

**Dr. Sarah Levine**

**Co-Instructor**

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**Office Hours:** by appointment

### **Course Overview**

Welcome to the third and final course in a three-part sequence on teaching English Language Arts in secondary schools. These three courses focus on reading comprehension for students as they learn to read and interpret both fiction and non-fiction texts and communicate their ideas in discussion, writing, and other media in order to better understand texts, themselves, and the world.

Our ultimate goal is to help you learn to build on the resources your students bring to the classroom and design lessons and units that will help your students become independent readers and writers who can fully engage the world of texts that surrounds them.

In the Winter course, we will focus on designing a conceptual unit plan using the tenets of backward design and constructivism.

### **Course Goals**

*By the end of the course, you will:*

- Interrogate and expand your knowledge, beliefs, and assumptions about ELA, specifically around text choices, essential questions, and assessments
- Practice flexible strategies that you can adapt for a variety of lessons; incorporate some of these strategies into your planning
- Rehearse lessons to hone your instructional practice and engage in feedback and revision with your peers
- Engage in social and emotional learning (SEL) practices to build classroom community; consider how you might incorporate these practices into your own teaching
- Design a conceptual unit plan based on an anchor text that
  - helps students learn transferable skills and/or explores a particular concept
  - makes visible and builds on students' everyday interpretive skills and practices
  - is equitable and culturally sustaining for your students

### **Final Assignment**

Your final assignment will take up some of these learning goals in the form of a conceptual unit plan of about 4-5 weeks. The instructors will model the unit design process in class, and you will draft part of your unit plan for homework each week. Detailed instructions for this assignment will be distributed and discussed in Week 1.

### **Course Expectations**

In the final course of our C&I sequence, we hope to continue to build a collegial culture in which we can learn from one another.

*To facilitate this culture, we will:*

- Strive to be well prepared, responsive, and reflective teachers
- Build criteria based on our knowledge as well as your ideas, questions, and requests
- Respond to your work and emails/phone calls in a timely way
- Help build connections between your learning at Stanford and at your placement

*We expect that you will:*

- Attend class every week and arrive on time
- Be open-minded to new ideas and practices
- Closely read and annotate class articles
- Engage in rigorous, open-minded, and respectful class participation
- Share all assignments with us on time and complete all parts of the assignments
- Communicate with both instructors via email if you need additional support or an extension

### Grading

Because we believe you can and will do these things, we expect every student in this class will earn an A. Our primary goal in responding to your assignments is to provide feedback and engage in conversation about the work you have done. Thus, we will provide comments but not a letter or numerical grade on your assignments. Instead, along with comments, you will see either a “complete” or “incomplete” on your work. A “complete” means that you have met the goals for that assignment and are ready to build on your understanding. An “incomplete” means that you will need to do some revision or addition. Responding to feedback will lead to a “complete” grade and, more importantly, is one of the best ways to learn about instructional design.

*Except in unusual circumstances, you will earn a B or lower if you:*

- Miss more than one class in a quarter
- Arrive late two or more times in a quarter without prior notice
- Miss more than one assignment in a quarter

Because we believe that an A grade in this course is generally attainable, we consider a B grade to be of some concern. If we are concerned about your progress, we will share those concerns with you and the STEP directors to help you get the support you need. We want you to become a capable and fulfilled teacher. You should also share any concerns about your progress with us so we can help you. *If you must be late or absent, please inform the instructors prior to class via text or email and arrange for a colleague to take notes and gather materials for you. If you think you need an extension on a deadline, you must let us know in advance.*

### Course Readings & Materials

All course readings and materials will be available digitally on Canvas. We will post readings a week in advance. If possible, we recommend purchasing a copy of [\*Teaching English by Design, Second Edition: How to Create and Carry Out Instructional Units\*](#) by Peter Smagorinsky, as it is a resource you might want to return to or have on your professional bookshelf. That said, all of the required and supplemental course readings from this book *are* available as PDFs on Canvas. If there is an additional chapter you are interested in, just let us know. \*Note: We may make small changes to readings and assignments. The Modules and Assignments tabs on Canvas will be your most updated source.

### Support

**Students who need an academic accommodation** based on the impact of a disability must initiate the request with the Student Disability Resource Center (SDRC) located within the Office of Accessible Education (OAE). SDRC staff will evaluate the request with required documentation, recommend reasonable accommodations, and prepare an *Accommodation Letter* for faculty dated in the current quarter in which the request is being made. Students should contact the SDRC as soon as possible since timely notice is needed to coordinate accommodations. The OAE is located at 563 Salvatierra Walk (phone: 650-723-1066).

### Preferred Name & Preferred Gender Pronouns

Class rosters are provided to the instructors with the student's legal name and gender designation; these records might not correspond to the name and gender pronouns you use. We will gladly honor your request to address you by your preferred name and pronouns. Please advise us of these preferences so we can make appropriate changes to our records. Please also let us know if these change at any point.

### Stanford Honor Code

You are expected to follow the Stanford Honor Code. For an explanation of the Honor Code, please go to <http://www.stanford.edu/dept/vpsa/judicialaffairs/guiding/honorcode.htm>. If you have any questions about how it applies to a particular assignment, please ask.

**Course topics and assignments are listed on the next pages.**

### Course Topics and Assignments

**Note:** This is a living document that is subject to change based on how the course is going and students' needs. We will make adjustments accordingly. All assignments and course readings will be posted on Canvas each week.

| Week / Date                | Topic  |
|----------------------------|--|
| Week 1<br>1/7              | <p><b><u>Conceptual Unit Plans &amp; Essential Questions</u></b></p> <p>What is a conceptual unit plan? How might our text choices and questions inform our unit plans?</p>  |
| <b>Assignments<br/>DUE</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <a href="#">The Poet X</a> by Elizabeth Acevedo</li> <li>○ The primary text you would like to build a unit plan around.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |
| Week 2<br>1/14             | <p><b><u>Grading &amp; Rubrics</u></b></p> <p>What and how should I grade? Why? What are the different types of rubrics? What are the pros and cons of each?</p>   |
| <b>Assignments<br/>DUE</b> | <p><b><u>Unit plan:</u></b> Your Venn "Why-agram" outlining what skills and concepts are worth learning, why, and the final task that incorporates the "what" and the "why."</p>   |
| Week 3<br>1/21             | <p><b><u>The Discourse Ecosystem</u></b></p> <p>How do we use reading, writing, and discussion to support one another? How can we weave reading, writing, and discussion together in scaffolding a final task?</p>                         |
| <b>Assignments<br/>DUE</b> | <p><b><u>Unit plan:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ #1 Table of Contents</li> <li>○ #2 - Essential + Text-specific questions</li> <li>○ #3 - Goals</li> <li>○ #4 - Rationale</li> <li>○ #9 - List of texts</li> </ul> |
| Week 4<br>1/28             | <p><b><u>Designing Lessons: Reading</u></b></p> <p>What are the ingredients that make effective reading instruction? How do we design lesson plans that effectively teach reading comprehension to build on students' ways of knowing?</p> |

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| <b>Assignments<br/>DUE</b> | <b>Unit plan:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="radio"/> None</li> </ul>  |
| Week 5<br>2/4              | <p><b><u>Designing Lessons: Writing &amp; Feedback</u></b></p> <p>What are the strengths and weaknesses of different theoretical approaches to teaching writing? What ingredients go into effective writing feedback?</p>   |
| <b>Assignments<br/>DUE</b> | <b>Unit plan:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="radio"/> #5 - Final task</li> <li><input type="radio"/> #8 - Rubric</li> </ul>  |
| Week 6<br>2/11             | <p><b><u>Designing Lessons: Discussion</u></b></p> <p>How can we build opportunities for meaningful discussion into our unit plans? How can we disrupt narrow, potentially damaging views of “academic” discussion? What specific moves and strategies can we use to facilitate high-quality discussions?</p> |
| <b>Assignments<br/>DUE</b> | <b>Unit plan:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="radio"/> #6 - Enactment of final task</li> </ul>  |
| Week 7<br>2/18             | <p><b><u>AI and Media Literacy</u></b></p> <p>How can we teach students to be critical consumers of media? What skills are required for students to evaluate different types of digital sources?</p>  |
| <b>Assignments<br/>DUE</b> | <b>Unit plan:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="radio"/> #7 - Task Analysis</li> </ul>  |
| Week 8<br>2/25             | <p><b><u>Defense Against AI</u></b></p> <p>How do we design learning experiences and environments outside of traditional paradigms? What are the affordances and limitations of alternative learning experiences?</p>   |
| <b>Assignments<br/>DUE</b> | <b>Unit plan:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="radio"/> #10 - Calendar, part 1 - Daily Objectives (SWBAT... BY... BECAUSE) for each day</li> </ul>   |
| Week 9<br>3/4              | <p><b><u>Rehearsals</u></b></p> <p>How can we improve our teaching practice through rehearsal, feedback, and reflection? How do we iterate upon our processes to craft stronger lessons and units?</p>  |
|                            | <b><u>Unit Plan:</u></b>  |

|   |  |
|---|--|
|   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ #10 - Calendar, part 2 - Major activities for each day; include key assessments and/or HW</li> </ul>  |
| Week 10<br>3/11   | <p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Rehearsals &amp; Reflection</u></b></p> <p>How has our thinking about English Language Arts developed over the course of the year? To what extent has engaging in the unit planning process developed our thinking?</p> |
| <b>Assignments<br/>DUE</b>                                    | <p><b><u>Unit plan:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ #11 Lesson Plan</li> </ul>  |
| <i>Final Conceptual Unit Plan due Tuesday, March 15, 2026</i> |  |