

**A. COURSE TITLE: ASTL 5302 TEACHING IN THE MIDDLE SCHOOL
(7-8-05)**

B. CATALOG DESCRIPTION:

This course is designed to examine the philosophy, organizational patterns, and curricula of exemplary middle schools. Additionally, it encompasses the specialized knowledge, dispositions, skills, and commitment needed to successfully teach young adolescents. It is based on National Middle School Association Masters Level Teacher Preparation Standards and the five core propositions of National Board Certification (NBC). Candidates will be expected to engage in a variety of personal explorations that will demonstrate an understanding and embracement of the following NBC core propositions:

1. Teachers are committed to their students and their learning.
2. Teachers know the subjects they teach and how to teach those subjects to students.
3. Teachers are responsible for managing and monitoring student learning.
4. Teachers think systematically about their practice and learn from experience.
5. Teachers are members of learning communities.

C. PURPOSE:

The purpose of the course is to provide candidates with the knowledge, dispositions, and performance skills to be highly accomplished middle level teachers. In doing so, candidates will engage in a study of issues, theories, and research in middle level education, including the philosophy, organizational patterns, and curricula of exemplary middle school with emphasis upon teaching and assessment methods appropriate for use with students in late childhood and early adolescence. Candidates will be given the opportunity to engage in activities that will enable them to develop more fully an understanding of the unique cognitive, behavioral, and affective needs of middle level students and, therefore, make informed academic decisions that are responsive to student needs. Attention will be given to viewing curriculum design from an interdisciplinary studies perspective in order that candidates may present to their students important connections between their lives and the world in which they live. Additionally, the purpose of the course is to provide candidates with major concepts, principles, theories, and research related to working collaboratively with students' families and other community members and in encompassing an appreciation of the value of diversity in our society. Finally, the purpose of the course is to provide an avenue by which candidates may analyze major concepts, principles, theories, and research related to professional roles both within and outside the classroom and apply that knowledge in practice.

D. REQUIRED TEXTS:

This we believe: And now we must act. (2001). Westerville, OH: National Middle School Association.

Wiles, J., and Bondi, J. (2001). *The new American middle school: Educating preadolescents in an era of change* (3rd ed.). Upper Saddle: Merrill Prentice Hall.

E. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Faculty members involved in the preparation of professional educators, as well as professional education candidates, public school representatives, and member of the community share a vision for the Professional Education Unit (PEU) at the University of Central Arkansas (UCA). The theme “Educators as Reflective Decision-Makers” serves as a statement of the vision of the PEU. The vision encompasses the development of candidates’ abilities to examine problems, formulate options, consider decisions, and evaluate outcomes while embracing an awareness of and sensitivity to human diversity. The vision is achieved by candidates’ acquisition of reflective decision-making skills through self-understanding, course work, and field and internship experiences

F. USE OF TECHNOLOGY:

A rationale for requiring the use of technology is that teachers must be comfortable when using tools and ideas of our technological society in enhancing developmentally appropriate learning activities for students. Candidates will explore ways technology may be used to improve instruction in the classroom and will apply technology in completion of assignments. Candidates will investigate instructional programs and the use of audio-visual materials in curriculum development and instructional delivery. Candidates will examine web-sites that are applicable to middle level teaching and will apply their findings in completing an annotated list of internet sites that will be helpful in instruction. Furthermore, candidates will video-tape themselves for self-evaluation purposes.

G. DIVERSITY

In a variety of situations, candidates will be expected to demonstrate they understand the importance of accomplished teachers appreciating the uniqueness of individual students as well as the commonalities they share. One aspect that will be emphasized is assisting teachers in modeling for students the importance of respecting and appreciating individual and group differences. Teachers will examine means by which they may foster emotional and social growth of students and encourage the development of socially acceptable and ethical values and behaviors. Additionally, teachers will study research and methodology for accommodating various learning style and will create curricula that incorporates sequenced learning from concrete to abstract, emphasizes collaboration rather

than competition, involves active rather than passive learning, promotes service learning, and includes strategies for multilevel instruction.

H. OBJECTIVES

The candidate will be able to:

1. Define exemplary middle level education programs.
2. Explain the rationale for the beginning and growth of the Middle School Movement.
3. Develop compelling themes to be used in instruction that engages students in applying knowledge, skills, and understanding across subjects.
4. Describe the physical, intellectual, social, emotional, and ethical development of pre-adolescents and early adolescents.
5. Design curricula that is developmentally appropriate by engaging in using planning, organizational, and management skills designed to create an emotionally supportive community of active learners. U
6. Utilize instructional strategies that actively engage all students, promote collaboration, provide for varying levels of concrete/abstract thought processes, and foster student inquiry.
7. Utilize instructional strategies that motivate and engage students creatively and assist students in developing problem-solving and critical thinking skills.
8. Critically assess instructional materials in terms of quality and appropriateness for use in the classroom.
9. Identify evidence in his/her own practices of quality middle level teaching and areas of needed improvement through the use of the Teacher Performance Outcomes Assessment (TPOA) instrument.
10. Identify means for involving families and other community members in the learning process.
11. Assess the implications of young adolescent development for school organization and components of highly effective middle level programs and schools.
12. Research and effectively react to societal changes which impact the healthy development of the middle level student, including the changing portrayal of young adolescents through the media.

I. COURSE OUTLINE

Part I. Rationale for a school in the middle

1. History and philosophy of the middle school movement
2. Middle school transitions
3. Today's middle school

Part II. The middle level student

4. Physical, social, emotional, intellectual, and ethical characteristics of the middle level student

5. Society's influences on the middle level student
6. Diversity among middle level students
7. Social issues affecting middle level students

Part III. Effective middle school structures

8. Team teaching
9. Interdisciplinary teaching
10. Flexible scheduling
11. Block scheduling
12. Multiage grouping
13. Computer - based management systems

Part IV. Teachers for middle school

14. Characteristics of highly accomplished teachers
15. Critical teaching skills
16. Fusion of research and effective teaching
17. Learning Theory

Part V. The middle school curriculum

18. Organizing the curriculum
19. Junior high vs. middle school differences
20. Improving achievement
21. Curriculum for the 21st century
22. Meeting diverse student needs
23. Curriculum mapping
24. Inclusion of technology

Part VI. The full-service middle school

25. The families' role
26. Inclusion
27. Strategies for working with students with special needs
28. Character education
29. Safe and drug-free schools
30. Multiculturalism

Part VII. Instruction in the middle school

31. Learning environments
32. Instructional theory
33. Student involvement
34. Use of technology
35. Learning styles and planning
36. Assessment strategies

Part VIII. Middle schools for the 21st century

37. Professional development for middle level educators
38. Standards- based assessment and education

- 39. Creating a caring community in schools
- 40. Program Analysis

J. FIELD EXPERIENCE REQUIREMENTS

Candidates will complete assignments in which they use their own classrooms and schools as the location for their field experiences.

K. Course Evaluation

Evaluation of candidates will be based upon the following components:

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| 1. Article reading guides (4 @ 25 points each) | 100 points |
| 2. Current events article reading guides (4 @ 10 points) | 40 points |
| 3. Facilitating Chapter Discussion (2 @ 40 points) | 80 points |
| 4. Research paper (1 @ 150 points) | 150 points |
| 5. Research paper presentation (1 @ 25 points) | 30 points |
| 6. Final Exam (1 @ 100 points) | 100 points |

Grading Scale:

A total of 500 points can be earned during the course. Grades will be calculated using the following scale: 500 – 450 = A; 449 – 400 = B; 399 – 350 = C; 349 – 300 = D; Below 299 = F

Late work will be penalized by deducting 20 percent of the assigned point value for each day late.

L. ATTENDANCE POLICY

Candidates are expected to be on time. An absence does not excuse a candidate from being prepared for class. For unavoidable absences, proper notification is expected as well as plans to make up any work covered in class. Candidates should note the university’s drop date policy that includes notifying the registrar’s office. Make-up exams will be scheduled at the discretion of the instructor.

M. STUDENT HANDBOOK POLICY:

Candidates are expected to follow all policies regarding academic dishonesty, sexual harassment, and academic issues as outlined in the current *UCA Student Handbook*. Candidates should familiarize themselves with all policies included in the *Handbook*.

Plagiarism is the presentation of another person's work, ideas, or expressions whether you do so intentionally or as a result of careless documentation. It is a serious violation and carries severe penalties – failure on the assignment or in the course. Please consult the instructor if you have any questions concerning what constitutes plagiarism.

N. Bibliography

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- Lipsitz, J., Jackson, A., & Austin, L.M. (1997). What works in middle-grades school reform. *Phi Delta Kappan* 3, 517-556.
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