

(11/14/05)

A. COURSE TITLE: ASTL 6301 ISSUES IN TEACHING

B. CATALOG DESCRIPTION:

Advanced study of contemporary issues and challenges associated with teaching in public schools. Emphasis on causes and application of proposed solutions to specific situations.

C. PURPOSE OF COURSE:

This course is intended to provide a seminar setting in which graduate candidates participate as members of a learning community in the analysis of teaching practice. Cases will serve as catalysts for analytic thinking and discussion. The course is designed to engage K-12 educators in the exploration and examination of key issues in teaching. Issues include, but are not limited to, the following: assessment, diversity, parental involvement, technology, constructivism, teacher collaboration, student motivation, and individualized instruction.

D. REQUIRED TEXT:

Bliss, T. & Mazur, J. (2002). *K-12 Teachers in the midst of reform: Common thread cases*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Martin-Kniep, G. (2000). *Becoming a better teacher: Eight innovations that work*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Student-selected professional education articles related to case issues

E. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK: “Educators as Reflective Decision-Makers”

Faculty members involved in the preparation of professional educators, as well as professional education candidates, public school representatives, and members of the community share a vision for the Professional Education Unit at the University of Central Arkansas (UCA). This vision is one of preparing Educators as Reflective Decision-Makers. 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.

How do the goals of the program reflect the conceptual framework? The master’s in Advanced Studies in Teaching and Learning (ASTL) prepares candidates to become highly skilled and articulate classroom teachers. It is designed to enhance and expand existing knowledge, skills, and dispositions of candidates while fostering the

development of competencies expected of advanced educators. The program rests on the assumption that accomplished educators engage in reflective decision-making as they assess and extend their own professional practice. In addition to addressing the eight essential elements of the Conceptual Framework, the program incorporates standards and propositions from appropriate national professional organizations such as IRA, NAEYC, NCATE, NCTE, NCTM, and NBPTS.

Upon completion of the program, ASTL Graduates will demonstrate the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to

1. Respond positively to classroom practices that enhance student learning.
2. Critically analyze their own classroom practices and appropriately respond to their findings.
3. Articulate the rationale for decisions they make regarding professional practice, classroom instruction, and classroom/school policies and procedures.
4. Make informed decisions by reflecting on experiences both past and present to improve teaching practices that enhance student learning.
5. Become change leaders for the improvement of their schools.
6. Provide leadership to the profession via organizations and other service roles.

How does “Issues in Teaching” address the PEU’s Conceptual Framework vision of preparing educators as reflective decision-makers?

Course objectives align with the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS). Cases will provide opportunities for reflective practice. Through the use of these cases and current professional readings, this course aims to engage candidates in analytic problem solving and systematic reflection. Candidates will be expected to examine and to evaluate the consequences of teacher decisions and actions (as presented in the cases). In addition, each candidate will complete a research/action project that requires systematic investigation.

F. USE OF TECHNOLOGY:

Graduate candidates will gather information and resources related to educational issues from the Internet. Such websites as Teacher Magazine (www.teachermagazine.org), Teaching Tolerance (www.teachingtolerance.org), and the Coalition of Essential Schools (www.essentialschools.org) will be suggested. Candidates will also search the ERIC database for professional articles. They will be encouraged to communicate with the instructor and each other via electronic mail.

G. DIVERSITY:

The selected cases represent a wide range of school populations and settings. Candidates’ diversity in terms of teaching and cultural backgrounds will be emphasized as strengths to enhance seminar discussions. In addition, guest speakers from various educational settings (e.g., rural vs. urban) will be incorporated into the seminar sessions.

H. COURSE OBJECTIVES:

Upon completion of the course, the candidates will be able to:

1. Analyze teaching practices from multiple perspectives and demonstrate their commitment to student learning (NBPTS 1.1, 1.3, & 1.4);
2. Articulate various implications and consequences of instructional decisions and educational reform recommendations (NBPTS 4.1);
3. Collaborate with other professionals to improve school effectiveness (NBPTS 5.1);
4. Explain the multiple facets of contemporary issues in teaching; and
5. Identify barriers to educational change and identify strategies to overcome these barriers.

I. COURSE OUTLINE:

Specific topics will depend upon selected cases. Selections will be based upon the candidates' educational backgrounds and experiences. Common topics, regardless of selected cases, include the following:

- A. Educational Reform Recommendations
- B. Change Process in Education
- C. Site-Based Decision Making
- D. Teacher Collaboration
- E. Assessment of Learning
- F. Student Diversity
- G. Parental Involvement
- H. Student Motivation
- I. Individualized Instruction
- J. Reflective Practice
- K. Professional Development

J. FIELD EXPERIENCE REQUIREMENTS:

N/A

K. COURSE EVALUATION:

Evaluation of candidates will be based upon the following components:

1. Case response papers (2 @ 50 points each) 100 points

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| 2. Article reading guides (5 @ 10 points each) | 50 points |
| 3. Action project & presentation (1 @ 200 points each) | 200 points |
| 4. Case discussion facilitation (1 @ 50 points) | 50 points |

GRADING SCALE:

A total of 400 points can be earned during the course. Grades will be calculated using the following percentages:

A = 93 – 100%; B = 83 – 92%; C = 73 – 82%; D = 63 - 72

Make-up exams will be given at the discretion of the instructor.

Late work: Homework submitted after the due date will be penalized by deducting ten percent of the assigned point value for each day late.

Please note: Candidates are encouraged to retain copies of all ASTL course products as they may be of importance to candidates when preparing the exit portfolio.

L. ATTENDANCE POLICY:

Graduate candidates are expected to demonstrate professional behavior and disposition at all times. Because lecture and classroom discussion / activities are important to the total learning experience, candidates are expected to attend and participate in class regularly. Furthermore, all readings and assignments are to be completed before class. In addition, if a candidate misses a class, the instructor is to be notified as soon as possible (preferably in advance), and the candidate is responsible for submitting assignments on time and for completing all assignments for the next class. A ten percent reduction in the candidate's final average will be calculated for each absence beyond the first. Candidates should note the university's drop date policy that includes notifying the Registrar's Office.

M. STUDENT HANDBOOK POLICY:

Candidates are expected to follow all policies regarding academic dishonesty, sexual harassment, and academic uses 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. . Although collaboration is encouraged, any work submitted as part of a course assignment must be the candidate's own work or else referenced using the appropriate reference format (i.e., APA). Please consult the instructor if you have any questions concerning what constitutes plagiarism.

The University of Central Arkansas adheres to all requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act. If you need an accommodation under this Act due to a disability, please contact the UCA Office of Disability Services, 450-3135. Instructors should be notified the first day of class.

N. BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Barth, R. (1990). *Improving schools from within: Teachers, parents, and principals can make a difference*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Daniels, H., Bizar, M., & Zemelman, S. (2001). *Rethinking high school: Best practice in teaching, learning, and leadership*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Day, B. (Ed.) (1999). *Teaching and learning in the new millennium*. Indianapolis, IN: Kappa Delta Pi.

Eisner, E. (2002). The kind of schools we need. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 83 (8), 576-585.

Falk, B. (2002). Standards-based reforms: Problems and possibilities. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 83 (8), 612-620.

Fullan, M. (2002). The change leader. *Educational Leadership*, 59 (8), 16-20.

Kohn, A. (1999). *The schools our children deserve: Moving beyond traditional classrooms and "tougher standards"*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Martin-Kniep, G. (2000). *Becoming a better teacher: Eight innovations that work*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Merrow, J. (2001). *Choosing excellence: "Good enough" schools are not good enough*. Lanham, MA: Scarecrow Press.

Walling, D. (Ed.) (1997). *Hot buttons: Unraveling ten controversial issues in education*. Bloomington, IN: Phi Delta Kappa.

O. ATTACHMENTS (Rubrics for Project & Presentation; Reading guide sheet)

MSIT 6301
Reading and Discussion Guide Sheet
(Please make multiple copies of this form.)

Name: _____

Article:

Authors:

1. Key points made by the authors:

2. This article reinforced my understanding and/or beliefs about . . .

3. This article caused me to rethink my understanding and/or beliefs about . . .

4. Prior to reading this article, I did not know . . .

5. Questions that I want to ask/discuss are:

MSIT 6301: Seminar on Teaching Issues

Rubric: Issues Paper and Presentation

The following criteria will be used by the instructor to evaluate and assess this assignment. As a student, this evaluation form is being provided to you for three reasons:

1. You may use it to *assist in planning* how you will address and complete the assignment.
2. You may use it when you have completed the assignment to ensure that all component parts have been *addressed*.

3. You may use it to *evaluate your own performance* in meeting the criteria for the assignment.

Please note that parts of the assignment are weighted more heavily than others. The minimum number of points that can be assigned in any category is zero; the maximum number of points that can be assigned in each category varies. Points allocated for each section are indicated below. **Total points possible on this assignment are 200 points. The minimum number of points required to successfully complete this assignment is 150 points.**

The presentation:

Demonstrates the student's knowledge of content (i.e., the student is not dependent upon notes, makes smooth transitions within the presentation, and is able to respond to questions raised). (10 points) _____

Includes the effective use of an appropriate visual aid to enhance understanding. (10 points) _____

Exhibits the student's ability to present information in a well organized manner. (10 points) _____

Provides an opportunity for active class involvement/participation. (10 points) _____

Is of adequate length (Neither too long nor too short, i.e., 20-30 minutes). (10 points) _____

TOTAL POINTS POSSIBLE = 50

TOTAL POINTS EARNED: _____

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The paper:

Includes an introduction with a rationale and relationship to the broad field (10 points)

Contains a set of focal questions which are appropriate and comprehensive (10 points)

Includes a minimum of 7 professional education sources in APA bibliographic form (15 points)

Demonstrates the student's ability to synthesize ideas and thoroughly review literature (40 points)

Discusses application/implications of findings (15 points)

Shows evidence of reflective thought in the conclusions section (30 points)

Illustrates the student's ability to write in a quality manner (30 points)

TOTAL POINTS POSSIBLE = 150 **TOTAL POINTS EARNED: _____**

MSIT 6301
Project/Paper Scoring Rubric

Name: _____

Topic: _____

CRITERIA	Points Possible	Points Earned
Introduction/Overview (10 points) Rationale (reason for topic) Relationship to the broad field (context)	 5 5	
Statement of Questions (Focus of Paper) (10 points) Appropriateness (connected to course) Comprehensiveness (focused yet inclusive)	 5 5	
Findings (Review of Literature) (40 points) Thoroughness of review Comprehensiveness of coverage (multiple perspectives) Ability to synthesize ideas	 10 15 15	
Discussion/Application (15 points) Ways findings (or intentions) . . . reaffirm course concepts challenge course concepts extend course concepts	 5 5 5	
Conclusions (30 points) Explanation of personal learning/response Anticipated use of knowledge gained	 15 15	
References (15 points) Minimum of 7 professional education sources	15	
Quality of writing (30 points) Correct use of grammar, spelling & punctuation Adherence to APA format Style (clarity, transitions, organization)	 10 10 10	
Minimal acceptable score: 110 points	150	

