

ENG 413 Syllabus: Community Literacy In The Virtual World

ENG 413 Spring 2021, 4 Credits CRN [32070, 32079]

This course will meet remotely using the **UO Canvas Learning Platform** and Zoom. Our synchronous work together will be on Tuesdays and Thursdays during our scheduled class time of 2:15 - 3:45 p.m. (1415-1545)

Instructor: Emily Simnitt, PhD

Office Hours: T 3:30-5:30 p.m., M 9-10 a.m., and by appointment
esimnitt@uoregon.edu

Access Zoom Office Hours with this link:
<https://uoregon.zoom.us/my/emilysimnitt>

Find up-to-date information about the class in announcements that will appear on the course web page. You will also course receive announcements through email via Canvas. Be sure to set how you receive notifications from Canvas so that you will be able to manage information in a way that works best for you.

Overview and Objectives

ENG 413: Theories of Literacy explores the history of and current ways in which reading and writing work in our global, digital world and what that means for diverse stakeholders in local communities. In the university, we tend to privilege academic literacy. What can we learn by

examining community literacies in virtual spaces or the ways that groups of people outside of school understand and communicate knowledge about the world in a time of limited physical social connection? We'll explore this question through a class community literacy project in which we will use digital technologies to learn directly from people in the community.

By *critically* engaging with the material of this course, you will:

- Inquire into literacy as a social and cultural *practice* that allows communities or groups of people in "real" and virtual spaces to use material objects and a full range of senses to understand and communicate about their world(s).
- Examine how structures *in addition to* schools "sponsor" literacy and how those sponsorships perpetuate or change the distribution of power and access to resources in society.
- Analyze how individuals and communities have demonstrated agency and resilience in literacy through counterstories.
- Reflect on one's own literacy practices and how those have been formed and located in relation to power and access.

Career Readiness

An objective of this course is to provide you hands-on experience in research and resume-building skills. This will prepare you to write about, for, and with communities in your future careers.

Specifically, you will have opportunity to work on the follow career competencies identified by the UO and the National Association of Colleges and Employers. We will work on:

Critical Thinking/Problem Solving: Exercise sound reasoning to analyze issues, make decisions, and overcome problems. The individual is able to obtain, interpret, and use knowledge, facts, and data in this process, and may demonstrate originality and inventiveness.

Oral/Written Communications: Articulate thoughts and ideas clearly and effectively in written and oral forms to persons inside and outside of the organization. The individual has public speaking skills; is able to express ideas to others; and can write/edit memos, letters, and complex technical reports clearly and effectively.

Teamwork/Collaboration: Build collaborative relationships with colleagues and customers representing diverse cultures, races, ages, genders, religions, lifestyles, and viewpoints. The individual is able to work within a team structure, and can negotiate and manage conflict.

Digital Technology: Leverage existing digital technologies ethically and efficiently to solve problems, complete tasks, and accomplish goals. The individual demonstrates effective adaptability to new and emerging technologies.

Professionalism/Work Ethic: Demonstrate personal accountability and effective work habits, e.g., punctuality, working productively with others, and time workload management, and understand the impact of non-verbal communication on professional work image. The individual demonstrates integrity and ethical behavior, acts responsibly with the interests of the larger community in mind, and is able to learn from his/her mistakes.

Course Materials

We will study literacy using three sources of information: theory developed by interdisciplinary researchers, literacy counterstories that demonstrate how individuals and communities who have been marginalized or excluded from access to literacy exhibit resilience and regain agency, and direct learning from communities.

You will not need to purchase any materials for this course. All material you will read, watch, and listen to will be provided as links and/or pdf files in the [Assigned Readings](#) module. Links and advice for how to engage with course materials will be included in weekly overviews in each week's module.

Course Learning Methods: Compassion, Curiosity, Commitment

Success in ENG 413 will depend more on your openness to and curiosity than on your previous academic experience or existing knowledge about the topics we will explore together.

Your grade will be determined by the *labor* you put in and your own *engagement* with course material, activities, the writing of your peers, and the course learning goals.

I ask that you:

- Be a compassionate member of our class community — challenge yourself to take risks and support your classmates as they take risks.
- Be curious and open to new methods, ideas, and perspectives. You'll do this by deeply and respectfully reading and responding to assigned articles and the work of your classmates. Sometimes this

material will require watching and/or listening.

- Be willing to write, read, and respond to the best of your ability.

I commit to:

- Checking your understanding of key concepts about literacy.
- Deeply and respectfully reading your work and taking your ideas seriously.
- Challenging you to go further and take risks by giving feedback, asking questions, and providing additional material.

Together we will repeat this process until you feel more confident drawing on and responding to theories of literacy and imagining how you will could apply those theories to writing for, about, and with communities in the future.

I am committed to making adjustments as we figure out together how to learn remotely.

What You Will Do

Overview of Course Assignments

Instructions and criteria for evaluation will be provided with each assignment so you know what is required for it to be considered complete. Grading comments will be provided to give feedback and let you know if your work is incomplete and whether it may be revised and resubmitted.

1. Synchronous Session Activities and “Exit Tickets”

Includes tasks completed in preparation for and during synchronous

sessions on Zoom and Canvas:

- carefully reading/watching/listening to assigned material in advance of synchronous sessions
- participation in breakout rooms, freewrites, polls, chat check-ins, notetaking, and in-class discussion boards
- completing "exit tickets" (short reflective surveys) at the end of each synchronous session

****Completing the session "exit ticket" is how I will assess your engagement with the material.****

Expect that we will have two synchronous session *most* weeks of the term. Engagement with synchronous session material is required. Make-up work will be available. Your grade final grade will drop by a third 1/3 (A to A-, A- to B+, etc.) for each class or makeup activity you don't complete that is not excused by a wild card (see information about wild cards below).

2. Weekly Asynchronous Reflective Discussion Boards

You'll use reflective writing-as-inquiry to engage with each week's material before and after Zoom discussions and activities. This series of assignments supports you in identifying key terms and passages, establishing a "personal" relationship with the concepts of the week, and making connections between theoretical concepts, your individual experience with literacy, and the communities we are engaging with. Each week (except for your presentation week), you will complete:

- 1 300-word reflective post to the week's readings (prior to synchronous sessions)
- 2 100-word responses/questions to classmate's posts (by the end

of the week)

You are required to complete all assigned weekly discussion boards. You can have up to two "incompletes" on this assignment sequence without your grade being affected. After that, "incompletes" will start dropping your final grade by 1/3 unless they are excused by a wild card (see information below).

3. Community Literacy Artifact Presentation (scheduled during weeks 3-6)

A "community literacy artifact" is a human-made object that supports how individuals use literacy skills (reading and writing) within a specific community to which they belong. Researchers who take a critical approach to studying literacy identify artifacts of interest and examine them through the theoretical frameworks we are learning about in class in order to understand how their use is related to the distribution of power and access to resources in society. This assignment provides you the opportunity to practice thinking critically like a literacy researcher and work on your oral and written presentation skills.

You will be assigned a week in which to present. Your presentation will include:

- a 15-minute in-class presentation of a literacy artifact from a community of interest to you and our class
- a short write up describing and analyzing the artifact (counts in place of the Reflective Discussion Board in your assigned week)
- a brief annotation of an article you select that helps the class understand the significance of the artifact

You will be required to meet with me in advance of your presentation.

You must complete this assignment in order to pass the class. You will have the opportunity to resubmit incomplete or unsatisfactory work. The assignment will have "A," "B," and "C" lists of requirements. You choose what you complete.

4. Individual Literacy Counterstory (Final Draft due at end of term)

This assignment offers you the opportunity to develop your own "counterstory" by examining your relationship to literacy and developing your own theory of literacy. We will read/watch/listen to several literacy counterstories during the term presented in different formats. You will choose the form your own counterstory takes (analytical essay, short memoir, podcast, video "documentary," info graphic). More details are forthcoming.

You will submit multiple drafts for review throughout the term and give/receive feedback to/from your classmates. I'll provide feedback, too. You must complete the in order to pass the class. You will have the opportunity to resubmit incomplete or unsatisfactory work. The assignment will have "A," "B," and "C" lists of requirements. You choose what you complete.

5. Contribution To Class Project (due at the end of the term)

A goal of this class is to consider how the university community can support surrounding communities through community writing. To this end, we will work together as a team to collate what we have learned through reading about and listening to communities and make recommendations about how UO can better engage undergraduate students in writing about, for, and with communities with a primary objective of increasing access to literacy and related resources.

All class members must contribute some effort to the Class Project. We will decide together what is required. More details are forthcoming.

Grading + Evaluation Principles

The grading policy for this course is built on the following principles:

You control your grade by deciding what work to complete.

Learning happens through steady engagement and reflection over time.

Assignments are the place where I encounter and respond to your ideas and learning.

The overall *work* of the course is more important than the subjective *quality* of any single assignment. Assignments build on each other.

All work will be evaluated as "complete" or "incomplete" using assignment-specific rubrics. Completing assignments as designed leads to the achievement of course learning goals.

"Incompletes" are my way of indicating your work isn't satisfactory. Submitting unsatisfactory work repeatedly will start to lower your final grade. I'll let you know how to improve and succeed.

"Stuff" happens and some work just needs to be excused.

Wild Cards + Completing the Course

You will learn the most by fully by attending all synchronous class sessions and completing all of the assignments, and, in the best-case scenario, you will be able to do just that. However, if something

happens, you will start the course with 2 wild cards that can be used to excuse missing or incomplete weekly activities and/or weekly discussion boards. We can negotiate additional uses of wild cards during the term.

I will provide feedback on Individual Counterstories and Community Literacy Artifact Presentations and offer a limited window for unsatisfactory or incomplete work to be revised and resubmitted.

This includes but is not limited to resubmitting an assignment meeting criteria for a higher grade (i.e. a "B" assignment resubmitted with additional "A" elements).

Our class is small. I am available to work with you individually to ensure that you are working toward the grade you want to earn for this class!

What You'll See In Grades

Wild cards will "show up" as "excused" with a note in comments and in assignment rubrics.

Satisfactory work will show up as a checkmark or "complete."

Unsatisfactory or incomplete work will show up as an "incomplete" with a note in comments and in assignment rubrics.

Missing or unsubmitted work will show up as an "incomplete" with a note in comments.

A = Completing the majority of work (exit tickets, discussion boards, engagement with class project) in the course and "A" options on the Individual Literacy Counterstory and Artifact Presentation.

B = Completing majority of work (exit tickets, discussion boards, engagement with class project) in the course and "B" options on the Individual Literacy Counterstory and Artifact Presentation.

C = Missing some work (exit tickets, discussion boards, engagement with class project) in the course and completing minimum requirements for the Individual Literacy Counterstory and Artifact Presentation.

Late Work Policy

- An automatic 48-hour extension is available for all assigned work.
- You do not need to contact me.
- After 48 hours, I can no longer accept your work without hearing from you. It will be considered unsubmitted and incomplete unless we come to an agreement.

Please make every effort to submit group discussion posts on time so your classmates have adequate time to respond.

Shared Responsibilities and Extenuating Circumstances

I will do my best to be clear about assignment expectations and how I will assess your work. **It's your responsibility to contact me when you are confused, overwhelmed, or unsure about class expectations. Talk to me before an assignment is due, not after, if possible.**

That way I can help you talk through your confusion, brainstorm ideas, consider possibilities, give you resources, and discuss your work with you—that's an integral part of my role in our class! I can't make

exceptions or extend grading deadlines unless you talk to me *before* the assignment is due.

I am only able to help you be successful in the course if we are in communication!

Other Course Policies

Find a complete list of policies for all WR courses -- which also apply to ENG 413 -- on the Composition Program website at composition.uoregon.edu.

Tentative Course Calendar

Find up-to-date information about the class in announcements on the home page.

Below is a schedule of assignments for the course. I reserve the ability to change the schedule but only after notifying you in advance by an announcement on Canvas.

Week 1: Introductions and Definitions

Tuesday

- **Read:** Class Syllabus and other information in Canvas [START Here](#) Module
- **Complete:** March 30 "Exit Ticket": Introductory Survey

Thursday

- **Read:** Hong, "Bad" English Is Part of my Korean American

Heritage"; Mills, Key Concepts in Social and Cultural Literacy excerpts

- **Complete:** April 1 "Exit Ticket"

Week 2: Histories Of Literacy

Tuesday

- **Read:** Graff, "The 19th Century Origins Of Our Times" (22 pages); Smitherman, "Foreward To April Baker-Bell's *Linguistic Justice: Black Language, Literacy, Identity, and Pedagogy*" (6 pages)
- **Complete:** WK2 Reflective Discussion Board (individual post due by start of class); April 6 "Exit Ticket"

Thursday

- **Read:** Monea, "A Gallery of (Re)Imagined Interfaces" (web text); Mills, excerpts from Key Concepts in Multimodal Literacies
- **Complete:** WK2 Reflective Discussion Board (two responses to classmates due by end of Thursday); April 8 "Exit Ticket"

Week 3: Critical Approaches To Literacy Theory

Tuesday

- **Read:** Baldwin, "If Black English Isn't A Language, I Don't Know What Is" (op ed in New York Times); Freire and Faundez, "What Is Critically Reflexive Teaching?" (9 pages); Mills' excerpt, Key Concepts In Critical Literacies" (5 pages)

- **Complete:** WK3 Reflective Discussion Board (individual post due by start of class); April 13 "Exit Ticket"

Thursday

- **Read:** April Baker-Bell selection from *Linguistic Justice: Black Language, Literacy, Identity, and Pedagogy*
- **Complete:** WK3 Reflective Discussion Board (two responses to classmates due by end of Thursday); April 10 "Exit Ticket"

Week 4: Spatial Approaches To Literacy Theory

Tuesday

- **Read:** Mills, "Key Concepts in Spatial Literacies" (4 pages); Anzaldúa, "How To Tame A Wild Tongue"
- **Complete:** WK4 Reflective Discussion Board: Initial Draft Individual Literacy Counterstory (due by the start of class); April 20 "Exit Ticket"

Thursday

Artifact Presentation Example

- **Read:** Rush, "What 500 Americans Hit By Floods Can Tell Us About Climate Change."
- **Complete:** WK4 Reflective Discussion Board: Peer Responses to Individual Literacy Counterstories (due end of day); April 22 "Exit Ticket"

Week 5: Material Approaches To Literacy Theory

Tuesday

Artifact Presentations Begin

- **Read:** Mills, excerpts from Key Concepts in Material Literacies; Bechdel, excerpts from *Fun Home*
- **Complete:** WK5 Reflective Discussion Board (individual post due by start of class); April 27 "Exit Ticket": NOTE: Presenters are exempt from the weekly reflective discussion aboard individual post.

Thursday

- **Read:** TBA, material for artifact presentations
- **Complete:** WK5 Reflective Discussion Board (two responses to classmates due by end of Thursday); April 29 "Exit Ticket"

Week 6: Sensory Approaches To Literacy Theory

- **Read:** Mills, excerpts from Key Concepts In Sensory Literacies; Kimmerer, "Speaking of Nature."
- **Complete:** WK6 Reflective Discussion Board (individual post due by start of class); ; May 4 "Exit Ticket"; NOTE: Presenters are exempt from the weekly reflective discussion aboard individual post.

Thursday

- **Read:** TBA, material for artifact presentations.
- **Complete:** WK6 Reflective Discussion Board (two responses to classmates due by end of Thursday); May 6 "Exit Ticket"

Week 7: Community Literacy In Action

- **Read:** Your choice from selected Counterstories; Bay, "Research Justice as Reciprocity: Homegrown Research Methodologies" (tentative)
- **Complete:** WK7 Reflective Discussion Board: Second In-Progress Draft of Individual Counterstory Due; May 11 "Exit Ticket"

Thursday

- **Read:** TBA, background material on community in focus
- **Complete:** WK7 Reflective Discussion Board: Peer Responses to Individual Literacy Counterstories (due by end of day); May 13 "Exit Ticket"

Week 8: Community Literacy In Action

- **Read:** Your choice from selected Counterstories; Mathieu, "The Contemplative Concerns of Community Engagement"
- **Complete:** WK8 Reflective Discussion Board (individual post due by start of class); May 18 "Exit Ticket"

Thursday

- **Read:** TBA, background material on community in focus
- **Complete:** WK8 Reflective Discussion Board (two responses to classmates due by end of Thursday); May 20 "Exit Ticket"

Week 9: Community Literacy Project Planning

- **Read:** Feigenbaum, "An Interview with Floyd Jones and Denise Jones, Youth Enrichment Services, Pittsburgh" or Hill, "Food For Thought: Constructing Multimodal Identities Through Recipe-Creation with Homeless Youth"
- **Complete:** WK9 Reflective Discussion Board (individual post due by start of class); May 25 "Exit Ticket"

Thursday

- **Read:** TBA, background material related to community in focus
- **Complete:** WK9 Reflective Discussion Board (two responses to classmates due by end of Thursday); May 27 "Exit Ticket"

Week 10: Reflections And Projections

- **Read:** Review relevant material from the term; material submitted for Community Project
- **Complete:** WK10 Reflective Discussion Board In-Progress Individual Literacy Counterstory due by start of class; June 1 "Exit Ticket"

Thursday

- **Read:** Class counterstories
- **Complete:** WK10 Reflective Discussion Board (two responses to classmates due by end of Thursday); June 3 "Exit Ticket"

Week 11: Final Work Due

Submit final draft of Individual Literacy Counterstory, final work for class Community Project, and final reflection.