

English 574: Grammar in Teaching Writing

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Tuesday, 6:00-9:30
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Texts

Haussemann, Brock et al. *Grammar Alive: A Guide for Teachers*
Noden, Harry. *Image Grammar: Using Grammatical Structures to Teach Writing*
Truss, Lynne. *Eats, Shoots, & Leaves: The Zero Tolerance Approach to Punctuation*

A good grammar resource book; some possibilities include:

Painless Grammar (Elliot)
Rules for Writers (Hacker)
A Writer's Reference (Hacker)

(These and others will work -- just make sure you have a good resource that will quickly and easily show you various grammatical elements, issues, and errors.)

A \$5.00 copy card from the WMU Bookstore

Course Description

You will leave this course with an understanding of the theories, ideas, and classroom practices that drive the teaching of grammar in elementary, middle, and high school classrooms. I expect all students to be aware of general concepts in teaching writing already. In this course, we will focus our attention on issues of grammar as they are seen within the context of teaching writing. We will spend time reading, discussing, and practicing the teaching of grammar within the context of teaching writing. It is designed in accordance with the NCTE English Language Arts 'Standards in Practice' Series and the Michigan Department of Education's Standards for English Language Arts.

The readings and discussion for course will be essentially in three parts. For the first three weeks, we will focus on underlying ideas that support 'best practices' in teaching grammar. The second part of the course will focus on key issues in teaching grammar and ways to successfully overcome those issues. The final part of the course will involve practices and examples of ways to integrate grammatical concepts into a classroom.

Your task in this course is to

- Challenge your notions of teaching writing and focus your professional efforts specifically on teaching grammar
- learn and try out new techniques for teaching grammar in various contexts
- learn the ins-and-outs of grammatical issues as they are seen in student writing and ways to teach students about those issues

An important note: This course is about *teaching grammar* – not the actual study of grammar (although you will learn a lot about grammar in the process). Our focus will be on how you can translate these issues to your students – not just close study of grammatical concepts and theories.

Attendance

This is a professional course – you are expected to act as professionals and attend all class meetings. Missing a class meeting will put you far behind in the course. You will spend most of the class in response groups or work teams with peers and the absence of one member can make progress on projects difficult.

If you miss more than two classes during the semester, I reserve the right to lower your final grade by one letter. More than four absences will result in a failing grade.

Course Schedule

In our first two meetings, we will focus on the general issues that guide the teaching of grammar. At the third meeting, I will give you a schedule that will take you through the rest of the course, including due dates of major projects, teaching demonstrations, and other key events for the class.

Daily Schedule

With the exception of our first two meetings, the course meetings will follow the following general format:

6:00 – Meeting with next week’s ‘Grammar RX’ teachers

6:30 – General class meeting begins

6:30 – Grammar RX teaching demonstrations (see below for explanation)

7:00 – Discussion of week’s readings and class activities

8:00 – *Image Grammar* teaching demonstrations (see below)

9:00 – class ends

9:00-9:30 – meeting with next week’s *Image Grammar* teaching group

Grading

The course will consist of 1000 points.

A= 950-1000

C/D= 750-799

B/A= 900-949

D= 700-749

B= 850-899

D/F= 650-699

B/C= 800-849

F= below 650

Note: Failure to turn in a major project (any listed below) will automatically result in an F grade for the course.

Technology

Many of the projects in this course will utilize basic technologies such as web-publishing, online collaboration, and presentation and word-processing. We have a course server that has materials on it. Everyone will have assigned computers. You’re responsible for the use of that computer during class time.

A Couple of Important Dates

The *Michigan Council of Teachers of English* (MCTE) Conference is set for Friday, October 8 at the Lansing Center. The *National Council of Teachers of English* (NCTE) Conference is in Indianapolis, November 17-22.

Overview of Major Assignments

Opening Project (15%)

A Encyclopedic article that describes a professional and well-researched view of the definition of the term ‘grammar’ from your own perspective as a teacher of writing, reading, and literacy. This writing will be the culmination of the first set of readings and will focus on our initial ‘overview readings. In this article, you will:

- Define Grammar
- Define Teaching Grammar
- Define one key issue (I’ll give these out)

Project 2: Professional Activities (50%)

Image Grammar Lesson (15%): Each week, a small group of students will lead us through a lesson from Harry Noden’s Image Grammar book.

Grammar RX Lesson (10%): Each week, we will begin class with a short lesson on one of the primary grammatical issues that tend to surface in student work. One person in each small ‘Grammar RX’ group will lead a lesson and develop a handout for his/her group. Everyone in the class can expect to lead at least one lesson for his/her small group.

Grammar RX Notebook (5%): Each week, as you receive materials regarding various ‘Grammar RX’ issues, you should archive them in an organized binder. You get credit for maintaining this resource.

Response to Student Paper (20%): At the end of this section of the course, you will be given a draft version of a typical student paper. Using your skills as a teacher and a grammarian, you will diagnose various problems and write a note or a conference plan on how you can explain these issues to the student.

A Note: Although this section of the course is treated as a single project, your grade will build as the project goes on, depending on when you Image Grammar and Grammar RX teaching demonstrations are scheduled.

Project 3: Final Academic Project (35%)

Formal Academic Paper (25%): An article for inclusion in our class anthology/edited collection (4-6 pages, single-spaced); written for other teachers. The issues you discuss in your double-entry journal should serve as a starting point for this article.

Double Entry Journal (10%): Each week, you will be required to keep a double-entry journal as you read. This will be collected twice during the course. Once at mid-point; once at the conclusion of the readings. It should also be included as part of the prewriting of your final paper.