

Team Teaching Project for Foundation Courses

I developed this assignment to try to address a dilemma I think many of us face when teaching foundation courses in our majors: These courses frequently aim to teach students about essential concepts and methods in our disciplines. At the same time, we know that many of these concepts and methods are implicated within larger structures of oppression. For example, I teach a major foundation course called ENL 258: Literary Studies that introduces students to the key concepts and methods of literary criticism. This means teaching them about methods like metrical scansion, which is used to determine the meter of a poem. The history of scansion and of concepts like meter/prosody are bound up with racist, colonialist, classist, and nationalist pedagogies. I don't want to replicate these pedagogies, but how do I complicate/undermine concepts that I'm only beginning to introduce to novice learners? How can I help them learn what they need to know while also challenging the oppressive forces at work in this knowledge?

These are super big questions and this assignment does not resolve them. It's a little experimental step toward addressing this dilemma. For the assignment itself, students read excerpts from poetic guidebooks and textbooks written between the 1890s and the 1970s. These excerpts focus on key concepts we're learning about in our class, such as free verse, meter, and rhythm. In looking at these older textbooks, students get a sense of how these concepts were understood and taught at other periods of time. Students then work in groups that are responsible for teaching the readings to the rest of the class and leading them in discussion. The goal here is to give students more ownership over the material we're learning about and to give them a way to see how the material in our class is not transhistorical, transcultural, or ideologically neutral. They are encouraged to think about the political and social contexts informing the ideas about poetry in these books and to work through them together. The hope is that this work will encourage them to also think more critically about how poetry is taught in their own time.

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ENL 258: Team Teaching Assignment

For this assignment, you'll be placed on a team that has the privilege and the responsibility of teaching one of our classes. Team teaching is a valuable endeavor for a number of reasons. First (and take it from someone who does this for a living) the best way to learn a subject is to teach it. Needing to ensure that your classmates grasp particular concepts will help to make you more of an expert on them and offer you deeper insight into some of the ideas we're exploring. Also, as you work hard to become thoughtful literary critics and thinkers in your own right, it's important for you to take

greater control of--and responsibility for--your learning. Team teaching offers you the opportunity to make the class and the ideas your own.

For these team teaching class sessions, we'll be taking some time to learn a little bit about the deeper histories behind the interpretive tools and literary terms we're learning about in this class. These are crucial tools and terms, but we sometimes have a tendency to look at them in a vacuum and to think of them as neutral concepts that come from nowhere and don't have any histories or ideas attached to them. This is not at all the case. Ideas about poetry, and about all of literature, change over time and are often entangled with their own social, cultural, and political contexts. You will be more effective and aware literary critics if you begin to develop some sense of these histories and contexts.

What You're Doing

For this project, you will be helping to teach about how an earlier guidebook, textbook, or anthology discussed a particular poetic term. I will provide you with the reading for your group. Everyone in the class will be completing and annotating these readings for homework and then your team teaching group will be responsible for running the class. When it isn't your group's turn to teach, you're still responsible for being prepared for class and contributing to the discussion. Your team teaching group's goals are to

- Help your classmates to better understand the reading
- Lead your classmates in a deeper analysis of the reading and a consideration of how it impacts their understanding of the poetic terms and the methods and history of literary study

Roles

Each group member will have a particular role with particular responsibilities. Your group is responsible for coming to a consensus about who will perform what role. The roles are:

For groups of four:

- 2 co-presenters
- 2 co-discussion leaders

For groups of three:

- 2 co-presenters
 - 1 discussion leader
- OR
- 1 presenter
 - 2 co-discussion leaders (it's up to the group to decide)

Responsibilities of Each Role

Presenters

- The presenters should prepare a presentation of about 10-15 minutes on the reading. **This presentation must not be longer than 15 minutes.** If there are two presenters, they should split this presentation time, so each presenter would talk for about 5-7 minutes.
- The presenters should address the following questions in their talk. You can choose how to organize the presentation, and if you're working with a co-presenter, you should divide up these questions so that, for example, presenter A does questions 1-2 and presenter B does questions 3-5 or some version of that.
 1. What do you think we should know about the author of the reading and the time period in which it was published (stick to the information that is most relevant to the reading)? Are there any references in the reading that you think it would be helpful to explain to your classmates (again stick to the most relevant)?
 2. In your own words, how does the author of the reading define the particular term you're going to be discussing. If the reading, for example, is about the ballad, then how does the author define the ballad? If the reading is about the general definition of poetry, then how does the author define poetry?
 3. What are some of the key passages from the reading that help to illustrate the authors ideas and how do they illustrate those ideas?
 4. How do you think the author goes about supporting and developing their argument?
 5. What parts of the reading do you not understand or do you have questions about? You aren't expected to be experts here, and it's ok if there are areas of the reading you're still confused about. Please tell us about them so we can work together to clarify.
- You are more than welcome to use visual aids like powerpoint slides in your presentation. Please remember that less is more. A 10-15 minute presentation shouldn't use more than 5 or so slides. Don't overwhelm the slide with text. You can use a slide to show quotations from the reading and you can put bullet points on a slide to help students to follow your presentation, but the slide shouldn't contain everything you're saying.
- Please communicate with the discussion leaders so they know what you're doing and you know what they're doing and you can try to make the presentation and the discussion complementary.

Discussion Leaders

- The discussion leader or leaders should create discussion questions or prompts and lead the class in a discussion of the reading after the presenters have finished. **Discussion leaders are required to lead the class in discussion for at least twenty minutes** (this can go longer if the discussion is rolling along nicely). If there are two discussion leaders, they should work collaboratively to come up with the plan for leading discussion and they should both equally participate in leading it.

- Discussion leaders should not lecture. Your job is to find ways to facilitate discussion, to get your classmates talking and thinking, and to give them space to work through the reading.
- Discussion leaders should come up with questions or prompts that they can share with the class to help guide discussion. Again, less is more here, so somewhere between 2-3 questions is sufficient. Here are some suggestions for developing questions. You don't have to use all of these. They are here as a guide:
 - You can ask your classmates to help with areas of the reading that were particularly difficult or confusing. You could use the areas of confusion brought up by the presenters and see what you classmates make of them.
 - You can ask classmates to look closely at a particular passage from the reading and ask them questions about it.
 - You can ask your classmates to consider how the reading relates to its social, political, and cultural context.
 - You can ask you classmates to compare the way the reading discusses the literary term with the way our *Norton Introduction to Literature* discusses it.
- Since your main goal is to facilitate discussion, it's ok if your classmates are talking a lot and you aren't talking as much, but you should sometimes reply or respond to what your classmates are saying with your own thoughts. Or you could draw connections between what different classmates seem to be saying.
- It would be a good idea to write up your discussion questions or prompts so your classmates can see them. The best way to do this would be a with a word document that you give to me so I can distribute it to everyone in the class.
- Please communicate with the presenters in your group so they know what you're doing and you know what they're doing and you can try to make the presentation and the discussion complementary.

Response Papers

In addition to the teach teaching, each group member should turn in an individual response paper of about 500 words that address the following questions:

1. What did you find most interesting, surprising, puzzling, or even unsettling about the reading your group was responsible for teaching.
2. How was your experience teaching the class (as either a presenter or discussion leader)? What did you learn from the experience?

Due Dates:

The date of your group's presentation is on the course calendar and on the myCourses sign up sheet. The reading you will be teaching is also listed on the sign up sheet and on the course calendar.

Presenters: Please email me the powerpoint slides and the notes for your presentation at least three days in advance so I can look it over and provide you with feedback before you present.

Discussion leaders: Please email me the discussion questions you plan to use at least three days in advance so I can look it over and provide you with feedback. If you need to revise the questions, please send me the final version before class, so I can distribute the questions to students.

Response Papers: Response papers should be submitted to the link on myCourses no later than one week after your group does their team teaching. You can also submit it earlier than that.

Grading Rubrics (All students will be graded individually)

- 0=Task not completed or completed so poorly that it's as if it hasn't been done
- 1=Poorly done; far below the acceptable level of work
- 2=Below average
- 3=Acceptable. Good enough.
- 4=Very good. Work is above average and shows distinction in several areas
- 5=Outstanding. Far exceeds expectations and shows great distinction.

Presenter

Criteria	0	1	2	3	4	5
Fulfills responsibilities and requirements outlined on the assignment sheet						
Presentation is clear, well-organized, and easy to follow.						
Content of the presentation is thoughtful, thorough, and rigorous. It shows that the student worked hard to understand the reading and to develop helpful answers to the						

questions on the assignment sheet						
Response paper addresses questions and is thoughtful, clear, and compelling						

Discussion Leader

Criteria	0	1	2	3	4	5
Fulfills responsibilities and requirements outlined on the assignment sheet						
Discussion questions/prompts are clear, thoughtful, and generative.						
Engages helpfully in leading the class discussion, listening to students, responding to their comments, and tying comments together						
Response paper addresses questions and is thoughtful, clear, and compelling						