**Eastern Oregon University**

**College of Arts and Sciences**

**Course Syllabus**

**Number of Course:** WR 360

**Name of Course:** Literacy, Discrimination, and Power

**Instructor:** Dr. Cori Brewster, Associate Professor, English/Writing

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Office hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 2:00 – 3:00, Wednesdays, 3:00 – 4:00, & by appointment

**Credit Hours:** 3

**Catalog Description:** Explores relationships between literacy and power in the United States, examining how literacies are differently defined, practiced, and distributed in different social and institutional contexts. Particular attention is given to public literacy debates and campaigns, and to the discourses of race, nation, gender, region, and class that inform and intersect them.

**Prerequisites:** WR 121 or equivalent

**Required Texts**

David Barton, *Literacy: An Introduction to the Ecology of Written Language* (2nd edition)

Lucy Tse, *“Why Don’t They Learn English?”: Separating Fact from Fallacy in the U.S. Language Debate*

*AND one of the following:* Richard Wright, *Black Boy,* OR Polingaysi Qoyawayma, *No Turning Back: A Hopi Indian Woman’s Struggle to Live in Two Worlds*

**Articles on Electronic Reserve (available on Blackboard)**

Amy Goodburn, “Girls’ Literacy in the Progressive Era”

Mary Crow Dog with Richard Erdoes, “Civilize Them with a Stick”

Excerpts from Shirley Brice Heath, *Ways with Words*

Excerpts from Victor Villanueva, *Bootstraps*

Kim Donehower, “Rhetorics and Realities: The History and Effects of Stereotypes about Rural Literacies”

Gloria Anzaldua, “How to Tame a Wild Tongue”

CCCC, “Students’ Right to Their Own Language”

**Learning Outcomes**

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Identify common metaphors and definitions of literacy in the United States
2. Reflect critically on their own and others’ literacy histories, practices, and values
3. Explain and give examples of ways in which literacy is socially situated and socially patterned
4. Analyze how literacy is gendered, raced, regioned, and/or classed in different social and institutional contexts, both historical and contemporary
5. Give examples of relationships between literacy, language, and identity, and discuss possible implications for schools and other public institutions
6. Analyze one or more current language or literacy-related conflict in the U.S., explaining the different views of literacy that inform it and how it relates to views and/or experiences of race, nation, gender, region, and/or class
7. Research, analyze, and evaluate specific literacy practices, values, conflicts, and/or policies in context

**University Writing Requirement Outcomes**

* Students will produce at least 5,000 words (including drafts, in-class writing, informal papers, and polished papers); 2,000 words of this total should be in polished papers which students have revised after receiving feedback and criticism.
* Students will practice the forms of writing and reflect upon the nature of the writing used by graduates and professionals in the discipline the course represents.
* Students will write at least one paper integrating information from more than one source, employing the appropriate documentation style for the discipline represented by the course.
* Students will draft, revise, and edit their formal written work.
* Students will seek assistance from a Writing Tutor in the Writing Lab when needed and when referred by the instructor.

\*\*Students must complete all UWR writing-intensive courses with a C- or better.

**Diversity, Power, and Discrimination Outcomes and Objectives**

90 - 100% of this course is devoted to understanding issues of diversity, power, and discrimination through the lens of literacy, examining ways in which historical and contemporary debates over the practice, definition, distribution, and instruction of literacy intersect with issues of race, gender, home language, region, and class.

1. **Objective:** DPD Courses engage students in the intellectual examination of the structures, systems, and ideologies that create and sustain discrimination and the unequal distribution of power and resources in society, e.g., social, political, economic environmental, or cultural

**Outcome**: Students should 1) identify specific examples of unequal distribution of power and resources in a given society and 2) describe those structures, systems, and ideologies related to specific examples, e.g., social, political, economic, environmental, or cultural.

1. **Objective:** DPD Courses review the causes and effects of unequal distribution of power and discrimination within the framework of particular disciplines and course content.

**Outcome**: Students should apply discipline-specific knowledge and concepts to distinguish between the causes and effects of the unequal distribution of power that create the conditions for discrimination.

1. **Objective:** DPD Courses provide an opportunity to examine the contributions of underrepresented groups within the framework of particular disciplines.

**Outcome**: Students should 1) apply discipline-specific knowledge and concepts to identify societal contributions of under-represented groups and 2) explain how those contributions affect and/or are affected by thinking and learning in that discipline.

# Assessment

Student performance will be assessed through weekly discussion board assignments, a mid-term exam, and two formal written assignments.

The discussion board will provide an opportunity to post and respond to questions about course readings posed by fellow students and instructor. In online sections of this course, it serves as a major venue for assessing students’ comprehension of course concepts, ability to apply those concepts, and developing ability to draw connections across readings and assignments. In on-campus sections, the discussion board may be replaced with in-class activities, reading responses, and discussion designed to meet the same outcomes.

The midterm will include a series of short answer questions testing comprehension of major terms and concepts, as well as two single paragraph and one full-page essay questions asking students to apply these terms to specific cases read about and/or discussed in class.

The first formal written assignment, a 3 – 4 page literacy narrative, will ask students to reflect on their own literacy history and the home, school, and community contexts in which their views of literacy developed. In doing so, it will also ask students to identify ways in which their own literacy development and ideas about literacy were and are socially and historically situated. The narrative will be assessed according to five major criteria: critical thinking, focus, development, arrangement, and mechanics.

The second formal written assignment will require students to research and take a position on a current literacy-related controversy in the U.S. informed by competing perspectives on race, gender, home language, region, or class, or with significant implications for distributions of literacy resources across racial, gender, linguistic, regional, or economic lines. The project will include a five-source annotated bibliography, an 8 - 10-page final paper, and a reflective letter describing how the work relates to the outcomes of the course.

**Grading**

Literacy narrative (Course learning outcomes 2, 5); (DPD outcome 2): 20%

Discussion board (outcomes 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6); (DPD outcomes 1, 2, 3): 20%

Midterm exam (outcomes 1, 3, 5, 6); (DPD outcomes 1, 3): 20%

Research project and reflective letter (outcomes 2, 4, 5, 6, 7); (DPD outcomes 1, 2): 40%

**Policies and Expectations**

*Contribution to class:* Attendance, preparation, and active participation are critical to the success of this class. Students are expected to complete readings, discussion board posts, and other assignments on time, and to make an effort to contribute meaningfully to classmates’ learning as well as their own.

*Late work:* Formal papers will lose one full letter grade for each day they are late. Except in extreme circumstances, discussion board assignments posted after the due date will receive no credit.

*Academic support and accommodations:*Students are strongly encouraged to take advantage of the resources available to them as EOU students, including the Writing Center, Disability Services, office hours, and one another.

*Statement on Americans with Disabilities:* If you have a documented disability or suspect that you have a learning problem and need accommodations, please contact the Disability Services Program in Loso Hall 234. Telephone: 541-962-3081.

*Statement on Academic Misconduct:* Eastern Oregon University places a high value upon the integrity of its student scholars. Any student found guilty of an act of academic misconduct (including, but not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, or theft of an examination or supplies) may be subject to having his or her grade reduced in the course in question, being placed on probation or suspended from the University, or being expelled from the University—or a combination of these. Please see Student Handbook at: [*http://www.eou.edu/saffairs/handbook/honest.html*](http://www.eou.edu/saffairs/handbook/honest.html)

**Syllabus Prepared By:** Cori Brewster, EOU English/Writing Department

**Updated:** February 26, 2013 **Course schedule\***

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|  | **Topics** | **Assignment** |
| **Week 1** | Public views of literacy and language diversity in the U.S.  Metaphors of literacy | Read Barton, *Literacy* chpts. 1 and 2, and Grossman, “Is Junie B. Jones Talking Trash?” (see Week 1 Overview in Course documents folder for more specific directions and due dates).  Post responses to three short introductory assignments to Discussion Board (again, see Week 1 Overview for directions and due dates). |
| **Week 2** | Literacy in everyday lives  Researching literacy practices | Read Barton chpts. 3 and 4, Goodburn, “Girls’ Literacy in the Progressive Era,” and Crow Dog, “Civilize Them with a Stick.”  Discussion board assignment.  *See Week 2 Overview for specific directions and due dates.* |
| **Week 3** | Social patterning of literacy | Read Wright, *Black Boy* through at least chpt. 10, **OR** Qoyawayma, *No Turning Back* through at least chpt. 7.  Discussion board assignment.  First complete draft literacy narrative due.  *See Week 3 Overview for specific directions and due dates.* |
| **Week 4** | Language, literacy and identity | Finish Wright, *Black Boy* or Qoyawayma, *No Turning Back*, and read Barton chpt. 5  Discussion board assignment.  Final draft literacy narrative due.  *See Week 4 Overview for specific directions and due dates.* |
| **Week 5** | Social histories of literacy | Read Barton chpts. 9, 10, and 11, and excerpt from Heath, *Ways with Words* **or** Villanueva, *Bootstraps.*  Discussion board assignment.  *See Week 5 Overview for specific directions and due dates.* |
| **Week 6** | Midterm | Midterm exam  Research proposals due.  *See Week 6 Overview for specific directions and due dates.* |
| **Week 7** | Literacy and the cultures of schooling | Read Barton, chpt. 12 and Donehower, “Rhetorics and Realities: The History and Effects of Stereotypes about Rural Literacies.”  Discussion board assignment.  *See Week 7 Overview for specific directions and due dates.* |
| **Week 8** | Multilingualism and multiliteracies | Read Tse, *“Why Don’t They Learn English?”* and Anzaldua, “How to Tame a Wild Tongue”  Discussion board assignment.  Progress report on research project due, including annotated bibliography.  *See Week 8 Overview for specific directions and due dates.* |
| **Week 9** | Politics of access | Read Barton chpts. 13 – 14 and CCCC, “Students’ Right to Their Own Language.”  Discussion board assignment.  Draft research project due.  *See Week 9 Overview for specific directions and due dates.* |
| **Week 10** | Further implications of an ecological view of literacy | No reading this week.  Post and respond to research projects.  *See Week 10 Overview for specific directions and due dates.* |
| **Finals Week** |  | Final draft of research projects and cover letters due. |

\*This schedule is tentative and subject to change. Any changes will be posted to Blackboard at least one week in advance.