

WLLC:5000:0001/ TEACHING AND LEARNING LANGUAGES

Fall 2015

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Instructor: Emilie Destruel-Johnson

Office: Phillips 514

Office hours: M 8:30–10:30am, W 9:30–10:30am, and by appointment

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Required text and other materials

- Foreign Language Teaching Methods: Online Professional Development Modules for Foreign Language Instruction. <http://coerll.utexas.edu/methods/>
- Additional readings are posted on ICON or will be distributed in class.

Goals of the course

The primary purpose of this course is to help new Teaching Assistants (TAs) gain confidence and expertise as classroom instructors. This goal will be accomplished in this course in several ways:

- **acquire knowledge about teaching approaches and methods** by watching the assigned online modules and doing the embedded activities, and by reading the accompanying articles on each topic (see instructions for how to access articles);
- **develop skills in critical analysis of pedagogical approaches** through a one-page commentary (summary plus analysis) of a pedagogical article chosen from a recommended list, and through a textbook review;
- **learn through analysis and practice how to design activities for teaching and testing**, including use of multimedia and the Internet;
- **get feedback on your teaching** from class observations by classmates and by the professor;
- **sharpen observation skills** through analyses of the classes of others; and
- **reflect on your own teaching practices and beliefs** by keeping a blog on issues in foreign language teaching and how they relate to your teaching practices; and also by writing a philosophy of teaching statement (very helpful as a basis for the one you will write in the future when you go on the job market).

Components of the course

Each of these components of the course is described in this course description.

Online Foreign Language Teaching Methods modules. This online course, developed at the University of Texas, consists of a series of modules on the basic topics in language teaching. Professors of different languages teach the different modules, so the examples also come from a range of languages. Even though the examples in a particular module may be taken from a language you do not know, take time to understand the principles of teaching illustrated in the examples; you should also ask for help from your classmates who know the language.

Each module consists of several lessons, which are short video presentations (vodcasts) along with material printed on the screen. There are questions for reflection embedded in the lessons, as well as comprehension quizzes (self-correcting). The vodcasts are accompanied by printed transcripts, so you can read along as you listen if you wish. You may wish to listen to some of the vodcasts more than once to be sure that you understand it well. When you are assigned a module for homework, you should work on the entire module: (a) listen to the vodcasts and take notes on the content; (b) write your responses to the reflection questions that are embedded in the lessons in writing and bring the responses to class (notes are fine; they are just for you, since I will not collect them); and (c) take the short quizzes and check your answers. Most important, write down questions, concerns, doubts, etc. that you have about any part of the module to raise in class.

Other course readings. For each topic that we address in the course, we will also read one or more articles. These articles present information different from or in addition to that in the online modules. Some are research articles, which describe studies that were carried out to answer questions about how languages are learned or which teaching techniques or materials seem to be most effective. Others are pedagogical articles (or book chapters), which provide rationales, ideas, and samples for approaches to teaching or for a particular approach.

Responses to the readings. Responses to the readings will be both informal and formal, as follows:

1. Informal: Responses to reading guide questions that will accompany each reading. Each reading will be accompanied by one or more questions for reflection and analysis. You should respond to those questions in writing in preparation for the class discussion, but you will not hand them in.

2. Formal: Commentary on a research article. You will do **one short critical commentary** on an article related to what you read during the semester. The article should be selected from the Recommended Reading list distributed in class. (If you find another article that you would rather read, please let me know. Please note: It should not be an article that you have already read, or one that you will read for another course you are currently taking.) The purpose of this activity is to introduce you to the professional literature in the field of foreign language (FL) pedagogy and to help you become critical and thoughtful readers of this literature.

Your commentary should follow the format outlined below

* The first paragraph is an **abstract of the article** that should be no longer than 150 words. For examples, see articles in professional journals. It should summarize the main goal, methods and findings of the research tackled in the paper.

* The second and third paragraphs should consist of your critical reaction to the article, using as your base the models of foreign language education that are being developed in this course, as well as ideas from other readings that you have found convincing. Avoid basing your reaction exclusively or primarily on “common sense” or your own pedagogical style and preferences. Below are topics that you will find appropriate for this section of your commentaries. Note, however, that not all articles will lend themselves to all of the topics below.

- significance of the problem or issue raised in the article,
- plausibility of the research hypothesis (Is it specific, testable, and theoretically based?), the research design and method, and data collection and analysis (for research articles),
- presentation of recommendations, conclusions,
- implications of the article for instruction,
- how it complements (or contradicts) the approach or findings in other works that you have read.

Observation of your teaching by the professor. We will make an appointment for me to observe your class. The purpose of the visit is purely developmental; that is, this activity will not be graded. Feel free to seek me out before the observation if you wish to discuss the particular aspects of your teaching you would like me to focus on. After the observation, I will write a report of what I observed that pays particular attention to the items we discussed previously (if we have had a pre-observation meeting). I will give a copy of the report to your course supervisor to be included in your TA file if the supervisor wishes to do so.

Analysis of a partner's class. Twice during the semester you will visit a partner's class to observe it. After each observation, you will meet with your partner to talk about what you observed. You will then write a report on your partner's class and on the insights you gained about your own teaching. You will have a different partner for each observation, so that you can see and learn from a variety of teaching styles. One of the observations will be a class in a different language from the one you teach; in many cases, you may not know the language. Part of your task will be to learn about different pedagogical cultures in the various language teaching communities.

Designing activities for teaching and for assessment (Portfolio). Among the projects you will undertake in this class are several that involve designing activities for your students. You will pick a unit theme and will design one activity for each skill (Writing, Listening, Reading, and Speaking) as well as an exam that should also include a Culture activity. These take time, and it might take more than one draft. You will get instructions for each one. At the end of semester, the various activities that you created will be put together as part of a portfolio (each activity must come with a rough translation in English), and you will give a presentation about some of them.

Textbook Review. You will evaluate a textbook in the language you are teaching. Specifically, you will consider how the materials and the approach of the authors reach the goals of the textbook. You will write a one-page review and discuss your evaluation with your classmates.

Blog entries and philosophy of teaching. You will create a blog about your beliefs about language teaching and your teaching practices. You will write and post 15 entries (1 per week), most in response to a question or prompt that I gave you. You will also follow the blogs of two of your classmates; in other words, you will read their blog posts and write comments on them. We will create a class list with contact information (e-mails and phone numbers) and blog addresses. You are, of course, encouraged to read and comment on the blogs of your other classmates. I will also follow your own blogs. Near the end of the semester, you will write a philosophy of teaching statement, drawn in large part on the reflections you have written in your blogs.

Other information

Attendance and participation. This class is designed to provide a lively and supportive forum for the ongoing discussion of and learning about teaching. Your fellow first-year TAs need your reaction to their work, just as you need theirs. Your participation in the activities of the class is a key component of its usefulness. *Participation* in this class includes the following: (a) your regular, active contributions to class discussions (which entails your careful completion of the readings for each class); (b) your involvement in the demonstrations and oral reports presented by your classmates; and (c) regular attendance.

As graduate students who are also instructors of your own courses, you understand the importance of attending every class. An absence from class due to illness, a mandatory religious observance, or an emergency should be discussed with me before or immediately after it occurs, depending on the circumstances. More than two absences from class during the semester will affect your grade in the course (-1% on final grade for each unexcused absence over 2).

Grading

One critical commentary of research article	10%
Blogs (15)	30%
Pedagogical activities	total = 40%
- Peer observation 1 (5%)	
- Peer observation 2 (5%)	
- Textbook review (10%)	
- 5 Portfolio activities to include Speaking, Listening, Writing and Reading + Exam with Culture (20%)	
Class participation	10%
Philosophy of teaching statement	10%

This class will be using the plus and minus grading system, as illustrated below:

A+	100-98	C+	79-78	F	59 and below
A	97-93	C	77-73		
A-	92-90	C-	72-70		
B+	89-88	D+	69-68		
B	87-83	D	67-63		
B-	82-80	D-	62-60		

College of Liberal Arts and Sciences Policies

Administrative home. The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences is the administrative home of this course and governs matters such as the add/drop deadlines, the second-grade-only option, and other related issues. Different colleges may have different policies. Questions may be addressed to 120 Schaeffer Hall, or see the CLAS Academic Handbook (<http://www.clas.uiowa.edu/students/handbook/>).

Electronic communication. University policy specifies that students are responsible for all official correspondences sent to their standard University of Iowa e-mail address (@uiowa.edu). Students should check their account frequently. (Operations Manual, III.II.15. 2. k.11)

Academic fraud. All CLAS students have, in essence, agreed to the College's [Code of Academic Honesty](#): "I pledge to do my own academic work and to excel to the best of my abilities, upholding the [IOWA Challenge](#). I promise not to lie about my academic work, to cheat, or to steal the words or ideas of others; nor will I help fellow students to violate the Code of Academic Honesty." Any student committing academic misconduct is reported to the College and placed on disciplinary probation or may be suspended or expelled ([CLAS Academic Policies Handbook](#)).

Making a suggestion or a complaint. I will do my best to address concerns or complaints you may have about this course and the class environment. If your concerns are not satisfactorily resolved after speaking with me, you may contact the Departmental Executive Officer (Chair) of the Department of French & Italian, Professor Cinzia Blum. Complaints must be made within six months of the incident. See the CLAS Academic Handbook (<http://www.clas.uiowa.edu/students/handbook/>).

Accommodations for disabilities. A student seeking academic accommodations should register with Student Disability Services and meet privately with the course instructor during the first week of class to make particular arrangements. For more information, visit www.uiowa.edu/~sds/

Understanding sexual harassment. Sexual harassment subverts the mission of the University and threatens the well-being of students, faculty, and staff. All members of the UI community have a responsibility to uphold this mission and to contribute to a safe environment that enhances learning. Incidents of sexual harassment should be reported immediately. See the [Comprehensive Guide on Sexual Harassment](#) for assistance, definitions, and the full University policy.

Reacting safely to severe weather. In severe weather, you should seek shelter in the innermost part of the nearest building, if possible at the lowest level, staying clear of windows and free-standing expanses. If such an event happens during class, the class will continue if possible when the event is over. (Operations Manual, IV. 16.14. Scroll down to sections e and i for severe weather information.)