

INLS 888: SEMINAR IN TEACHING AND ACADEMIC LIFE

SPRING 2023
TUESDAYS, 11:00AM-1:45PM
MANNING 214

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Examines teaching, research, publication, and service responsibilities. Provides perspective on professional graduate education and LIS educational programs. Explores changing curricula and discusses ethics, rewards, and problems of academic life.

INSTRUCTOR

Casey H. Rawson, Ph.D.
Email: crawson@email.unc.edu
Zoom Office Hours:
<http://bit.ly/rawsonoffice>
She / Her / Hers



TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. Overview and Objectives	VII. Course Schedule
II. Required Materials	VIII. University Honor System
III. Inclusion and Student Support	IX. Students with Disabilities
IV. Course Attendance and Masking	X. SILS Diversity Statement
V. Grading	
VI. Assignments	

OVERVIEW AND OBJECTIVES

What is good teaching? How do people learn? How does teaching fit into the broader job of a faculty member, and how can you develop a teaching practice that complements, and is complemented by, your research and service commitments?

These are some of the essential questions we'll be exploring together this semester. To begin answering these questions, we'll study traditional and critical learning theories, instructional design, curriculum development, assessment, collaboration, and professional development - all of which fall under the umbrella of **pedagogy**. All these topics will be explored in the context of "academic life" – your future career within higher education.

By engaging with the content, assignments, and activities in this course, you will develop the ability to:

- Examine the political, ethical and philosophical questions that surround the life of a faculty member.
- Apply principles of instructional design to the development and implementation of curricular materials.
- Communicate your pedagogical beliefs and practices in the form of a teaching statement.
- Compare and contrast various theories of learning and instructional frameworks.
- Critically analyze emerging trends and challenges that are impacting faculty, students, and administrators at institutions of higher education.



REQUIRED MATERIALS

There are no required textbooks for this course. All readings except for the book you choose for Assignment #4 (see below) will be accessible on our course Canvas site. We will begin each class session with some time to discuss “current events” in academia, especially those related to teaching (for example, the recent University of California graduate worker strike). With that in mind, I would encourage you to sign up for the free newsletters sent out weekly by *Inside Higher Ed* and/or *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. Scanning these newsletters each week is a good way to stay abreast of key issues in academia. If there is a particular article or topic you’d like to discuss one week, you should feel free to email the link to the class in advance.

INCLUSION AND STUDENT SUPPORT

My teaching philosophy is grounded in relationships and shared meaning-making. This means that I believe people learn best when they are given the opportunity to construct their own understanding of content through authentic engagement with ideas and with each other. I strive to create learning environments that support and honor students’ identities and prior knowledge. **Who you are as a learner and as a person matters to me.**

It is my intent that the diversity that you all bring to our class be viewed as a resource, strength and benefit. I have worked to include and develop course materials and activities that are respectful of diversity: gender identity, sexuality, disability, age, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, race, nationality, religion, and culture. With that said, research in our field, like most others, has been largely built on a foundation of work from privileged voices (read: white, straight, cisgender, non-disabled, American, male), and I acknowledge that there may be both explicit and implicit biases in the selection of materials for this course. Suggestions for improvements are always encouraged and appreciated.

I understand that you have lives outside of this course, and that sometimes experiences outside of your control may interfere with your class performance. This is especially true as we continue to deal with the COVID pandemic. If this happens to you, please reach out. I will do my best to work with you to ensure that you can succeed in the course and that you are aware of SILS and university resources that might help you more generally. One place to find such resources is the Dean of Student’s Student Support page:
<https://odos.unc.edu/student-support>.

COURSE ATTENDANCE AND MASKING

It is likely that some of us may get sick this semester, whether with COVID or with more “normal” things like colds and the flu. **If you are feeling unwell, please do not attend in-person classes.** Instead, you can log into class via Zoom if you are able (link available in the course resources area of Canvas). Please note, however, that attending an in-person class session via Zoom is not a great substitute for being physically present: it’s difficult for me to monitor the Zoom window at the same time I am presenting to the in-





person folks, and typically impossible for me to successfully integrate online attendees into small-group activities that we might do in class. This usually means that if you attend a face-to-face class session via Zoom, you will mostly be limited to “listening in” rather than fully participating. That’s still much better than not attending at all! But, if for some reason you find yourself needing to attend via Zoom for more than one or two class sessions, please reach out to me so we can figure out how to ensure that you are still able to reach the course objectives.

As of now, UNC is not requiring face masks in classes, and instructors cannot enforce mask wearing for all students. However, I will ask you to be considerate of your fellow students, some of whom may be immunocompromised or have immunocompromised loved ones at home. I intend to continue masking in class and I encourage you to do the same.

EVALUATION AND GRADING

Because this is a class about teaching and learning, we will spend some time discussing grades and their place in assessing student learning. Numerical or letter grades are often the least useful form of feedback you can receive on an assignment, and I prefer to focus my feedback to you on qualitative evaluation of your work in relation to the assignment goals. Thus, you should expect feedback in this course to consist primarily of written comments made directly on the documents you submit via Canvas. You will also receive feedback on some assignments from your classmates.

Of course, I still need to turn in grades at the end of the semester following UNC’s graduate HPLF grading system. Your final letter grade will be determined as follows:

- P: This is the grade most of you will likely receive in the course, and it represents satisfactory completion of all assignments described below. In addition to completing all these assignments at a satisfactory level, a P grade also requires regular attendance and full participation in class. This means that you miss no more than one class session and attend no more than two class sessions via Zoom (except with prior permission of instructor; if you do need to miss more than one class, a make-up assignment may be necessary).
- H: The H grade is reserved for work that goes “above and beyond” standard course expectations. In this course, you could obtain an H grade in one of two ways: 1) you can choose to develop a diversity statement in addition to your teaching statement (more information below), or 2) you could complete the teaching practice assignment more than once. In addition, the H grade requires regular attendance (no more than one class session missed, and no more than one class session attended via Zoom except with prior discussion with instructor) and full participation in class activities.
- L: Work at the L level falls significantly short of course expectations, and I don’t expect anyone to earn an L in this course. An L grade would be warranted if you failed to complete one or more of the core course assignments, or if your work consistently fails to meet assignment expectations.



ASSIGNMENTS

I have designed the assignments below to align as closely as possible with the type of work you will be expected to complete as a higher education instructor. The assignments for this semester are described individually below. Please know that I will often provide class time for you to work on these assignments and/or to workshop them with your peers.

An overarching goal of any SILS course is to help prepare you to become not only competent professionals, but leaders in your respective fields. While I am happy to meet with you outside of class if you are having trouble with a particular assignment or other aspect of the course, you will be primarily responsible for establishing your own work schedules and internal deadlines and for locating and retrieving information to complete your assignments. Any incidence of plagiarism or other academic dishonesty will result in an F for the course.

SYLLABUS DEVELOPMENT

In higher education, “course design” is often treated as synonymous with “syllabus creation.” As we will discuss in class, the development of a syllabus is only one component of effective course design, however the syllabus itself remains critical as a plan of action, a guide to expectations and policies, and a “cognitive map” that places your course in a broader disciplinary context. It can also communicate critical information about your teaching style and the type of community you intend to foster in your courses; sometimes these messages are intentional and explicit, and sometimes they are merely implied.

In this course, you will work over the course of the semester to develop a syllabus for a course you would like to teach in the future. This could be an existing course for which previous syllabi are already available, or it could be a hypothetical course based on your own area of study (something like a “special topics” course at SILS). You will apply principles of Backward Design to develop this syllabus, beginning with the identification of course learning objectives and working “backward” from there to the development of meaningful course assignments, the creation of a structured lesson sequence, and the selection of appropriate course readings. You will also develop important course policies, such as a grading policy and a course attendance policy, that align with your developing identity and values as an instructor.

Work on this assignment will be scaffolded (meaning that we will approach this in “chunks” over the course of the semester), and at least some of your work on this will be done in class. You will also have time in class to workshop various elements of your syllabus with classmates and with the instructor.

DUE DATES:

1. Course learning objectives: 1/31
2. Course assessment / assignments plan: 2/21
3. Course outline (topics only, no readings yet): 3/7
4. Course policies: 4/4
5. Completed syllabus (including readings): 5/5 (scheduled exam date for this course)





TEACHING PRACTICE

One of the goals of this course is for you to “apply principles of instructional design to the development and implementation of curricular materials.” To accomplish this objective, you will work with one or more SILS faculty members to develop a lesson plan for a course at SILS, and then actually teach that lesson sometime in the second half of the semester. Several faculty have already volunteered to host one of you in their courses for this purpose, but you could also reach out to a different instructor if there is a specific course or lesson topic you’d like to pursue for this assignment.

Like the syllabus, this assignment has multiple components that will be spread out over the course of the semester:

- 1) **Meet with the course instructor** (to be completed ASAP): After you have chosen a course in which to complete this assignment, you should reach out to the instructor and arrange a time to meet with them to discuss the class and nail down the details of the lesson you will teach (date, time, number of students, topic, etc.). At this meeting, you should ask questions that might help you prepare for the lesson you will teach. These might include things like, what is your typical approach to the class (lecture, small group work, hands-on activities, etc.)? Do any students in the course require disability related accommodations? Is there any element of the topic I’m teaching that you want to be sure I communicate to the students?
- 2) **Lesson plan development:** After meeting with the instructor, you will develop a written plan for your lesson (a template will be shared with you for this purpose). You will share at least one draft of this plan with the course instructor before teaching your lesson (please coordinate with the instructor on the timing of this). You may also share your draft plan with Dr. Rawson if you would like her feedback before teaching the session. Along with the plan itself, you will also be responsible for developing or obtaining any necessary materials for your class session (for example, presentation slides or activity instructions).
- 3) **Teaching:** You will implement the lesson plan that you have developed on the date and time agreed upon with the course instructor.
- 4) **Reflection:** Following the lesson, the course instructor should provide you with written feedback that communicates with you how they feel the lesson went. You should plan some time to debrief with them about these notes either face-to-face (preferred) or via email. In addition, you will write a brief reflection on the lesson at the end of your lesson plan template. You will turn in this template along with any materials you developed for the lesson to Dr. Rawson within two weeks after teaching your class session.

Optionally, you may choose to complete this assignment more than once (teaching more than one session of one class, or teaching one session in two or more different classes).





TEACHING STATEMENT

A teaching statement is a living document (meaning that it's one you should continue to revise throughout your career). Along with your research statement and CV, the teaching statement is a key component of most academic job applications and will be closely reviewed by hiring committees.

Teaching statements are typically around 1.5-2 pages single-spaced. They usually take the form of a personal, reflective essay that communicates your pedagogical beliefs *and practices*. Sometimes, the teaching statement may also draw connections among one's teaching, research, and service roles, though this may not always be necessary. A good teaching statement is:

- **Personal.** Your teaching statement should be *your* teaching statement – specific to your experiences, beliefs, and understandings.
- **Confident.** You don't need to qualify your statements with phrases like "I believe" or "I think" – boldly assert your principles. For example, "Racial equity is a primary goal of my teaching practice" is a much stronger and more effective statement than "I believe that racial equity should be an important component of teaching practice."
- **Active.** Include specific examples of how you live out your teaching and learning beliefs. If you say that inquiry is critical to learning, back that statement up with a description of how you have incorporated it into your own teaching and with what result. If you don't yet have extensive teaching experience, 1) refer to whatever you do have (such as the instructional plan assignment in this course), and/or 2) state what you WILL do once you have a faculty job.
- **Supported by established theories and frameworks.** An effective teaching statement will communicate that you "know the language" of teaching and learning. One of the primary ways to accomplish this is to use that language judiciously throughout your statement. Don't shy away from using terms like constructivism, inquiry, and differentiation in your statement in places where you are discussing your related beliefs and practices. However, there's a caveat here: using too much of this language can make a teaching statement feel like a collection of buzzwords and jargon and can detract from its individuality.

Unless you include a direct quote, you do not need to cite / include a bibliography with your statement (terms like constructivism, differentiation, etc. are widely used and do not generally require citation). **You will turn in your teaching statement twice:** a first-draft statement toward the beginning of the semester (on or before 1/24) and a revised draft at the end of the semester (on 4/25).

DIVERSITY STATEMENT (OPTIONAL)

Academic institutions are increasingly looking for evidence of a commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion in their job applicants, and one common way they assess this in potential hires is by requesting a diversity statement as part of the initial application package. In your diversity statement, you will communicate your





understanding of the value of diversity and inclusion in academia (including in the classroom) and your commitment to working toward equity in your teaching, research, and service.

Diversity statements are somewhat controversial. Some have argued that diversity statements place additional burdens on scholars from marginalized backgrounds, or that they are “backdoor” ways to ask applicants to disclose sensitive information about themselves (such as sexual orientation or disability status) that employers are not legally permitted to ask about as part of the hiring process. Others argue that rather than asking potential hires to explain how they will improve the diversity or inclusivity of an institution, the institution itself should be the one providing information to potential hires about its own commitments to inclusion to better allow people from marginalized backgrounds to determine whether the institution is one in which their work and their identities will be supported.

Despite these critiques, many universities still ask for a diversity statement, and choosing to submit a statement that focuses on why diversity statements are problematic is probably not going to be a good move in these instances. Thus, even if you fundamentally disagree with the whole idea of a “diversity statement,” you may still need to write one.

Like the teaching statement, a diversity statement typically takes the form of a brief, personal, reflective essay. It should not only describe what you think or feel about diversity and inclusion, but also what you *have done* or *will do* to foster equity and inclusion in your work.

A couple other things to note about your diversity statement:

- You don’t have to call it a diversity statement if you prefer different terminology (as long as you’re aware that a “diversity statement” is still what you’ll be asked for in applications nine times out of ten).
- Don’t take it for granted in your statement that terms like “diversity,” “equity,” or “justice” will be universally understood by different readers to mean the same thing. What do YOU mean when you use those terms?
- You are not required to disclose any element of your personal identity within the diversity statement. The choice of whether to disclose a marginalized identity within a job application package is a personal one, and there are strong opinions and arguments on both sides. We can discuss this more in class, but please know that I will respect your decision to share as much or as little about your own identities as you choose in this statement and in your other coursework.

If you choose to complete it, your diversity statement is due for instructor review on 4/11.

DISCUSSION FACILITATION

There is always more to learn about teaching and learning. In K-12 education, that learning is accomplished primarily via officially sponsored professional development and is enforced by state teacher licensing agencies. In higher education, however, it is typically left up to individual faculty members to pursue, or not pursue, opportunities for professional growth as an educator. Some universities, including UNC, have centers or institutes dedicated to improving teaching and learning on campus (ours is the [Center for Faculty Excellence](#)). Faculty can also attend conferences focused on pedagogy (such as the [ASCD annual conference](#)) or seek out





other workshops or courses to develop their craft. However, one of the primary ways that faculty learn new pedagogical skills is through independently reading professional monographs on the topic.

For this assignment, you will read one book about teaching written for higher education faculty. A set of potential titles will be shared with you in class (and physical copies of those books will be available for you to borrow for this assignment), however you are not limited to these. You will then facilitate a 45-minute presentation and discussion of this text in class.

You should plan for approximately 15 minutes of presentation in which you will share the book's main themes and takeaways with your classmates. Following this brief presentation, you will then facilitate a 30-minute guided discussion of some of the questions or issues this book brought up for you, keeping in mind that your classmates will not have read the book. We will discuss strategies for this discussion facilitation in class.

In addition to the presentation and discussion, you should develop a 1-2 page handout that communicates your book's main takeaways for your classmates. The exact format of this handout is up to you, but the idea is that it should be a document that your classmates could use to understand and apply some of the book's principles in their own practice.

CLASS PARTICIPATION

The ability to work successfully and communicate effectively with your colleagues will be vital to your career as a professional. Consequently, you must be thoughtful in your interactions with your peers and instructor. Your active participation in class is vital not only for your own learning, but for the learning of everyone in the class.

My expectations for your participation include:

- **Attendance:** You are expected to attend class each week and to arrive to our meetings on time. This is especially important for this course since we only meet once each week. See above for information about attending via Zoom (intended only as a rare substitute for in-person attendance).
- **Preparation:** Full participation in class will require that you have not only completed all readings, but also thought critically about them before coming to class. In your assignments and in-class contributions, I will look for evidence that you have engaged in thoughtful preparation for each class session. UNC's definition of one credit hour is "not less than one hour of classroom or direct faculty instruction and a minimum of two hours out of class student work each week." As this is a three credit-hour course, by this standard, you should be spending approximately 6 hours of time each week outside of class preparing for class and completing assignments.
- **Participation in class activities:** In addition to large-group discussion, this class will include individual, pair, and small-group activities, and I will look for your engagement in all of those activities. I understand that it is not always easy to jump into a discussion; however, without a variety of voices and opinions, the quality of those discussions is significantly lowered. Take notes, ask questions, and above all, actively engage your mind with the ideas we are exploring in class.

- **Behavior:** Behave professionally. Be courteous to your instructor and classmates by refraining from conversing with others during lecture times, turning off all devices that might interrupt class, and using your electronic devices only to support class activities.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Note: The schedule below lists topics and essential questions for each week, as well as assignment due dates. Readings and other activities you may need to complete to prepare for each class session will be listed on that week's lesson page in Canvas.

Date	Topic and Essential Questions	Assignments Due
1/10	Intro and Big Questions <i>Today's Essential Questions:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is good teaching? • How does teaching fit into the broader job of a faculty member? 	
1/17	No class (Casey out of town). Use this time to reach out to / meet with your chosen teaching practice faculty member.	
1/24	Curriculum and Backward Design <i>Today's Essential Questions:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is curriculum, and what different forms can it take? • How can “starting at the end” help us design meaningful and effective learning experiences? 	First draft of teaching statement due
1/31	Learning Theories; Speaking the Language of Education <i>Today's Essential Questions:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do people learn? • What's the best way to teach? 	Syllabus: Course learning objectives draft due
2/7	Assessment of Learning <i>Today's Essential Questions:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the role of assessment and grading in higher education? • What is the best way to assess learning? 	

Date	Topic and Essential Questions	Assignments Due
2/14	No class (University Wellness Day)	
2/21	<p>Instructional Approaches and Frameworks Part I: Student-Centered Approaches</p> <p><i>Today's Essential Questions:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What instructional approaches allow for active, engaged learning? • How can those approaches be implemented effectively in a higher education classroom? 	Syllabus: Course assignments / assessment draft due
2/28	<p>Instructional Approaches and Frameworks Part I: Teacher-Centered Approaches</p> <p><i>Today's Essential Questions:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the appropriate role of teacher-centered instructional approaches (such as lecture) in higher education? • What are best practices for implementing teacher-centered instruction that is still effective and engaging? 	
3/7	<p>Critical Pedagogy: Equity in the Classroom; Student-Led Discussion #1</p> <p><i>Today's Essential Questions:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can critical theory inform teaching and learning in the university classroom? • What practices contribute to an equitable and inclusive classroom? 	Syllabus: Course outline due
3/14	SPRING BREAK - NO CLASS	
3/21	<p>Online Teaching; Student-Led Discussion #2</p> <p><i>Today's Essential Questions:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is unique about teaching online? • What strategies work best for teaching online? 	
3/28	<p>Course Policies and Procedures; Student-Led Discussion #3</p> <p><i>Today's Essential Questions:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do university-level policies impact individual classes and instructors? 	

Date	Topic and Essential Questions	Assignments Due
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can we write course policies that are inclusive and equitable? 	
4/4	<p>Learning Differences, Learning Difficulties; Student-Led Discussion #4</p> <p><i>Today's Essential Questions:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can we plan for instruction that meets the needs of ALL learners? • What challenges are today's students facing, and how should that impact our teaching? 	Syllabus: Course policies due
4/11	<p>Department-Level Curriculum Development and Revision; Student-led discussion #5</p> <p><i>Today's Essential Questions:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does large-scale curriculum revision happen in higher education? • What is the role of individual faculty members in this process? 	(Optional) Diversity statement due
4/18	<p>Balance and Wellness in the Academy</p> <p><i>Today's Essential Questions:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What challenges lead to burnout and mental health struggles among faculty? • What strategies can instructors use to maintain their own mental health in the academy? 	
4/25	<p>What do I do if...</p> <p><i>Today's Essential Questions:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How should I respond if the worst happens? • Note: In this class session, we will workshop case studies that present challenging scenarios you might encounter as an instructor. 	Revised teaching statement due
Friday, May 5	N/A	Completed syllabus due

UNIVERSITY HONOR SYSTEM

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill has had a student-administered honor system and judicial system for over 100 years. Because academic honesty and the development and nurturing of trust and trustworthiness are



important to all of us as individuals, and are encouraged and promoted by the honor system, this is a most significant University tradition. More information is available at <http://www.unc.edu/depts/honor/honor.html>. The system is the responsibility of students and is regulated and governed by them, but faculty share the responsibility and readily commit to its ideals. If students in this class have questions about their responsibility under the honor code, please bring them to me or consult with the Office of the Dean of Students. The web site identified above contains all policies and procedures pertaining to the student honor system. We encourage your full participation and observance of this important aspect of the University.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill facilitates the implementation of reasonable accommodations, including resources and services, for students with disabilities, chronic medical conditions, a temporary disability or pregnancy complications resulting in difficulties with accessing learning opportunities. All accommodations are coordinated through the Accessibility Resources and Service Office. See the ARS Website for contact information: <https://ars.unc.edu> or email ars@unc.edu.

SILS DIVERSITY STATEMENT

In support of the University's diversity goals and the mission of the UNC School of Information and Library Science, SILS embraces diversity as an ethical and societal value. We broadly define diversity to include ability, age, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, gender expression, immigration status, national origin, race, religion, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic status. As an academic community committed to preparing our graduates to be leaders in an increasingly multicultural and global society we strive to:

- Ensure inclusive leadership, policies, and practices
- Integrate diversity into the curriculum and research
- Foster a mutually respectful intellectual environment in which diverse perspectives and experiences are valued
- Recruit and retain students, faculty, and staff from traditionally underrepresented groups
- Participate in outreach to underserved groups in North Carolina and beyond

The statement is our commitment to the ongoing cultivation of an academic environment that is open, representative, and reflective of the concepts of equity and fairness.

~The Faculty and Staff of the UNC School of Information and Library Science

