

# Course Syllabus

## **WED140AC The Art of Making Meaning: Educational Perspectives on Literacy and Learning**

### **in a Global World**

University of California, Berkeley

Spring, 2021

***Instructor:***

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***Section Times (online via Zoom):***

Thursdays 7:00-8:30 pm weekly beginning 8/27/20

[Please sign up for your section here \(Links to an external site.\)](#)

### **Course Description**

WED140AC is an online course. Students will work through readings and activities each week online, and will also participate together in one online discussion section each week using the videoconferencing application Zoom. As we explain below, there's also a fieldwork component in which WED140 students serve as mentors and tutors for kids in after-school or school day programs.

The focus of WED140AC is to understand how we use language and other modalities to communicate in a digital age—that is, how we use a variety of symbol systems to make

meaning. Since the early 2000s, communication has changed radically, as social media took the world by storm. Especially apparent at the current moment is the need to be critical, reflective, and ethical in one's use of new media tools. These are topics we will address, not only through readings, but through participation with each other online, and through our work with children and youth.

The use of symbol systems such as language, writing, song, and gesture in communicating with others maintains a long history of scholarship, particularly in the field of education. With the coming of the digital age—one in which paper, pencils, and bodies have been replaced with screens, cameras, and avatars for many—many practices of symbolization have moved into online, digital spheres of creation, curation, and circulation. To put this shift in perspective, every *minute* on the Internet in 2019, 500 hours of video were uploaded to YouTube, 60,720 photos were shared on Instagram, 546,240 Tweets were sent, and 176,493,780 new emails were sent. According to a 2018 Pew Internet Survey, around 95% of American teens (13-17 years old) have access to a smartphone and 88% to a computer, while 45% say they are online almost constantly. It is not surprising, therefore, that educators around the globe have taken a keen interest in better understanding how young people are learning online and with digital tools, and how these kinds of learning experiences can be mapped onto existing paper and pencil classroom practices and curricula. In this course, we are interested in understanding how youth develop their literacy capacities, both in print and digital form, in and beyond classrooms. We are also interested in understanding these literacy practices across time and space by exploring literacy in local and global contexts, and examining schooling and education in culturally diverse classrooms in the U.S. and around the world.

Drawing from both historical and contemporary sociocultural theories on literacy and language as well as recent empirical research from education and new media scholars, we will explore an array of digital and non-digital forms of meaning-making and symbolic creativity, such as meme-generating, video making, micro-blogging, multi-player gaming, and app designing, as well as more traditional and non-digital or pre-digital forms of cultural participation and civic engagement. Our inquiry will span both the technical and aesthetic dimensions of these practices, as well as the social contexts and global cultural and commercial flows that give those practices their meaning.

We will be guided by the following questions:

- *What is literacy in a digital and global age, and what is the value of becoming and being perceived as literate?*
- *How do definitions of what counts as literacy vary—from place to place, context to context, time to time, language to language, mode to mode, and culture to culture?*
- *How do the social, cultural, and political values ascribed to these definitions of literacy impact or privilege certain modes and forms of meaning-making?*

- *How is literacy taught, learned, and acquired—in school and outside it, in a first language or a second or third, in global and local contexts, and online and face-to-face?*
- *How can classrooms be reimagined as spaces for youth to take collective action in the world as active and engaged citizens, informed by critical inquiry, self-reflection, and identity expression?*

In this course, we will develop critical understandings of course content through the creation of texts and digital artifacts, focusing on how different media and modes of meaning-making can be used in the production and sharing of knowledge. We will also apply theoretical ideas from readings to recent news articles, teacher and practitioner blogs, educational websites, and other mediations of current happenings in the world, as well as through our fieldwork (see below for details), where we will apply key ideas and pedagogical strategies from course readings in our own educational work. In reflecting on how educational theories relate to practice, we also will learn the fundamentals of educational and ethnographic research. Students will draw upon their data collected through fieldwork, course readings, and other available course content in authoring a final Case Study paper that explores a relevant literacy theme or issue.

Throughout the course, we ask how culture intersects with learning to read and write, and we will be alert as well to how symbolic systems like written language and image convey cultural meanings and how these meanings and the cultures they represent shift, blend, and hybridize in a global and digital world. As an American Cultures course, we will examine race and culture in the US across different geographic and ethnic dimensions. However, we will also explore readings and conceptual frameworks on race, culture, and language in the context of a globalized world. In so doing, we will consider how traditional and bounded categories of race, culture, and language are shifting and blending amidst the broad-scale circulation of cultural goods, peoples, and connective technologies.

### Learning Objectives

- Students will gain a foundation for understanding socio-cultural ideas about literacy and language through an engagement with theoretical texts, video lectures, and discussion/learning activities with peers.
- Students will gain practical strategies for teaching and working with diverse groups of young students through an engagement with practitioner

blogs, video interviews with teachers, and reflective practice on their own teaching.

- Students will learn key terminology and ideas about how different forms of media, social and cultural context, and aesthetic forms shape meaning in literacy practices in and out of school, locally and globally, through engagement with key texts, video lectures, and thorough analysis of digital artifacts.
- Students will gain the methodological tools for conducting ethnographic and educational research through engagement with key texts, video lectures, and through their own fieldwork experiences, which culminate in drafting a case study report of their research.
- Students will gain an understanding of relationships between meaning-making and literacy practice and race, ethnicity, language, class, and culture, focusing on the North American context but also introducing global contexts as well through an engagement with key theoretical and empirical texts and video interviews with researchers working in these areas.
- Students will gain an understanding of the impact student race, language, culture, and ethnicity has on education and schooling through engagement with key texts, video lectures and reflective practice on their own teaching experiences.
- Students will gain fluency in writing and knowledge of two academic genres by composing a personal essay and a social science research report.
- Students will learn to use new digital tools in creating multimedia texts that demonstrate critical understandings of course content, as well as learn how these tools shape the meaning of texts through their own experiences.
- Students will learn to work collaboratively online through the use of digital tools.
- Students will gain an understanding of the relationships between literacy practices and meaning-making and democratic participation and civic engagement through analysis of key texts, video lectures, and examples found online.

## **Grading Breakdown**

### **Online Discussion Participation and Activities (20% of your final grade):**

This grade will be based on your work each week moving through the online activities and your participation and attendance in videoconferencing discussions. The online Engagement Index will not be used directly for grading but will be consulted by the GSIs and your professor for rapid feedback about your participation in the online portion of the course. Students will be rewarded for contributing interesting artifacts and learning materials to the class, commenting and discussing with peers, and impacting the learning community both online and in the section meetings. Please note our attendance policy in the next section. You will receive a participation grade at midterm (10 Possible Points) and at the end of the semester (10 Possible Points).

### **Field Notes (25% of your final grade):**

Throughout the semester, students will submit 8 field notes that use qualitative research methods learned during the course in observing, documenting, and analyzing fieldwork experiences. Detailed instructions on writing field notes will be provided before you are asked to write your first note (during Week 3). Make sure you follow these guidelines, including those related to formatting the field notes. In general, field notes should include lots of vivid, detailed description. You will also relate your experiences in the field to class readings and discussions in an insightful way. Please note that your GSI will comment on your first 2-3 field notes in detail, making sure that you understand how to write excellent ones. Thereafter, your GSI will read and grade each field note, but will not comment in detail.

### **Literacy Autobiography (25% of your final grade):**

Students will author a Literacy Autobiography, a personal narrative that documents their own experiences in becoming literate. Drawing from theories and key concepts from course readings to frame their narratives, students will relate their own narratives to broader issues pertaining to education, literacy, society, and culture. The Literacy Autobiography will allow students to engage multiple forms of creative expression, including image, sound, video, and text, and will be assessed using a literacy autobiography rubric by GSIs.

### **Case Study (30% of your final grade):**

Students will write a Case Study (8-10 pages, not including references and appendices) based on a qualitative analysis of field notes (see above) written throughout the semester. The Case study will employ course concepts to explore a research question focused around an educational issue and will be assessed by GSIs using the Case Study rubric. Detailed instructions on writing the Case Study will be provided.

## Course Logistics

### Attendance:

Please expect to attend online discussion sections, and be alert to the fact that excessive absences will affect your final grade. You may have **one** unexcused absence during the semester without your grade being affected. If you have more than one unexcused absence, points will be taken from your participation grade. If you present legitimate documentation, such as a doctor's excuse or a letter from your coach, your absence will be considered excused and not affect your participation grade.

### Weekly Online Activities:

**Weekly Inspire and Explore activities are due BEFORE your weekly sections every Wednesday by 11:59 PM.**

**Collaborate, Research, and Reflect activities are due by 11:59 pm every Sunday.**

Due dates for field notes, the Literacy Autobiography, and the Case Study are provided in the Weekly Topics, Readings, and Due Dates section below and also on the website under Assignments. All assignments must be turned in by the indicated due dates; written assignments (i.e, field notes, literacy autobiography, and case study) will be penalized with a reduction of a third of a letter grade PER DAY if they are turned in within 3 days of the due date. If the assignments are submitted beyond 3 days late, they will not be accepted. Weekly online activities will not be accepted beyond the due date indicated.

**Please note: We will take attendance each week during online discussion sections. If you need to miss section, or if you need special accommodations for completing assignments, or if you want us to have emergency medical information, please let your Professor or GSI know. We are here to work with you and help you learn and perform at your best. We encourage you to reach out to us proactively.**

## Fieldwork

### Purpose:

Fieldwork is an integral component of the course because it gives students an opportunity to apply what they are learning in our class to their experiences working in an educational context. Students will develop tutoring and mentoring skills in a supported environment (with guidance from the course instructor, GSIs, and school site coordinator), while simultaneously forming strong bonds with youth. To that end, we

have developed a set of requirements and guidelines that will help students in our course and the youth that they are working with have the best experience possible.

### **Fieldwork Requirements:**

For this course, **students will complete 30 hours of fieldwork during the semester at a school or other educational site**, where students will work with school-aged students in varying capacities (such as tutors, teachers' aides, and mentors). We expect ED140 students to commit to approximately 2-3 hours of field work per week over approximately 10-12 weeks. **Given our unique times, your fieldwork will be online. Therefore, your work with students may occur both synchronously and asynchronously, though the majority of your fieldwork experience should be synchronous.** You are, of course, welcome to exceed the 30 hour minimum for fieldwork. This enables students to develop deeper bonds with their mentees and to collect more data, making for a stronger final research report.

Please read through the [Fieldwork module](#) for more detailed information about our partner and affiliated sites.

### **Keeping Track of Hours:**

To ensure successful completion of the required number of hours, students will maintain a timesheet that will be initialed by the site supervisor after each visit and be submitted to the GSI at the end of the semester. In some cases, you may be asked to check-in electronically and will obtain a printed timesheet from your site at the end of the semester. Please be sure to verify timekeeping procedures with your site supervisor on your first day. GSIs will verify your timesheet with the site supervisor at the end of the semester.

### **Other Procedures and Paperwork:**

All students are required to complete and submit the Volunteer Code of Conduct and Telecommunication Responsible Use Agreement.

Before you can begin at each site, you will need to complete the site-specific pre-requirements. At ECUC sites for example, you will be required to complete online trainings and to pass a background check (i.e., Megan's Law), which is a search of your name in a sex offender database. At OUSD schools like FHS and OIHS, you will need to obtain a livescan fingerprint in addition to other requirements. These other requirements will be clarified when you begin the onboarding process for these sites.

If you are volunteering with an independent site, please ask the site supervisor about the requirements you need to fulfill to work with their students.

### **Navigating the Online Course and Working with Digital Tools**

This course is entirely online. Online discussion sections, video lectures, and activities take the place of the in-person lecture. This course requires no previous experience working in online environments or with digital tools. Course introduction materials will provide students with a general tutorial for navigating the Canvas environment and course content, as well as for launching collaborative tools. An archive of tutorials will also be provided for helping students use freely available digital tools for completing multimedia assignments, such as using movie-making, photo editing, and sound editing software.

### **Managing Your Work in this Course:**

This course requires ongoing participation in completing course assignments. For instance, it is not advisable for students to try to complete a week's worth of work in a single sitting. Instead, students should plan a consistent schedule for working on course materials at least **three times per week** and should be responsive to other group members' messages at least every other day. This will help ensure equal participation and successful collaboration.

### **Satisfying University Course Requirements:**

This course satisfies an elective course and one unit of the three required fieldwork units for the Education Minor. It also satisfies the American Cultures requirement.

### **Research:**

WED 140AC is part of a research study on online learning. Students will have the option to voluntarily participate in interviews, complete surveys, and provide feedback on the course as a part of this study. Your GSI will provide more information and consent forms. Your choice to participate or not does not affect your grade in the course.

### **Academic Honesty:**

All major written assignments should follow a standard citation format (APA, MLA, or Chicago). In your works cited, please use a footnote on the first or last page indicating which citation style you have followed. Citing sources properly is an essential component of academic integrity. Plagiarism of any kind will not be tolerated and will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct. For more information about writing with sources and writing with Internet sources, see the following helpful website from the Cal Library: <http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/instruct/guides/citations.html>

### **Honor Code:**

The ASUC in conjunction with the Graduate Assembly, the Academic Senate, and the L&S Deans have developed a UC Berkeley Honor Code to support an environment of academic integrity and respect on campus. While the statement of the Honor Code itself is brief, it is an affirmation of our highest ideals as Golden Bears:



“As a member of the UC Berkeley community, I act with honesty, integrity, and respect for others.”

### **Accommodations for Students with Disabilities**

Please see Prof. Hull or your GSI as soon as possible if you need particular accommodations, and we will work out the necessary arrangements.

### **Accessible Content on bCourses**

WED140 uses Ally, a set of tools within bCourses that helps make course content more accessible. For example, students can automatically generate “Alternative Formats” for course files, including PDF, HTML, Electronic Braille, ePub, and MP3.

### **Accommodations for Religious Creed**

In compliance with Education code, Section 92640(a), it is the official policy of the University of California at Berkeley to permit any student to undergo a test or examination, without penalty, at a time when that activity would not violate the student's religious creed, unless administering the examination at an alternative time would impose an undue hardship which could not reasonably have been avoided.

### **Weekly Topics, Readings, and Due Dates**

(Subject to change: Please see the weekly Modules for the most up-to-date information)

#### **Course orientation and introductions:**

You should have already [signed-up \(Links to an external site.\)](#) for a section-time before attending the orientation.

Additionally, you should complete reviewing the [Course Information](#) and [Fieldwork](#) modules.

#### **Week 1: What is Literacy?**

*Weekly online assignments and readings will begin during the second week of classes.*

Gee, J.P. (1998). What is Literacy? In V. Zamel & S. Spack (Eds.), *Negotiating Academic Literacies: Teaching and Learning Across Languages and Cultures* (pp. 51-59). New York, NY: Routledge.

Scribner, S. (1984). Literacy in three metaphors. *American Journal of Education* 93(1), 6-21.

## **Week 2 : Creativity in Everyday Literacy**

Willis, P. E., Jones, S., Canaan, J., & Hurd, G. (1990). Chapter 1: Symbolic creativity. In *Common Culture: Symbolic Work at Play in the Everyday Cultures of the Young* (pp. 1-14). Milton Keynes: Open University Press.

Kirkland, D. E. (2009). The skin we ink: Tattoos, literacy, and a new English education. *English Education*, 41 (4), 375-395.

## **Week 3 : Research in Literacy**

Bogdan, R. C., & Biklen, S. K. (1998). *Qualitative research in education. An introduction to theory and methods* (pp. 101-110). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

Naoi, A. (2011). The Ethics of Social Research (Excerpts)

Fadiman, A. (1997). Chapter 1: Birth. In *The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down: A Hmong Child, her American Doctors, and the Collision of Two Cultures* (pp. 8-18). New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

Previous WED 140 student field note examples.

**Due:** [Field Note 1](#)

## **Week 4 : Critical Literacy**

Freire, P. (1970). Chapter 2: Banking concept of education. *Pedagogy of the oppressed* (pp. 71-86). 30th Anniversary Edition (2000) with an introduction by Donaldo Macedo. New York: Continuum.

Alim, S. (2011). Chapter 14: Hip hop and the politics of ill-literacy. In B. A. U. Levinson and M. Pollock (Eds.), *A Companion to the Anthropology of Education* (pp. 232-246), Wiley-Blackwell, Oxford, UK.

Evans, B. & Wilson, S.M. (2016). Chapter 4: Paulo Freire: The Pedagogy of the Oppressed. In *Portraits of Violence: An illustrated history of radical thinking* (pp. 49-60), New Internationalist, Oxford, UK.

## **Week 5 : Learning as Social Participation**

Vygotsky, L. (1978). Interaction between learning and development & The prehistory of written language. In M. Cole, V. John-Steiner, S. Scribner, & E. Souberman (Eds.), *Mind in Society* (79-91). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Freedman, S. W., Hull, G., Higgs, J., & Booten, K. (2019). Teaching writing in a digital and global age: Toward access, learning, and development for all.

Franco, J., Orellana, M., Franke, M. (2019). 'Castillo blueprint'-How young children in multilingual contexts demonstrate and extend literacy and numeracy practices in play

**Due:** [Field Note 2](#)

### **Week 6 : Multimodality and Digital Storytelling**

Jewitt, C. (2008). Multimodality and literacy in school classrooms. *Review of Research in Education*, 32(1), 241-267.

Hull, G., Kenney, N.L., Marple, S. & Forsman-Schneider, A. (2006). *Many versions of masculine: An exploration of boys' identity formation through digital storytelling in an afterschool program*. New York: The Robert Browne Foundation.

### **Week 7 : Connecting School and Culture**

Ladson-Billings, G. (1995). But that's just good teaching! The case for culturally relevant pedagogy. *Theory into practice*, 34(3), 159

Moll, L., Amanti, C., Neff, D., & Gonzalez, N. (1992). Funds of knowledge for teaching: Using a qualitative approach to connect homes and classrooms. *Theory into Practice*, (31), 2, 132-141.

Alim, H.S. & Paris, D. (2017). What is culturally sustaining pedagogy and why does it matter? In H.S. Alim & D. Paris (Eds.) *Culturally sustaining pedagogies: Teaching and learning for justice in a changing world* ( pp. 1-21), Teachers College Press, New York, NY.

Brannon et al. (2008). The five-paragraph essay and the deficit model of education. *English Journal*, 98(2), 16-21.

**Due:** [Field Note 3](#)

### **Week 8 : Language and Identity**

Bakhtin, M. M. (2003). The dialogic imagination (pp. 73-81). In P. Morris (Ed.), *The Bakhtin Reader: Selected Writings of Bakhtin, Madvedev, & Voloshinov*. London, UK: Arnold.

Rodriguez, R. (1981). The achievement of desire.  
In *Hunger of memory: The education of Richard Rodriguez, An autobiography* (pp. 43-73).  
Boston: D.R. Godine.

Anzaldúa, G. (1987). How to tame a wild tongue.  
In *Borderlands/La Frontera: The new mestiza* (pp. 53-64). San Francisco: Spinsters/Aunt  
Lute.

**Due:** [Multimodal Literacy Autobiography](#)

[Participation and Engagement Part 1](#) assessed

### **Week 9 : Language in and Out of the Classroom**

Wong Fillmore, L. (2009). English language development: Acquiring the language needed  
for literacy and learning. (pp. 1- 15). *Research into Practice*. Pearson Education.

Flores, N. (2016). A Tale of Two Visions: Hegemonic Whiteness and Bilingual  
Education. *Educational Policy*, 30(1), p. 13-38.

**Due:** [Field Note 4](#)

### **Week 10 : Globalization & Cosmopolitanism**

Pratt, M. L. (1991). Arts of the contact zone. *Profession*, 33-40.

Hull, G. A., Stornaiuolo, A. Literate Arts in a Global World: Reframing Social Networking  
as Cosmopolitan Practice

Hull, G. A., Stornaiuolo, A., & Sahni, U. (2010). Cultural citizenship and cosmopolitan  
practice: Global youth communicate online. *English Education*, 42 (4), 331-367.

**Due:** [Field Note 5](#)

### **Week 11 : Global Literacies**

Yoon, B., Yol, Ö., Haag, C., & Simpson, A. (2018). Critical Global Literacies: A New  
Instructional Framework in the Global Era. *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy*,  
62(2), 205-214.

Andreotti, V. O. de. (1970). Learning to Read the World Through Other Eyes. *Economic  
and Political Weekly* (Vol. 5).

**Due:** [Field Note 6](#)

## **Week 12 : Coding Field Notes**

Dyson, A.H., & Genishi, C. (2005). Considering the case: An introduction. In *On the case: Approaches to language and literacy research* (pp.1-18). New York: Teachers College Press.

Saldaña, J. (2009). Chapter 1: An Introduction to codes and coding (pp. 1-31). In *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers*. London, UK: SAGE Publications Ltd.

**Due:** [Field Note 7](#)

**No class during the fall break / Thanksgiving**

## **Week 13 : Final Class**

Hull, G., & Rose, M. (1990). " This wooden shack place": The logic of an unconventional reading. *College Composition and Communication*, 41(3), 287-298.

**Due:** [Field Note 8](#)

## **Week 14 : Reading/Review/Recitation Week (no class meeting)**

Case Study Consultations with GSIs (by appointment)

[Participation and Engagement Part 2](#) assessed

**Due:** [FieldworkLog](#)

## **Week 15**

**Due:** [Case Study](#)