

English 4701/6701: Being an English Teacher Spring 2021

What does it mean to “teach English”? Why do we teach it? This course provides an overview of English studies and English teaching. The course focuses on the nature of literature and writing by exploring critical approaches to literary texts and the ways writers compose meaningful discourse. Students engage historical issues related to the emergence of English studies as an academic discipline as well as contemporary considerations related to the teaching of English, especially in secondary school contexts.

Note: This course does not contribute toward teacher licensure.

The Course Explores the Following Questions:

What *Is* English and Why Study It?
What Should Be the Subject Matter of English?

The Nature of Literature

What *Is* Literature—and Who Decides?
What Happens When Readers Read Literature?
How Should We Approach Teaching Literary Texts?

The Nature Writing

What Do We Know about How People Learn to Write?
Is Writing a Process or a Product?
What About Grammar?

The Nature of English Teaching

What’s It Mean To “Teach” English?
Can English Teachers Save the World?
How Can English Teachers Work for Social Justice?
What Should Teaching English Look Like?

Typical Assignments Include the Following:

- *English Teachers in the Popular Imagination* – Students select a movie with an English teacher as its protagonist and write an analysis of how the English teacher—and English teaching—are depicted, paying particular attention to the ways both are valorized.
- *English as Controversial Subject* – Students research an historical or contemporary controversy related to literacy and the teaching of English, and compose an essay that explores the way it affected/affects the teaching of English.
- *English Teachers Are Scholars* – Students identify a topic of teaching interest (e.g., Shakespeare, grammar, African American literature, poetry, etc.) and compile an annotated 5-7 item bibliography of professional resources (articles, teaching guides, etc.) related to that topic. Students then synthesize that research into an essay for English teachers.
- *Imagining English Teaching* – Students create a four-week teaching plan that integrates writing with the teaching of a work of literature.