English 2

Reading, Writing and Teaching

Prof. Judy Frank

Fall 2010

Office hours: MW 3:30-4:30, and by appointment

Johnson Chapel 12, x2071, [jefrank@amherst.edu](mailto:jefrank@amherst.edu)

Course Asst.: Kathryn Libby

klibby11@amherst.edu

phone: (207) 899-6991

This is a somewhat unusual course. It is a writing attentive course with a good deal of reading. In addition, each student will work one afternoon each week either as a classroom assistant at Holyoke High School or as a tutor at an Adult Basic Education Center in Holyoke or in Ware. We will consider from many perspectives what it means to read and write and learn and teach for each of us and for others, some of whom we will encounter through the readings in the course, others of whom you will be working with weekly. Although we hope you will reflect a great deal about teaching, this is not a course in how to teach. It is a course in thinking about education, the process of learning, yours and others’.

The writing in the course is designed to range across many genres. You will be asked sometimes to draw upon some aspect of your own experience, at others to engage someone else’s experience, to read and to write poems, closely observed descriptions, critical analyses, and one or two somewhat extended essays.

In considering whether you wish to take the course, it will be helpful to know the commitments involved. We will meet twice a week to discuss the reading and the writing assigned for the course. In these discussions we expect that each of you will draw on your own experiences as students, as readers, as writers, and on what you are doing as a classroom assistant or tutor. Furthermore, each student will be required to spend time each week at Holyoke High School or offering GED tutoring through the Juntos Holyoke Tutor/Mentor Program or the Literacy Project – a commitment of approximately four hours each week including transportation. In addition, there will be a number of extra activities to support your work in Holyoke: a tour of the city including visits to a number of community organizations, an orientation in the high school, a tutor training, etc. In effect this will be a humanities course with the equivalent of a lab section – the time committed to teaching.

**Once you have a teaching assignment this should be treated as an obligation so important that only serious illness can be an excuse. Please remember that many of the students have had too many experiences of adults letting them down; don’t add to this history. As soon as you have a classroom assignment get the phone number of the teacher or contact person so you can let him/her know if something unavoidable has come up that prevents you from meeting your responsibility. Marie Mew is our liaison at Holyoke High, the general phone number at HHS is 534-2020. Emily Fox coordinates the Holyoke Tutor/Mentor Program; you can reach her by phone 534-3376 or e-mail holyoketutor@holycham.com. Margaret Anderson coordinates the Literacy Project in Ware; her phone is 774-3934** **and her e-mail is margaret@literacyproject.org. Do contact me or Kat Libby about any problems you are having with your placement.**

**Book List**

Roberto Santiago ed. *Boricuas* ISBN: 978-0345395023

Miguel Algarin and Bob Holman eds. *Aloud* ISBN: 978-0805032574

Tracy Kidder *Among Schoolchildren* ISBN: 978-0380710898

Patrick Chamoiseau *School Days* ISBN: 978-0803263765

Judith Frank *Crybaby Butch* ISBN:978-1563411434

David Mamet *Oleanna* ISBN: 978-0822213437

**The books** required for the course are available at Amherst Books, and because this course is taught often, you may well be able to find used copies at The Option. Because we will be working so closely with these books it is important, whenever possible, that each student has her or his own copy. The other required readings will be posted as e-reserves. It is crucial to print these out and bring to class, as a lively and engaged discussion depends on your having these readings at hand. In the interest of saving trees, I will let you know when and if it is not necessary to print.

**Writing:** generally there will be nearly weekly writing assignment. These will vary in length but none, except the final, will be longer than 5 pages. **Essays are generally due via e-mail attachment on Friday by 2 pm,** but occasionally other due times are marked on the syllabus. Since there is writing nearly every week, **I will not accept late papers**.

**SYLLABUS**

**Week 1**

Tuesday, Sept. 7

Introduction

Thursday, Sept. 9

Abraham Rodriguez, “The Boy Without a Flag” and Esmeralda Santiago, “The American Invasion of Macún” in *Boricuas* 30-46 and 159-177.

Michael Jacobsen-Hardy, *Facing Education: Portraits of Holyoke School Children* on E-Reserves.

**6:30-8:30: Literacy Workshop with Emily Fox and Margaret Anderson WITH PIZZA, in the Octagon**

**Week 2**

**Tour of Holyoke High School during this week**

Tuesday, Sept. 14

Jonathan Kozol, “Hit Them Hardest When They Are Small,” *The Shame of the Nation*, 40-62

Appendix on per-pupil spending in public schools of six metropolitan districts

Paul Tough, “The Harlem Project,” *New York Times Magazine* (June 20, 2004), both on **E-Reserve**

Thursday, Sept. 16

Tracy Kidder, *Among Schoolchildren*

Writing (2-3 pages): Write an essay about a school experience (it may be anything, from in or outside of the classroom). Then use one element of the same experience and create a 17 syllable haiku about it. Your object in both exercises is to make the experience as detailed and vivid as possible for someone else, within the constraints of three lines or three pages. **Due 2pm Friday, September 17**

**Week 3**

**Placements begin!**

Tuesday, Sept. 21

Tracy Kidder, *Among Schoolchildren*

Literacy Workshop with Emily Fox, Margaret Anderson, and Zizi Ansell

Thursday, Sept. 23

Sara Lightfoot, “Highland Park High School” from *The Good Highschool*,121-149 and

Laurie Olsen, “Maps of Madison High” from *Made in America: Immigrant Students in*

*Our Public Schools*,37-57 both on E-reserve

Writing (2-3 pp): After reviewing how the previous weeks’ readings depictions of specific schools, write a description of your high school that focuses on detailed information, emphasizing its socio-economic profile and the relationship of its curricular offerings (class size, kinds of subjects, which students are in what grouping or track, etc.) to the demographic characteristics of the student body. You may include a map of your school if you like. 2) When you have finished the writing above, on a separate page discuss the difference for you in writing in this fashion about your school and the way you wrote and what you chose to write about in the essay and haiku versions of your first assignment. **Due 2pm Friday, September 24.**

**Saturday, Sept. 25:** **Holyoke Bound day-long orientation and tour**

**Week 4**

Tuesday, Sept. 28

Browse through the poems in *Aloud: Voices from the Nuyorican Poets Café*, then pick 10 to read carefully, prepare one of these to perform “aloud” in class, and be ready to talk about what you find interesting in this poem.

Thursday, Sept. 30

Working with a partner, pick 6-8 poems in *Aloud* that “talk to one another” (perhaps they share a theme, or certain formal characteristics, or a quality of voice) and read them carefully. Together you should prepare to perform two of these poems “aloud” in class in a way that lets us see them in dialogue. Be ready to discuss the rationale for your grouping.

**Week 5**

Tuesday, Oct. 5

Continue with *Aloud* presentations and discussions

Thursday, Oct. 7

Writing, due IN CLASS: Using a poem in the book as your model, write a poem of your own about a memory, a place, childhood, parents, a teacher, a school friend. Then pick a piece from *Aloud* or *Boricuas* that you think would be useful or interesting to your Holyoke students and prepare a lesson plan laying out your goals for teaching this piece and how you would implement them. What are the problems with which your students might wrestle? You may want to look at the Educational Resource Information Center [www.eric.ed.gov](http://www.eric.ed.gov) or at the somewhat more user-friendly The Educator’s Reference Desk [www.eduref.org](http://www.eduref.org) for model lesson plans. You don’t have to follow their forms, but you can get an idea from them of things you should be attending to. (Be sure to think about age-appropriateness when choosing your poem or story.)

**Week 6**

Tuesday, Oct. 12

FALL BREAK

Thursday, Oct. 14

Lisa Delpit, “The Silenced Dialogue: Power and Pedagogy in Educating Other Peoples’ Children” from *Harvard Educational Review,* 280-98 and

Deborah Meier, “Trusting Each Other’s Agendas and Intentions: The Dynamics of Race and Class” from *In Schools We Trust* 78-91, both on E-reserves.

**Week 7**

Tuesday, Oct. 19

Literacy Workshop with Emily Fox, Margaret Anderson, and Zizi Ansell

Thursday, Oct. 21

Beverly Tatum, “Identity Development in Adolescence,” and “The Development of White Identity” from *Why Are all the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?* 52-74 and 80-90 and

Elizabeth Aries “Relations Ships across Race and Class” from *Race and Class Matters at an Elite College* bothon E-reserves

Writing (3 pages): Kozol, Tough, Delpit, Meier, Tatum and Aries all write about the ways in which racism pervades and structures American education at every level, from economics and politics to individual interactions and personal identity formation. Write a three page essay that explores the nature of the race and class “achievement gap” and describes the sort of interventions that strike you as most promising. This essay should make an argument and it should engage explicitly and specifically with course readings. **Due 2 pm Friday, October 22.**

**Week 8**

Tuesday, Oct. 26

Patrick Chamoiseau, “Longing,” *School Days*

Thursday, Oct. 28

Patrick Chamoiseau, “Survival,” *School Days*

Writing: Pick a passage you find powerful, of no more than a page, from *School Days*. Copy out your passage by hand so that you have to pay attention to every word and comma, and write down all the observations you can about its (English) style. Then, rewrite your first essay (Longing? Survival?) in Chamoiseau’s style. I f you need to embellish or fictionalize or head in a slightly different direction, go ahead and do so. Then write 1-2 pages about how imitating his style affected the meaning of your experience. The more general question here: what impact does style have upon meaning, and what might this have to do with the little boy’s, or any child’s, experience of school. Turn in your copied passage and list of observations as well. **Due 2 pm Friday, October 29.**

**Week 9**

Tuesday, Nov. 2

Patricia Williams, “Crimes without Passion” from *The Alchemy of Race and Rights*, 80- 97

on E-reserves.

Thursday, Nov. 4

James Baldwin, “Congo Square” from *The Devil Finds Work*, 4-41, on E-reserves

**Week 10**

Tuesday, Nov. 9

Writing workshop

Thursday, Nov. 11

Film: Precious

Writing (3 pages): I deliberately sacrifice myself in my writing, Patricia Williams insists; what is ‘impersonal’ writing but denial of self?” James Baldwin finds himself over and over in the books he reads and the movies he watches even when they seem very far from his immediate experience: I knew something about that. Pick one passage in either of these essays and write a paper that discusses *with as much attention to linguistic detail as you can* how the self is revealed and how it is hidden in these sentences. How do these tactics affect you as a reader? What do such sacrifices, denials, and identifications have to do with learning? **Due 2pm Friday November 5.**

**Week 11**

Tuesday, Nov. 16

Shoshana Felman, Psychoanalysis and Education: Teaching Terminable and Interminable *Yale French Studies 63* (1982) 21-44 and

Herbert Kohl, “I Won’t Learn from You,” 9-47 both on E-reserves

Thursday, Nov. 18

Jan Dizard, “Achieving Place: Teaching Social Stratification to Tomorrow's Elite,” from   *Teaching What We Do,* 145-62, on E-Reserves

Carleen Basler, 2008 Senior Assembly address https://cms.amherst.edu/aboutamherst/news/specialevents/commencement/speeches\_multimedia/2008/senior\_assembly

**THANKSGIVING BREAK** remember to tell your class that you won’t be there

**Week 12**

Tuesday, Nov. 30

Judith Frank, *Crybaby Butch*, 1-233

Thursday, Dec. 2

*Crybaby Butch*, 234-416

Writing (3 pages): With these past few weeks of reading in mind write a paper about an instance of resistance to learning: either your own resistance or that of one of your students at Holyoke. This essay can be as narrative or as analytical as you'd like, but either way, it should be richly detailed. **Due 2 pm Friday, December 3.**

**Week 13**

Tuesday, Dec. 7

David Mamet, *Oleanna*

Thursday, Dec. 9

*Oleanna*

Writing (3 pages): TBA **Due 2 pm Friday, December 10.**

**Week 14**

Tuesday, Dec. 14

Conclusion

* **FINAL PAPER**: **Due 2 pm Sunday, December 19.** Write a new 5-6 page essay in which you reflect on your experience in and through the course this term. You should focus on one or more of the texts that we have read as a way of organizing the essay; you are encouraged to bring insights from your own educational autobiography and from your experiences in Holyoke or Ware to your discussion of these texts. Feel free to use whatever materials and whatever written form will make this essay as searching and meaningful for you as possible.