This course offers an introduction to the best practices and methods for teaching English/Language Arts in middle school. This course will teach you to plan lessons and units, select texts, create assignments, lead discussion, provide feedback, and make assessments of student work. This course is designed to prepare students for the edTPA portfolio and Illinois state teaching licensure, student teaching, and a career in the classroom.

**Required Texts:**

1. *In the Middle: A Lifetime of Learning About Writing, Reading, and Adolescents* by Nancie Atwell. (Third edition, 2015)

**Electronic Texts**

2. Illinois Professional Teaching Standards: [https://www.isbe.net/Documents/IL_prof_teaching_stds.pdf](https://www.isbe.net/Documents/IL_prof_teaching_stds.pdf)
5. A selection of readings, articles, and resources will also be shared via Google Drive

**Assignments:** Each week, you must prepare for class by reading the assigned selections. You will be creating lesson plans, sample video lessons using Edthena, weekly “practice” assignments and reflection papers, and creating a unit plan. You will use your own resources, those from this course, and from various online sites (I recommend sticking to ReadWriteThink and other professionally managed curriculum sites rather than using TeachersPayTeachers. More on that later). You don’t need to reinvent the wheel, but I do expect you to disclose and cite your resources in your lesson plans. Practice the ethical behavior you wish to model for your students.

In your plans, you will cite IBSE Professional Teaching Standards and the Common Core Standards. You will be expected to know and be competent in citing and using this language and
terminology, so it’s a good idea for us to practice using this language now. You might also consider knowing/using the IBSE Social Emotional Learning Performance Descriptors, NCTE standards, the Teaching Tolerance Framework, or your own personal goals for students in your lesson plans.

April 4: What is Middle School Reading, Writing, and Language Arts?

In class:
* Five Truths about Middle School Students (Traits of Writing, page 25)
* Introduction to Notice & Note strategies & literature circles
* The Skills vs. Content debate

**Homework due 4/11:**
- Reflection paper: Think back to yourself as an English student in middle school. Was there a connection between “school” reading and writing and “free” reading and writing? What is your most vivid in class memory of middle school English? Why do you think it’s stuck with you?
- Create an Edthena log-in and join our class group. Record a brief video of yourself explaining one of the Notice and Note strategies, imagining you are working 1-1 with a student who needs support understanding a text.

**Reading for 4/11:**
1. Chapter 5, *In the Middle*
3. *Reading Strategies Handbook* (bring to class on 4/11)

April 11: Middle School Reading & Lesson Planning

In class:
Diving in to the Common Core
Lesson Planning for ELA

**Homework:**
- Create a reading lesson plan using one of the strategies from the Reading Strategies book and a middle school appropriate level text.
- Using Edthena, record yourself introducing the reading strategy from your lesson plan.

**Reading for 4/18:**
- Skim the *Teaching Tolerance Framework*
The September 2017 issue of English Journal is all about Multicultural Literature. Choose one of the following to read.


April 18: How Identity Impacts Reading & why Representation Matters
In class:
Speaker: Elisa Gall, Children & Youth Librarian at Deerfield Library, contributor to Reading While White blog.

Text selection & creating an inclusive classroom
How to use the Teaching Tolerance Framework in lesson planning.

Homework due 4/25:
- Choose an inclusive MG novel and read the first 50 or so pages. Create a lesson that addresses one of the anchor strands in the Teaching Tolerance framework AND either a strategy from the Reading Strategies Handbook or a Notice and Note strategy.
- Reflection paper: What is the most challenging idea you learned about bringing inclusivity into the middle school classroom? What makes you most nervous? In what area are you most confident?

Reading for 4/25:
1. Chapters 2-6 from Traits of Writing: The Complete Middle School Guide
2. Chapter 4 from In the Middle
3. NCTE Position Statement: Professional Knowledge for the Teaching of Writing (2016)

April 25: Teaching Writing
In class:
The Six Traits & Writing Workshop
Graphic Organizers and Prewriting Strategies
The Revision Process

Homework due 5/2:
- Create a lesson plan for a part of the writing process.

Reading for 5/2:
Chapters 7-9 in *Traits of Writing: The Complete Middle School Guide*
Chapters 1-3 in *Mechanically Inclined*

**May 2: Writing & Grammar**
**In class:**
Conferencing with student writers
Grammar & mini-lessons

**Homework due 5/9:**
- Create a lesson plan for teaching a grammar skill that you think is important for middle school writing.
- Record yourself teaching the grammar mini-lesson and post the video to Edthena.

**Reading for 5/9:**
1. Chapters 9-13 (choose one genre to read closely, skim the others) from *In the Middle*

**May 9: Genre Studies**
**In class:**
Non-Fiction *Notice & Note* strategies
Poetry
Comics & Graphic Novels

**Homework due 5/16:**
- Use an article from Newsela, a textbook, or other non-fiction source as the basis for a non-fiction mini-lesson. Record how you would model how to read the article using a non-fiction strategy from *Notice and Note*.

**Reading due 5/16:**
1. Chapters 1-4, and chapter 7 from *Academic Conversations: Classroom Talk that Fosters Critical Thinking and Content Understandings*
2. Grouping without Fear (handout)

**May 16: Student Engagement**
**In class:**
Student Engagement and why it Matters
Leading a discussion
Forming Groups and fostering healthy student working behavior

**Homework due 5/23:**
• Reflection paper: Think back on a class where you felt a high level of engagement, and other when you felt disengaged. Connect your personal feelings to what you’ve learned about student engagement. How does it help explain why you felt the way you did?
• Post a video to Edthena giving starting a whole class discussion about a text from last week’s genre study class.

Reading due 5/23:
1. Chapters 1-3 from How to Give Effective Feedback to Your Students by Susan Brookhart (2008)
2. Formative Assessment Toolkit (handout)

May 23: Assessment & Feedback
In class:
Formative & Summative Assessment
Feedback vs. Grading

Homework due 6/6:
Unit Plan for a four week ELA unit will be due on 6/6

Reading for 5/30:
1. Mapping a Route towards Differentiated Instruction by Carol Ann Tomlinson
2. Chapter 1 from Differentiation in Middle & High School by Kristina J. Doubet and Jessica A. Hockett

May 30: Differentiation
In class:
Guest Speaker: Julie Badynee, learning specialist
Why and how to differentiate?
Learning differences and accommodations

Homework due 6/6:
Unit Plan for four week ELA unit will be due on 6/6

Reading due 6/6:

June 6: Technology in the Classroom
In class
Academic technology in the ELA classroom & Sharing Unit plan presentations

ILLINOIS PROFESSIONAL TEACHING STANDARDS (IPTS), 2013
1. Teaching Diverse Students - The competent teacher understands the diverse characteristics and abilities of each student and how individuals develop and learn within the context of their social, economic, cultural, linguistic, and academic experiences. The teacher uses these experiences to create instructional opportunities that maximize student learning.

2. Content Area and Pedagogical Knowledge - The competent teacher has in-depth understanding of content area knowledge that includes central concepts, methods of inquiry, structures of the disciplines, and content area literacy. The teacher creates meaningful learning experiences for each student based upon interactions among content area and pedagogical knowledge, and evidence-based practice.

3. Planning for Differentiated Instruction - The competent teacher plans and designs instruction based on content area knowledge, diverse student characteristics, student performance data, curriculum goals, and the community context. The teacher plans for ongoing student growth and achievement.

4. Learning Environment - The competent teacher structures a safe and healthy learning environment that facilitates cultural and linguistic responsiveness, emotional well-being, self-efficacy, positive social interaction, mutual respect, active engagement, academic risk-taking, self-motivation, and personal goal-setting.

5. Instructional Delivery - The competent teacher differentiates instruction by using a variety of strategies that support critical and creative thinking, problem-solving, and continuous growth and learning. This teacher understands that the classroom is a dynamic environment requiring ongoing modification of instruction to enhance learning for each student.

6. Reading, Writing, and Oral Communication - The competent teacher has foundational knowledge of reading, writing, and oral communication within the content area and recognizes and addresses student reading, writing, and oral communication needs to facilitate the acquisition of content knowledge.

7. Assessment - The competent teacher understands and uses appropriate formative and summative assessments for determining student needs, monitoring student progress, measuring student growth, and evaluating student outcomes. The teacher makes decisions driven by data and curricular and instructional effectiveness and adjusts practices to meet the needs of each student.

8. Collaborative Relationships - The competent teacher builds and maintains collaborative relationships to foster cognitive, linguistic, physical, social and emotional development. This teacher works as a team member with professional colleagues, students, parents or guardians, and community members.

9. Professionalism, Leadership, and Advocacy - The competent teacher is an ethical and reflective practitioner who exhibits professionalism, provides leadership in the learning community, and advocates for students, parents, or guardians, and the profession.