

COLLEGES OF WORCESTER CONSORTIUM, INC.
Certificate in College Teaching

CT 933: Teaching a Foreign Language: Methodology in Practice
Fall 2011
Syllabus

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COURSE MEETINGS:

The course will meet on the campus of **College of the Holy Cross, Stein Hall**, room 304, **7-9 PM**, on the following 7 Monday evenings: **September 12 & 19; October 3, 17 & 31; November 14 & 28.**

COURSE GOALS:

- to familiarize students with the history and cultural context of foreign language pedagogy
- to help students develop a framework for critical evaluation of theories about language teaching and learning
- to explore together how theory may successfully be applied to practice in the classroom

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Teaching a Foreign Language: Methodology in Practice is designed for graduate students intending to teach Modern Foreign Languages or English as a Second Language in institutes of secondary and higher education.

Students will learn about a wide variety of approaches and methods of language teaching: from teaching trends in the early 20th century to current communicative approaches, as well as a broad range of alternative methods (e.g. Total Physical Response, Suggestopedia, Community Language Learning, Multiple Intelligences, Competency-Based Language Teaching etc.).

We will also take a critical look at traditional dichotomies: explicit versus implicit language instruction, grammar versus communication, foreign language versus mother tongue. The concepts of language awareness, language learning reflection, and learner autonomy will be examined as indicators of a shift in language teaching towards learner-centered approaches. In addition, we will also discuss the implications for teachers of recent concerns about standards, assessment, and continuing professional development.

The course investigates ways in which different approaches and methods can be used to create a rich learning environment. After they reflect on their own experiences as language learners, participants will evaluate different teaching methods by staging a short teaching sequence as a classroom presentation. For a final project, students design their own detailed lesson plan incorporating theory and application. Participants are expected as well to engage actively in classroom discussion based on the presentations and readings.

REQUIRED READINGS:

- Richards, Jack C / Rodgers, Theodore S. (2001): *Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (2nd edition). The book will be available at the Holy Cross bookstore.
- Several articles and excerpts to be handed out or accessed online

GRADING PROCEDURES:

Performance in this course will be graded on the basis of two papers (a language-learning autobiography and a final paper), active and informed participation in classroom discussion, and a presentation/teaching sample. Grades will be determined as follows, and grading rubrics will be posted on the Blackboard site for each category:

- Language Learning Biography 25%
- Teaching Sample: Presentation of teaching method / approach 25%
- Classroom Participation 25%
- Final Paper: Lesson Outline 25%

ASSIGNMENTS:

- Language Learning Autobiography (due Oct. 3)

The language learning autobiography is intended to be a personal narrative (not a research paper), about 4-5 pages long, in which you describe your experience as a language learner. You should reflect on your own classroom experiences (learner group, teacher, methods and techniques used, learning atmosphere etc), your experiences outside the classroom (in private study, with speakers of the language, in the target countries), as well as your attitudes towards the language itself and your impressions of your own learning achievements.

- Teaching Sample: Presentation of Teaching Method / Approach (ongoing due dates)

Students will sign up for a presentation of one of the teaching methods / approaches introduced in the Richards / Rodgers book. The presentation and discussion, about 30 minutes in length, should include 3 parts:

- a teaching sample demonstrating this method / approach (other members of the class will be the learners); visual and other aids are encouraged!
- a brief discussion of the benefits and shortfalls of this method / approach, taking into account secondary readings from the Richards / Rodgers text bibliography
- questions or comments for class discussion

- Final Paper (due Dec.)

Students will create a detailed **Lesson Outline** of a one-hour foreign language lesson. This outline, about 7-8 pages long, should include:

- a description of language taught, target group and size, language level (beginners, intermediate, advanced), learning institution (middle / high school, university, vocational school, evening class), as well as room size and equipment
- a detailed lesson plan including information about teacher /student activities, materials used, and time allotment for activities. Please include, too, your plan for assessment of the lesson.
- a concluding argument, presenting your reasons for your choices of a mix of methods, techniques, and forms of interaction.

ACADEMIC HONESTY PROCEDURE:

There are no written exams in this course. The only written assignments are papers participants write outside of the classroom. The goal of the two papers is to connect individual learning experiences, the course content and future teaching practice. While papers may be discussed with others during the thinking and planning stage, I expect the written work to be your own. External sources must be cited appropriately, and a list of those sources must accompany the written papers. Please see me if you have questions.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:

To request academic accommodations due to a disability, please contact the Office of Disability Services at Holy Cross (508) 793-3693.

COURSE SCHEDULE:

September 12

Introduction to the Course:

Why study language pedagogy?

Historical Overview of Issues, Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching

September 19

Early Approaches:

Oral Approach / Situational Language Teaching / Audiolingual Method

Reading due : Richards / Rodgers, Chapters 1-4: Please do the assigned reading for each week in advance.

Sign-ups for individual presentations on methods / approaches

October 3

Alternative Approaches 1:

TPR / Silent Way / Community Language Learning / Suggestopedia

Reading due: Richards / Rodgers, Chapters 5-8

Language Learning Autobiography due

**individual presentations on methods / approaches

October 17

Alternative Approaches 2:

Multiple Intelligences / Whole Language / Neurolinguistic Programming / Lexical Approach /

Competency-Based Language Teaching

Reading due: Richards / Rodgers, Chapters 9-13, and Gardner 1993 (excerpt to be handed out)

**individual presentations on methods / approaches

October 31

Communicative Approaches 1:

Communicative Language Teaching / The Natural Approach

Reading due: Richards / Rodgers, Chapters 14-15, and Brumfit 1984 (excerpt from *Communicative Methodology in Language Teaching*)

**individual presentations on methods / approaches

November 14

Communicative Approaches 2:

Content-Based Instruction / Task-Based Language Teaching / Cooperative Language Learning
/ Process Drama

Reading due: Richards / Rodgers, Chapters 16-18, and
Liu 2002 (article)

**individual presentations on methods / approaches

November 28

Drawing Conclusions

From Method to Practice to Reflection: How Can We Become Better Teachers?

Tools for Self-evaluation and Professional Development

Reading due: Richards / Rodgers, Chapter 19, and Jack C. Richards 2006 (excerpt from *Professional Development for Language Teachers*)

Final Paper due by December 5.