

COURSE SYLLABUS

Lit 912: African Folktales

Instructor: Luetta Reimer

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Number of units: 3 Semester Units

Grade Level: K-8

Course Description:

Teachers who take this course will use the texts' resources to build and teach lessons that focus on African folktales. In addition to reading the folktales in the texts, teachers will also find and incorporate tales from online sources. By gaining exposure to the variety of resources available and by incorporating African folktales into their classrooms, students of this course will discover new ways to build skills and sensitivities in reading, comprehension, vocabulary, listening, logical thinking, relationships, ethical living, cultural understanding, and geography.

The Common Core State Standards for Language Arts as well as the five core propositions of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards have provided the guiding principles and philosophical basis for this course. Participants may be asked to make connections between course work and these standards or the standards of their own states.

Course Dates:

This course is self-paced; students may enroll at any time and take up to a year to complete assignments. No course should be completed in less than three weeks (one week per credit).

Course Materials (Texts Included):

Mandela, Nelson. *Nelson Mandela's Favorite African Folktales*. W. W. Norton, 2002.

Vernon-Jackson, Hugh. *African Folk Tales*. Dover Publications, 1999.

Course Requirements:

To successfully complete this course, students must

- 1) read all of the folktales in the course texts and demonstrate thoughtful analyses of eight tales through brief reflective written responses
- 2) collect and analyze four (4) additional resources (from other texts or the Internet)
- 3) design and teach three lessons/projects appropriate for their teaching level, each incorporating at least one of the tales
- 4) identify national and/or state/district standards met by the lessons/projects

See the "Schedule of Topics and Assignments" for more details on these assignments.

All work should be typed and sent to the instructor at one time when the course is completed. Please keep a copy; work will not be returned. Students have one full year to finish the course but should not send completed work in less than three weeks from registration.

Send completed work by email attachments to: Lmreimer@fresno.edu

OR

Mail all the above items to:

Luetta Reimer
1549 S. Lind Avenue
Fresno, California 93727

IN EITHER CASE, request online grading: <http://ce.fresno.edu/cpd>

National Standards:

This course is designed to reinforce and support the English Language Arts Standards of the Common Core State Standards Initiative (CCSS). The Anchor Standards for Reading (Grades K-12) are listed here:

Key Ideas and Details

1. Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.
2. Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.
3. Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.

Craft and Structure

4. Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.
5. Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole.
6. Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

7. Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse formats and media, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.
8. Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the validity of the reasoning as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence.
9. Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.

Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity

10. Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.

National Board for Professional Teaching Standards: Five Core Propositions

In addition to the content standards referenced above, this course supports the following core propositions that characterize National Board Certified Teachers (NBCTs).

Proposition 1: Teachers are Committed to Students and Their Learning

- NBCTs are dedicated to making knowledge accessible to all students. They believe all students can learn.
- They treat students equitably. They recognize the individual differences that distinguish their students from one another and they take account for these differences in their practice.
- NBCTs understand how students develop and learn.
- They respect the cultural and family differences students bring to their classroom.
- They are concerned with their students' self-concept, their motivation and the effects of learning on peer relationships.

Proposition 2: Teachers Know the Subjects They Teach and How to Teach Those Subjects to Students.

- NBCTs have mastery over the subject(s) they teach. They have a deep understanding of the history structure and real-world applications of the subject.
- They have skill and experience in teaching it, and they are very familiar with the skills gaps and preconceptions students may bring to the subject.
- They are able to use diverse instructional strategies to teach for understanding.

Proposition 3: Teachers are Responsible for Managing and Monitoring Student Learning.

- NBCTs deliver effective instruction. They move fluently through a range of instructional techniques, keeping students motivated, engaged and focused.
- They know how to engage students to ensure a disciplined learning environment, and how to organize instruction to meet instructional goals.
- NBCTs know how to assess the progress of individual students as well as the class as a whole.
- They use multiple methods for measuring student growth and understanding, and they can clearly explain student performance to parents.

Proposition 4: Teachers Think Systematically about Their Practice and Learn from Experience.

- NBCTs model what it means to be an educated person—they read, they question, they create and they are willing to try new things.
- They are familiar with learning theories and instructional strategies and stay abreast of current issues in American education.
- They critically examine their practice on a regular basis to deepen knowledge, expand their repertoire of skills, and incorporate new findings into their practice.

Proposition 5: Teachers are Members of Learning Communities.

- NBCTs collaborate with others to improve student learning.
- They are leaders and actively know how to seek and build partnerships with community groups and businesses.
- They work with other professionals on instructional policy, curriculum development and staff development.
- They can evaluate school progress and the allocation of resources in order to meet state and local education objectives.

Learning Outcomes:

Teachers who complete this course will be able to

- 1) identify the unique features of the folktale genre. (CCSS 1-9)
- 2) describe and discuss the African folktale after reading the texts and supplementary resources. (CCSS 1-9; NBPTS Props. 1-4)
- 3) recognize and describe the rationale for using African folktales in the classroom. (CCSS 1-9; NBPTS Props. 1-4)
- 4) select appropriate tales to meet specific educational goals. (CCSS 1-9; NBPTS Props. 1-4)
- 5) use African folktales to teach contemporary issues, character building, and human values. (NBPTS Prop. 1)
- 6) identify how teaching the African folktale reinforces state and national standards. (NBPTS Prop. 5)
- 7) design lessons for teaching African folktales in the classroom. (CCSS 1-9; NBPTS Props. 1-4)

Schedule of Topics and Assignments:

Please note: Word count guidelines for written responses are approximate; they are provided to give you a general sense of the length expectation for each assignment.

- 1) Read all of the folktales in the course texts.
- 2) Using a literature handbook or some other reference source, define “folktale” and identify the major categories of tales, such as trickster tales, animal tales, and magical tales.
- 3) Select a total of eight tales from the two texts. For each of these selected tales, write a reflective response of approximately 250 words. Include your observations on the nature and/or characteristic traits of the tale (using categories identified in #2), what students should be able to learn from the reading, and how the tale might be used in a classroom like yours.
- 4) Prepare an annotated bibliography (including at least four items) of other folktale resources, using printed texts, Internet sites, or other sources. You may review tales themselves or sources providing information about African folktales.
- 5) Design and teach three lessons or projects, each incorporating a folktale. Deliberately select a variety of approaches or methodologies for your lessons. You may follow the accepted lesson plan format for your district or a plan that is functional for your teaching situation. While it should be specific and detailed, it need not be more than one or two pages. Each plan should include the following elements:
 - a. Grade level
 - b. Date presented
 - c. Folktale used
 - d. Lesson objectives
 - e. Outline of presentation procedures
 - f. Methods for evaluating or assessing student progress and growth
 - g. State or national standards addressed
- 6) Evaluate the success of each of these lessons/projects. Write three short paragraphs responding to these questions.
 - a. How fully were your objectives met?
 - b. How did students respond?
 - c. How might you adjust the lesson or reinforce the concepts taught?

Note: If you are not teaching when taking this course, you may compensate for the teaching and assessment aspects of the assignments above by preparing an overlay or power point presentation highlighting the definition and characteristic traits of folktales.

Evidence of Learning:

- 1) Student demonstrated evidence of understanding of course objectives through reflective writing assignments. (Assignment 3)
- 2) Student demonstrated evidence of understanding of course objectives through presentation of lesson plans and projects. (Assignments 5 & 6)
- 3) Student demonstrated creative use of a variety of learning methodologies and strategies. (Assignment 5)
- 4) Student included the use of critical thinking skills and made connections to his or her state content and/or professional teaching standards. (Assignments 5 & 6)
- 5) Student's writing reflected thoughtful engagement with the course readings. (Assignment 3)
- 6) Student demonstrated healthy educational perspectives on cultural and global issues. (Assignments 3 & 5)

Grading Policies and Rubric:

Grades will be determined using the following percentages:

Written responses to eight tales: 40%

Bibliography of African folktale resources: 20%

Three lesson plans: 30%

Three evaluations: 10%

Total scores determine the final grade:

90 - 100% = A

80 - 89% = B

79% or below = no credit

All coursework must reflect a minimum "B" quality to receive credit. The discernment between an A and a B is at the discretion of the instructor, based on the quality of work submitted (see assignment rubric). Participants may request either a letter grade (A or B) or credit (CR). Coursework falling short of a "B" or Credit grade will be returned with further instructions. Every person with a score of 80% or above will receive three semester units of credit.

Scoring Rubric

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| Type of Assignment | 90 – 100 points Exceptional | 80 – 89 points Adequate | 70 – 79 points Not Acceptable |
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| Written responses | Student's written responses show an exceptional investment of time, energy and thoughtful reflection. The work submitted by the student is original and thorough. The student effectively organizes key insights and demonstrates evidence of interaction with the texts. | Student's written responses show an adequate investment of time, energy and thoughtful reflection. The work submitted by the student is complete, but lacks thoroughness and originality. The student sufficiently organizes insights and demonstrates evidence of interaction with the readings. | Student's written responses show little investment of time, energy and thoughtful reflection. The work submitted by the student does not show adequate thought or effort. |
| Lesson design | Lesson plans show an exceptional investment of time, energy and thoughtful reflection. Student consistently makes connections to local instructional goals/standards and implements research-based strategies and approaches. | Lesson plans show an adequate investment of time, energy and thoughtful reflection. Student makes some connections to local instructional goals/standards and research-based strategies and approaches. | Lesson plans submitted by the student do not show adequate thought or effort, and may not address specific goals. |
| Lesson evaluations | Student includes the use of critical thinking and reflection in the evaluation of lessons implemented. | Student includes the use of reflection in the evaluation of lessons implemented, but may lack sufficient detailed analysis. | Student does not demonstrate critical thinking or reflection in the evaluation of lessons implemented. |
| Presentation | Student effectively organizes key insights into a thoughtful and well-written presentation. | Student includes several key insights in an adequately written response. | Student response lacks key insights and is carelessly written. |

Instructor/Student Contact

Students are warmly invited to contact the instructor at any time with concerns, questions, or comments related to course work. They are specifically asked to do

so after finishing Assignment 2. At the completion of the course, the instructor will comment on the student's work and make suggestions, if needed.

Policy on Plagiarism

All people participating in the educational process at Fresno Pacific University are expected to pursue honesty and integrity in all aspects of their academic work. Academic dishonesty, including plagiarism, will be handled according to the procedures set forth in the Fresno Pacific University Catalog.

University Information

Graduate level course work reflects Fresno Pacific University's Desired Student Learning Outcomes as it applies to professional development to demonstrate the following:

- Oral and written communication in individual and group settings
- Content knowledge, and application of such knowledge in the student's area of interest to affect change
- Reflection for personal and professional growth
- Critical thinking
- Computational/methodological skills to understand and expand disciplines, including an understanding of technological systems