

• Categories

- [Uncategorized](#) (3)

• Archives

- [September 2011](#)

Syllabus

English 420: Writing in the Schools

Professor Kevin McKelvey

Office: Esch 044L

Phone: (317) 788-2018

email: mckelveyk@uindy.edu

Office Hours: M 5-6 p.m., T 8:30-9:30 a.m., Th 2-3, and by appointment

Meeting Times: M 1-4 (arrive at Christel House at 1:15 on service-learning days; classes meet 1:35-2:35 and 1:40-2:40) and W 1-2

Course Website: uindywits.wordpress.com

Course Description

This course will explore writing in the schools by working with 8th graders at Christel House Academy and help them write, design, and perform a poem.

Service Learning with Christel House and Second Story

To enhance our own writing style and process, the class will serve 8th graders at the Christel House Academy near campus. We'll lead four writing workshops with the 8th graders in conjunction with Second Story, a local non-profit that aims to improve writing attitudes in kids 6-18. (I've served on the board and in other capacities for the past three years. Teaching writing in the schools and community is something I've been passionate about for a decade.) Each student will collaborate on a project to lead 8th graders in writing a poem based on "What are you founded on?" and the following that with helping students design a broadside and perform their poem. We'll work with 53 students in eighth grade. Christel House has similar demographics to most IPS schools, including 90% of students on free or reduced lunch and about equal distributions of African-American, Latino, and Caucasian students.

Recommended Textbooks

Collom, Jack, and Sheryl Noethe. *Poetry Everywhere: Teaching Poetry Writing in School and in the Community*. Second Edition. New York: Teachers & Writers Collaborative. 2007.

University Learning Goals

- **Critical Thinking:** Every word you write shows a critical decision, and that critical thinking will only be refined throughout the semester by focusing on the writing process.
- **Creativity:** What is central in the writing process is creating thorough writing topics that lead to successful research and a developed paper.
- **Performance:** Talking is central to class discussion and peer review. Students will also lead and participate in writing workshops with the 8th graders.
- **Social Responsibility:** From discussing assigned readings to choosing paper topics, this class welcomes and encourages a focus on the local community. To that end, the class will be serving 8th graders as workshop leaders and assistants.

Our Class Blog

Our [wordpress.com](http://uindywits.wordpress.com) blogging website will allow us to centralize much of the writing that we would do on our own computers or on paper. We will use the site for freewrites of all kinds, journal assignments, initial drafts, and many other things. Keep in mind that other students in the class can read your work, so this is continuous practice in dealing with audience. The website is private, so your work is protected from search engines and unwanted visitors. After you create your digital portfolio, we might open the site so others can see your work. I will be using the website for my own writing and research, and it may be used for teaching other professors to use WordPress.

Class Requirements

“What are you founded on?” Project (60%)

The 8th grade language arts teacher at Christel House would like to build a poetry project around the question of “What are you founded on?” and would like to include writing, design, and performance. In the course, you’ll develop the curriculum and then implement it with the eighth graders.

Eighth graders at Christel House are currently studying foundations: the foundations of science, the founding of the US, and in English, themselves. Students will be asked to define themselves in terms of their heritage, language, self, territory, identity, neighborhood, family, religion, favorite foods, or country. They can go in many directions, but the main goal is self-reflection and -actualization.

The Driving Question: What is the best way to inspire students to write, design, and perform a poem that responds to the question “What are you founded on?”?

Each element should include

- background readings or information for you or others to prepare to teach the content
- readings, images, or recordings for leading the writing
- directions for completing that element of the project during class and outside of class
- assessment suggestions
- [8th grade standards](#)
- further reading or information

“What are you founded on?” Poem (20%) – due Oct. 3

Focusing question: How can you develop short exercises and longer exercises for a two-week module so students can freewrite, draft, and revise their poem?

Goals: a free verse poem with strong images and other elements of poetry that answers the question posed in the title

Sources: *Poetry 180* anthology and [website](#), *Aloud* anthology, *Poetry Everywhere*, Poetry Out Loud anthology and [website](#), poems from [poets.org](#) about America, with Spanish language words, or that represent demographics of school

Broadside (20%) – due Oct. 12

Focusing question: What are best practices for designing a broadside that heightens the impact of the poem without distracting from it?

Goals: a 11×17 to feature the poem, from a traditional broadside with a single image to a collage with lots of images

Sources: Broadside: from [Knopf](#), from [Broadside Press](#) (great [links](#), too), from [Center for Book Arts](#), from [Oneiros Press](#), from [Poetry Center of Chicago](#), from [City Lights Books](#), from [Broadside Press](#); Collage: [Collage Art website](#)

Performance (20%) – due Oct. 19

Focusing question: How can students use the elements of poetry recitation and slam poetry to effectively deliver their poem to an audience?

Goals: public speaking and performance of poem

Resources: Poetry Out Loud [Teacher Website](#), anthology and CD, *Aloud* anthology (from [Nuyorican Poetry Cafe](#)), Poetry Speaks [website](#), other recordings, other readings

Interaction, Service-Learning, and Your Blog – (20%)

We will have many various blog topics throughout the semester. You must complete these regularly and on time. These are a way to brainstorm, respond, think, create, experiment, explore, and generally type your many thoughts on the many aspects of reading, writing, and research that we will cover this semester.

Our service at Christel House is an integral part of this class. You need to prepare for every workshop during our class on the Wednesday before our Monday session. On Mondays, you need to participate in every workshop and implement your plans. After each Monday session, you need to write a 200-300 word reflection about that day’s experiences.

Digital Portfolio – Due November 21 (20%)

Over the last weeks of the semester, you will develop a digital portfolio to place on the course website, the English Department website, and the Second Story website. The main piece will be a 3-5 minute video that will showcase the development of this project and your reflections on the project and student writing. This can include interviews, voice over, screenshots of broadsides, video of performance, or other video. What story do you want to tell with this? We will develop a storyboard to help focus your story and what you need to tell it. The other part of the portfolio will include organizing your project modules for easy download, and we can hopefully include student writing and broadsides.

Grading

Your semester grade will be based on your performance in the work listed above.

“What are you founded on?” Project = 60%

Each module should structure a dynamic answer to the focusing question that includes relevant background information, examples, directions for class or other work, standards, and other materials. We’ll format these for high readability and keep focus on two audiences: the middle school students that can use the materials and the middle school teachers who can teach class with it.

This is a collaborative project, but each student must take individual responsibility. Each student will research and the following areas and contribute them to the module:

- background readings or information for you or others to prepare to teach the content
- readings, images, or recordings for leading the writing
- assessment suggestions
- 8th grade standards
- further reading or information

Students will work to combine that information, then students will collaborate on directions for completing that element of the project. At the end of each module, students will email the instructor a short evaluation about the project and partner. The instructor can usually tell if someone is not meeting expectations in collaboration, and instructor reserves right to deduct points up to and including failing the project.

Interaction, Service-Learning, and Your Blog = 20%

Over the course of the semester, we will have 15 blog posts at 1% each. Monday’s blogs will usually focus on reflection on that day’s service-learning at Christel House. The Wednesday blogs will focus on plans or reflections on the project module or on portfolio development and implementation. The other 5% will assess class discussion and attendance.

Digital Portfolio = 20%

You want to focus on story with this. Tell the story of your reflections on this project. You need a developed storyboard in addition to your video. Your story should reflect your experiences, showcase your work, and use video, images, and interview. We’ll also collect all documents so that they are easy to download.

Total = 100%

I will use the grading scale below when assigning grades. On paper assignments, I will respond with a letter grade and a number percentage.

- A 95-100
- A- 90-94.99
- B+ 86.67-89.99
- B 83.34-86.66
- B- 80-83.33
- C+ 76.67-79.99
- C 73.34-76.66
- C- 70-73.33
- D+ 66.67-69.99
- D 63.34-66.66
- D- 60-63.33
- F < 59.99

Schedule and Attendance

Throughout the semester, we may meet in different classrooms or computer labs. We will be at the Christel House Academy 4 times throughout the semester as part of class. We will also have a few online classes. You are expected to attend and participate in all of these sessions. Failure to do so will affect your interaction grade, service-learning grade, and your blog.

Late Papers or Assignments

You must submit drafts and final papers by the specified time. A penalty of one letter grade per day will be assessed on all late work until it is submitted or completed.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism occurs when you pass off someone else's words or ideas as your own, and it is a form of stealing. I don't expect to see plagiarism in this class. If I do, each case will be dealt with on an individual basis and referred to the English department for review. For a first offense, the MINIMUM penalty will be failure for the assignment in question. If you turn in plagiarized work a second time, you will fail the course. All confirmed cases of plagiarism will be reported to the Dean, the Vice President of Student Affairs, the Director of Campus Life, and the Provost, as required by the University Handbook. If you are doing research and are unsure how to incorporate someone else's work into your own in a valid manner, please ask—I'll be more than happy to help you out so that there is no danger of confusion.

Students with Disabilities

If you have a disability that may have some impact on your work in this class and for which you may require accommodations, please inform me immediately so that your learning needs may be appropriately met. Students with a disability must register with the Services for Students with Disabilities office (SSD) in Schwitzer Center 206 (317-788-6153 / www.uindy.edu/ssd) for disability verification and for determination of reasonable academic accommodations. You are responsible for initiating arrangements for accommodations for tests and other assignments in collaboration with the SSD and the faculty.

Share this:

Press This

Twitter

Facebook

[Edit this entry.](#)

Leave a Reply

Enter your comment here...



Guest



mckel...



Log In



Log In



mckelveyk: You are commenting using your WordPress.com account. ([Log Out](#))

- Notify me of follow-up comments via email.
 Notify me of new posts via email.

Post Comment

• Calendar