Course Description: Roles of reader, text, and teacher in connection with reader-response theories such as transmission, transaction, and transformation theories; practical strategies for literary engagement and response.

This course focuses primarily on the transactional theory of literature as developed by Louise Rosenblatt. We will engage in an in-depth study of her theories through the reading of her original work as well as reading how others have interpreted her theories. We will explore reading as a social act and encouraging multiple, diverse viewpoints with a democratic atmosphere. While our major focus is on theory, we will continuously consider the synergistic relationship between theory and practice.

This course will be conducted as a graduate seminar where class members read, critically analyze and discuss the course readings and generate meaningful questions concerning the nature of reader-response theories and issues of classroom practice, working collaboratively toward your own well-informed understandings. Therefore, the participation of all of us (including both our talking with and listening to each other) is important. Everyone should come prepared to discuss the readings for each week and to work actively with other class members.
Course Outcomes:

1. Engage in an in-depth examination of the transactional theories of Louise Rosenblatt through reading her original sources;
2. Explain key principles of the transactional theory of reader response, particularly evocation, response, and evaluation as well as aesthetic and efferent stances;
3. Examine the influence of Rosenblatt’s theories on English and reading education;
4. Explore the connections of transactional theory to education as democracy;
5. Analyze the application of reader response theories to intermediate and secondary school classroom practice.

Required Text(s):


Additional References:


Also see the bibliography beginning on page 345 of *Reader Response in Secondary and College Classrooms*.

Course Assignments and Projects

1. **Revisiting a Significant Literary Event in Your Life as a Reader**

Reflect on your past experiences with literature and choose a piece of literature (fiction only) that was a particularly significant experience for you as a child, adolescent, or adult. Write a narrative about that particular event – tell the story about the context in which you came to read and respond to the book, who was involved, and how/what you thought about that particular piece of literature. Also reflect on how that book connects to your own history as a person and as a reader. Reread that piece of literature and write a second narrative in which you tell the story about your current response to this rereading. What is the experience of rereading this piece of literature like for you? What kinds of connections, ideas, issues, and thoughts come to your mind during this rereading? When you finish the
second narrative, reread both of your narratives and add a reflection on how and why the two responses compare. How and why are they similar and different? Bring the book and the responses with you to class on January 23. (approximately 2-4 single-spaced pages)

2. **Response to Course Readings**
As you read the texts, articles, and book chapters this semester, develop a method for responding to your reading through post-it notes, highlighting, margin notes, 2- or 3-column charts, etc. Be sure to mark passages each week that you would like to discuss in class including passages you agree or disagree with, passages that provoke questioning or confusion, and passages that you want to remember for your own research and writing.

You should prepare a written response of 1 single-spaced typewritten page for each week. Please make 6 copies of this response to share in a small group (5 copies for the group and 1 copy for me). We will be reading these in small groups and using them to enable us to have more productive discussions where each of us contribute our own responses to and interpretations of the readings.

3. **Mini-Inquiry Project**
After completing the reading of Literature as Exploration, we will identify questions, issues, or ideas that have developed through reading and discussion. Each class member will choose a focus for a mini-inquiry and will hand in a reflection on that mini-inquiry. The reflection will consist of a description of a central question, issue, or idea and why it was important to you. In other words, you will reflect on a particular concept from Rosenblatt and write about its significance to you. This might include a reflection on classroom practice, possible response engagements that you will try out with readers, ideas and plans for future research (e.g. dissertation proposals), etc. You might also consider interviews or surveys with adults or children in family, school or community settings. (approximately 5 double-spaced pages) Due February 13.

4. **Final Inquiry Project**
This project should connect to your individual interests and could be an outgrowth of your mini-inquiry. Make sure that your choice for this project has a purpose in your life beyond this graduate course. Possibilities for projects include:

- an in-depth examination of a key theorist or concept related to reader-response theories
- an exploration of an issue from reader-response theories that traces how that issue plays out across different theorists (e.g., the role of text, the nature of talk in literary responses)
- an examination of a critical issue from Rosenblatt (e.g., efferent and aesthetic stance)
- an extensive review of research and theory related to some aspect of reader-response
- a teacher research or classroom project directly related to responding to texts (e.g., analysis of students’ responses to literature; case study of a reader; a self-study; a written plan for building a response-centered curriculum in your classroom; etc.)
- another approved project of your choosing.

A brief written proposal for this project is due on or before March 20 and the final paper and class presentation is due on April 17.

5. **Self-Evaluation**
Self-evaluation and reflection are essential to learning. At the end of the semester, in-lieu of a final exam, you will write a self-evaluation of your overall learning and participation in this course. This evaluation will be submitted online, through Blackboard. Due April 24

**Class Policy**

This course has been designed on the belief that learning occurs best with the support of others. Active participation and discussion are vital features of a community of learners. Class sessions involve discussions and collaborative engagements and are focused around our consideration of the professional readings. Read and reflect on the texts, write a response, and always be prepared to discuss them with others in small and whole group settings. Because of the collaborative, participatory nature of this course, class members are expected to attend every class session and to come prepared by having completed the readings and written reflections.

The class will benefit collectively and as individuals if each member arrives:
a. Regularly and promptly (More than 1 absence will result in a grade reduction. Missing parts of class (i.e.,
late arrivals/early departures, contribute to your total number of absences.)
b. Willing and able to discuss the week’s assignments and readings (readings and responses complete).
   Coming to class unprepared and/or with missing or incomplete writing assignments will result in a reduction
   of your final grade.
c. With a mind open to ideas and perspectives of others and are willing to share knowledge and ideas.
d. With cell phones turned off and not visible during class. Please do not retrieve your cell phone during class
to check messages, write texts, etc.

If you absolutely must miss a class session due to illness, send me an email message in advance. You are responsible
for retrieving any handouts and completing all reading and assignments prior to the next class. If you notify me prior
to the 5:00 p.m. start of the class you will miss, I will leave articles and other handouts for you outside of my office.
Otherwise, please make arrangements with a classmate to collect articles, handouts, assignments.

**Blackboard Discussion/Online Sessions**

During the course of the semester, there are three dates when, rather than “brick & mortar” sessions, we will come
together online to discuss the readings. These dates are January 30, February 27, and March 27. You are required to
fully participate in all three of these sessions. We will use Blackboard for these discussions. More details and
information will be provided in class.

**Evaluation/Grading**

Your final grade will be based holistically on both my evaluation and your self-evaluation of your growth and
learning, the quality of your written work, and your attendance, participation, and preparation for all class sessions.
You must complete all class projects and assignments to fulfill course requirements and your final grade for the
course will be based on the thoughtfulness and quality of this work with a B reflecting the completion of all course
projects at a satisfactory level. Incompletes will not be given except in extreme situations and only with my prior
approval.

**Academic Dishonesty/Plagiarism**

The College of Education has a “zero tolerance” approach to plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty. (See
Student Code of Conduct [http://doso.wayne.edu/codeofconduct.pdf].) Plagiarism includes copying material (any more
than 5 consecutive words) from outside texts or presenting outside information as if it were your own by not crediting
authors through citations. It can be deliberate or unintended. Specific examples of academic dishonesty, including
what constitutes plagiarism, can be found in the University’s Undergraduate Bulletin (http://bulletins.wayne.edu/ubk-
output/index.html), the Undergraduate Student Handbook (http://comm.wayne.edu/files/undergradhandbook.pdf),
and in print and online versions of the Graduate Catalog (http://www.bulletins.wayne.edu/gbk-output/index.html)
under the heading “Student Ethics.” It is every student’s responsibility to read these documents to be aware which
actions are defined as plagiarism and academic dishonesty. Sanctions could include failure in the course involved,
probation and expulsion, so students are advised to think carefully and thoroughly, ask for help from instructors if it
is needed, and make smart decisions about their academic work.

**Enrollment/Withdrawal Policy**

Beginning in Fall 2011, students must add classes no later than the end of the first week of classes. This includes
online classes. Students may continue to drop classes (with full tuition cancellation) through the first two weeks
of the term.

Students who withdraw from a course after the end of the 4th week of class will receive a grade of WP, WF, or WN.
   o WP will be awarded if the student is passing the course (based on work due to date) at the time the
     withdrawal is requested
   o WF will be awarded if the student is failing the course (based on work due to date) at the time the
     withdrawal is requested
   o WN will be awarded if no materials have been submitted, and so there is no basis for a grade
Students must submit their withdrawal request on-line through Pipeline. The faculty member must approve the
withdrawal request before it becomes final, and students should continue to attend class until they receive notification
via email that the withdrawal has been approved. Beginning in Fall 2011, the last day to withdraw will be at the end of the 10th full week of classes. The withdrawal date for courses longer or shorter than the full 15-week terms will be adjusted proportionately.

**Attention Students with Disabilities:**

If you have a documented disability that requires accommodations, you will need to register with Student Disability Services (SDS) for coordination of your academic accommodations. The Student Disability Services (SDS) office is located at 1600 David Adamany Undergraduate Library in the Student Academic Success Services department. SDS telephone number is 313-577-1851 or 313-202-4216 (video phone). Once you have your accommodations in place, I will be glad to meet with you privately during my office hours to discuss your special needs. Student Disability Services’ mission is to assist the university in creating an accessible community where students with disabilities have an equal opportunity to fully participate in their educational experience at Wayne State University.

Please be aware that a delay in getting SDS accommodation letters for the current semester may hinder the availability or facilitation of those accommodations in a timely manner. Therefore, it is in your best interest to get your accommodation letters as early in the semester as possible.

**Religious Observance Policy:**

Because of the extraordinary variety of religious affiliations represented in the University student body and staff, the Wayne State University calendar makes no provision for religious holidays. It is University policy, however, to respect the faith and religious obligations of the individual. Students who find that their classes or examinations involve conflicts with their religious observances are expected to notify their instructors well in advance so that alternative arrangements as suitable as possible may be worked out.

**Wayne State University Writing Center:**

The Writing Center (2nd floor, UGL) provides individual tutoring consultations free of charge for students at Wayne State University. While the center serves both graduate and undergraduate students, undergraduate students in General Education courses, including composition courses, receive priority for tutoring appointments. The Writing Center serves as a resource for writers, providing tutoring sessions on the range of activities in the writing process – considering the audience, analyzing the assignment or genre, brainstorming, researching, writing drafts, revising, editing, and preparing documentation. The Writing Center is not an editing or proofreading service; rather, students are guided as they engage collaboratively in the process of academic writing, from developing an idea to correctly citing sources. To make an appointment, consult the Writing Center website: [http://www.clas.wayne.edu/writing/](http://www.clas.wayne.edu/writing/).

To submit material for online tutoring, consult the Writing Center HOOT website (Hypertext One-on-One Tutoring) [http://www.clas.wayne.edu/unit-inner.asp?WebPageID=1330](http://www.clas.wayne.edu/unit-inner.asp?WebPageID=1330).
Tentative Course Schedule of Topics, Readings, and Projects

1/9   Introduction to the Course

1/16  The Transactional Theory of Literature
      Read: Reader Response in Secondary & College Classrooms: preface, chapters 1-4
      (Karolides, Small, Christenbury, Probst)
      Due: Written response to 1-4 (6 copies)

1/23  Rosenblatt’s Literature as Exploration: The Province of Literature
      Read: Forward, Preface, C. 1-2
      Due: revisiting a significant literary event (6 copies)

1/30  Rosenblatt’s Literature as Exploration: The Human Basis for Literary Sensitivity
      Read: C. 3-5
      Due: Written response to 3-5 Blackboard Discussion/Online

2/6   Rosenblatt’s Literature as Exploration: Literary Sensitivity as the Source of Insight
      Read: C. 6-8
      Due: Written response to 6-8 (6 copies)
      (meet in room 179)

2/13  Building from Rosenblatt’s Literature as Exploration
      Read: The Transactional Theory of Reading and Writing (Rosenblatt)
      Theory and Practice: An Interview with Louise Rosenblatt (interview with Nicholas Karolides)
      Due: Written response to readings (6 copies)
      Due: Mini-inquiry project

2/20  Initiating Readers’ Responses: Classroom Processes
      Read: Reader Response in Secondary & College Classrooms: chapters 5-8
      (Boyum, Luce, Kelly, Appleman)
      Due: Written response to 5-8 (6 copies)

2/27  Rosenblatt’s The Reader, the Text, the Poem: Invisible Reader, Poem as Event, and Efferent
      and Aesthetic Reading
      Read: Prefaces, C. 1-3
      Due: Written response to 1-3 Blackboard Discussion/Online

3/6   Rosenblatt’s The Reader, the Text, the Poem: Evoking a Poem, The Text
      Read: C. 4-5
      Due: Written response (6 copies)

3/13  SPRING BREAK – NO CLASS

3/20  Rosenblatt’s The Reader, the Text, the Poem: The Quest for the Poem Itself, Interpretation,
      Evaluation, Criticism
      Read: C. 6-7, Epilogue
      Due: Written response (6 copies)
      Due: Proposal for Final Inquiry Project

3/27  Developing Readers’ Responses: Classroom Processes
      Read: Reader Response in Secondary & College Classrooms: chapters 9-14
      (Toman, Varvel, Schaars, Poe, Karolides, Roen)
      Due: Written response Blackboard Discussion/Online

4/3   AERA Annual Meeting (Philadelphia, PA)  No class session. Time is reserved for work on
      final inquiry project.
4/10  Exploring Differences:  Gender, Race and Culture
Read: Reader Responses in Secondary & College Classrooms:  chapters 15-20
(Quinn, Furniss, Willis, Glazier et al, Spears-Bunton, Brown & Harrison.
Due:  Written response (6 copies)
(meet in room 179)

4/17  Presentation of Inquiry Projects
Due:  Final Inquiry Project paper and class presentation

4/24  Exam Week
Due:  Final Reflection  (Submitted online.  There is no class meeting.)