**ENGL 4800: Teaching Literature in Secondary Schools**

Literature & Sexual Orientation: How Literature Has Helped Us Learn About and Form Opinions on Sexual Orientation and Ways We Can Use This In the Classroom.

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**MATERIALS YOU WILL NEED:**

1. The YA Novel *Boy Meets Boy*, which can be rented, bought on Amazon, and in some cases, can be found at either university bookstore location.
2. At least one (1) notebook or something holding paper that you will be able to write in each class
3. Something to keep your writing in, you will utilize everything you write in class
4. A Nicenet.org username and password - questions will be posted to this for you to answer.
5. Access to [www.teachingsexualorientation.weebly.com](http://www.teachingsexualorientation.weebly.com) (group website)

**CLASS DESCRIPTION:**

English 4800 teaches you effective ways to use all literature in a secondary school setting. With this unit, however, you will learn how LGBT overtones have shaped much literature in the secondary school setting, and how it can be utilized to teach a very important (and sometimes controversial) subject. Throughout the next two weeks, you will learn ways to properly and carefully teach this sensitive material, learn and hear from sources that you may not have got the chance to in another class, and basically expand your own horizons as a teacher and student in the realm of sexual orientation.

**Unit Objectives:**

1. Future educators must be aware and acknowledge the sensitivity surrounding the topic of sexual orientation.
2. Future educators must be aware of the implications of failing to address sexual orientation within the classroom.
3. Educators must be aware of the materials and resources available in order to teach sexual orientation in an effective and positive manner.
4. Educators must be able to create coherent and inclusive lesson plans for all students regarding the topic of sexual orientation.
5. Educators must be knowledgeable in taking charge or creating a GSA (gay-straight alliance) within their school.
6. Educators must be active in creating an environment where all students will understand the experience of LGBT students/individuals.

**CLASS BREAKDOWN**:

The course is set for twice a week for the next two weeks, for an hour and 50 minutes each. We will more then likely use up each and every minute, so come prepared to discuss Nicenet questions, the reading previously assigned, and questions or concerns you have in general. Among the things you will do in this unit (which will be explained more in depth later, don't worry!) are

* Nicenet posting
* Reaction to "Boy Meets Boy"
* Creating a Sample Lesson Plan
* Guest Speaker with Q&A Session
* Movie Based on LGBT
* A Field Trip
* Final Cumulative Reaction/ Reflection

**PARTICPATION:**

An important part of this course will be your active participation. This means active participation during discussions, question posting, guest speakers, etc. The more you participate and be a part of the class, the more you will learn, and the better we can make each class period. Some of the material may be challenge the ideals and thoughts of your classmates or yourself, but that doesn't mean you shouldn't participate - voice your opinion, why do you agree or disagree? What would you do if given this situation to teach LGBT outside of this room?

**CLASSROOM RULES:**

We understand your time is valuable, as is ours. We will begin class on time and end on time every class to the best of our abilities. We also understand that things happen, so if you are a few minutes late, come in quietly, find a seat, and engage in the class – being late happens, just don't make it a habit! Also, there will be no cell phones, Ipods, laptops (unless instructed to use), or other electronics to be used in class unless permitted by us. Being that we will be in full use of computers, unless we direct you to use one, we will not use or sit at the computers unless there's say so. We will do our best to be respectful of you, so please give us the same.

Speaking of which, the final rule, and most important – **RESPECT.**..We **will not tolerate any derogatory terms or rudeness to your fellow classmates or towards myself.** There's no problem with a “liberal” use of language (i.e. swearing, slang, you get the idea), but any remarks putting down race, gender, and especially for this topic, sexuality, etc. will not be tolerated whatsoever and may result in you leaving the class and risking your grade on this unit! We **will respect everyone's comments, regardless of personal opinion.**

**CLASSWORK & PROJECTS:**

The projects and work for the class will be varied and hopefully engaging for all in the room. To break your work down further, here is the description of each part of this unit:

1. **Nicenet posts**: you will be given a question or a set of questions to respond to on the Nicenet we already utilize in the room. These Q&A's will be the foundation for many of our discussions, so check and answer them carefully. These also count for your participation portion of the assessment
2. YA Novel *Boy Meets Boy*: you will be reading the David Levithan book *Boy Meets Boy* which centers around a gay teen and his friends and school in a fictional city. This book will challenge many peoples ideals as the place portrayed in this book is the "ideal world", where there is no discrimination and people are completely open with their sexuality.
3. Articles/ Nicenet Question/ Lecture: These are grouped together as they will all roll into one format, where you will be given an article to read, we will lecture on it and discuss it, and you will post again to Nicenet.
4. Guest Speaker: We will be having a member/ advocate of the LGBT community here on campus come into class to have a discussion with us, as well as Q & A. This will also tie into a portion of the class where you will get info and learn ways to start or organize a LGBT club at the high school level.
5. Mock Lesson Plan: You will be asked to create a short activity or lesson plan that incorporates the LGBT community and ways of correctly teaching it to secondary students. This can be something very small, or you can go into a great deal of depth. The idea is that everyone will be able to trade and use these ideas someday in their own classroom, so the amount of effort and depth you do for this is totally your call.
6. "The Laramie Project" Movie: The class will be watching a movie dealing with the Matthew Shepard murder and how the movie shows the aftermath of the event on the community. You will be answering reaction questions to the movie and discussing these as well.
7. Field Trip to Kalamazoo Public Library: The final portion of class will be a trip to the KP Library where we will get a short tour that will ultimately lead to the YA section, which has a section specifically geared towards LGBT students. While at the library we will also collect your final assessment papers/ movie reaction questions.

**ACADEMIC HONESTY & PLAGIARISM:**

You are responsible for making yourself aware of and understanding the policies and procedures in the Undergraduate Catalog (pp. 274-276) that pertains to Academic Integrity. These policies include cheating, fabrication, falsification and forgery, multiple submission, plagiarism, complicity and computer misuse. If there is reason to believe you have been involved in academic dishonesty, you will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct. You will be given the opportunity to review the charge(s). If you believe you are not responsible, you will have the opportunity for a hearing. You should consult with me if you are uncertain about an issue of academic honesty prior to the submission of an assignment or test.

**ASSESSMENT:**

The assessment for this unit will take into account a multitude of different things, but most heavily will be the following: participation/ engagement with the class and the final reaction paper. The participation will be the driving force behind the Nicenet discussions, class discussions, and the material we cover, so being ready to participate will help you greatly. The final reaction paper will take into account everything you have seen, heard, and learned, and your ability to synthesize it all into a thoughtful and meaningful connection to the material. Maybe your views have completely changed, maybe they were reaffirmed - we want to know! Many of the smaller projects you do (lesson plan, q&a's, etc.) will play into the assessment, but ultimately your final reaction will combine them all into one package.

Tentative Schedule: (Modifications if necessary will be announced in class)

**Tues Feb. 22, 2011**

* Intro to topic: Sexual Orientation and Literature
* “Boy Meets Boy” novel due/large group discussion
* Post onto Nicenet prior to class in regards to the reading
* Lesson Plan brainstorming/small group discussions (examples available on website)

**Thurs. Feb. 24, 2011**

* Guided Imagery activity
* Guest speaker/ Q&A session
* How to start an LGBT organization in your own school
* Lesson plan due Watch “The Laramie Project”

**\*\*Spring Break\*\***

**Homework:** Watch “The Laramie Project”

**Tues. March 8, 2011**

* “The Laramie Project” review/discussion
* Guest Speaker

**Homework:**

* **Complete movie reaction/reflection**

**Thurs. March 10, 2011 (Meet at the Kalamazoo Public Library)**

* Movie reflection due
* Discover YA LGBT Literature
* Complete final self-evaluation/assessment
* Post on Nicenet.org