SOUTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY EDWARDSVILLE

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

Secondary English Education (BA + Licensure)
Student Teacher Screening Process and Portfolio Guidelines

Timing & Process: The Final Semesters of the Secondary English Education Program

Here is the appropriate sequence of ENGLISH coursework as students approach the final semester of full-time student teaching:

Pre-Screening semester..ENG 475 and ENG 490 (+other coursework)

Screening semester...ENG 485 (+other coursework)

Observation semester (CI 315A) ....ENG 497A: Senior Seminar (+other coursework)

Student Teaching Semester (CI 315B/352F) ....Full-Time Student Teaching (12 credits)

(Note: this sequence is not always possible—rearrangements can be made where necessary)

One year before the student teaching semester, candidates for teacher licensure in secondary English Language Arts must successfully pass through the English Department's student teacher screening process and apply for the School of Education, Health and Human Behavior's pre-student teaching field placement course (CI 315A). Early in the second week of the semester in which the candidate intends to screen, a screening applicant must submit his or her screening portfolio to the screening director via email attachment (see more on this below). Committee members will evaluate the portfolios and will meet subsequently to conduct 30-minute interviews with each teacher candidate.

The candidate's portfolio submission and professional interview constitute their first steps toward entering into the English Education program's final student teaching experience. Upon successful completion, he or she must register for the following semester's observation course (CI 315A), which leads to full-time student teaching in the final semester at SIUE (CI 315B/CI 352F). Once the candidate has successfully passed through the English Department's student teacher screening process, the School of Education Student Services office coordinates registration for CI 315A and arranges field placements at regional cooperating schools.

Information Session

At the end of the semester before the screening portfolio is due, the English Department conducts a mandatory information session for screening candidates. We typically meet once during the last two weeks of the semester. Contact Dr. Johnson for details: heatjoh@siue.edu.

"B" Grade Point Average Requirement (minimum 3.0 GPA required)

To begin the student teacher screening process, a student teaching candidate must have good academic standing as well as an SIUE cumulative grade point average of 2.5 (4.0 scale). In addition, a candidate must have a cumulative GPA of 3.0 in the English major and, separately, in the Speech Communication Education minor to enter into the screening process, to student teach, and to complete SIUE's English Education program. Students must also maintain the required 2.5 cumulative GPA at SIUE. All English and speech courses taken at all institutions count when we assess the cumulative GPA in English and in speech. All coursework must be complete before the full-time student teaching semester.

Transcript Evaluation and GPA Check

Since students may not take academic classes during the full-time student teaching experience (CI 315B/352F), English student teacher screening candidates must complete all required courses in the intervening semesters between screening and student teaching. To ensure that they will be done with their coursework before the student teaching semester begins, students must plan carefully as they prepare their schedules and register for the remaining academic semesters.

The English Education Program Director, Prof. Jill K. Anderson, conducts transcript evaluations and GPA checks in conjunction with the English student teacher screening process (at the end of the semester before screening). If you are not sure whether you are qualified to screen at this time, contact your CAS advisor or make an appointment to meet with Dr. Anderson. Take this packet and the transcript evaluation form with you when you meet with your CAS advisor. He or she may have some questions about our program's specific logistics.

The CI 315A Application

Students must have passed CI 200: Introduction to Education. Student teaching candidates must also apply for admission to the SEHHB's secondary education program and CI 315A school placements (pre-student teaching observation course). The formal CI 315A application is typically due to SEHHB in the third week of the screening semester. When the form becomes available, it should appear here:
https://www.siue.edu/education/advising/Program_StudentTeaching_applications.shtml
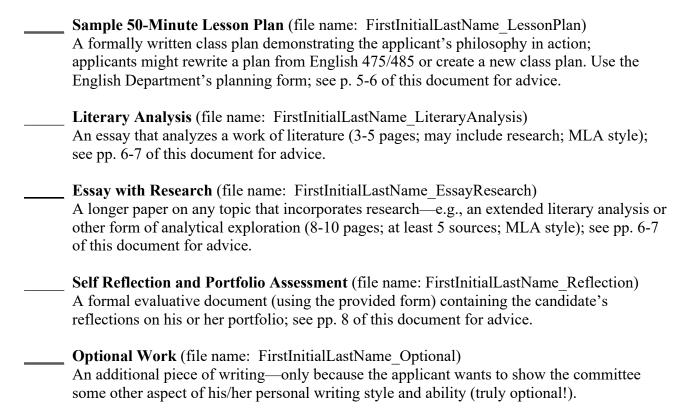
Portfolio Submission

The student will send a SINGLE email to heatjoh@siue.edu with the subject line: First Initial Last Name: Screening Portfolio. Each student will attach 4 or 5 files to this email (5 only if you are submitting an optional piece). ALL FILES should be in Microsoft Word (.doc or .docx). If you have additional materials that *go with* your lesson plan, find a way to INTEGRATE those into the lesson plan file (add them at the end of the document).

Note: All of the items in your portfolio must be revised. Do NOT include the same paper you used for a class "as is"—you have a new audience with new expectations. A paper that got an "A" in a class might not even be *passing* in a portfolio, because expectations can be very different. All the items should be *highly polished*—far more so than is required in most classes. Also note that MLA guidelines for bibliographic citation changed recently, so your works cited pages may need updating.

Screening Portfolio Checklist

_____	**Sample 50-Minute Lesson Plan** (file name: FirstInitialLastName_LessonPlan)
	A formally written class plan demonstrating the applicant's philosophy in action; applicants might rewrite a plan from English 475/485 or create a new class plan. Use the English Department's planning form; see p. 5-6 of this document for advice.

_____	**Literary Analysis** (file name: FirstInitialLastName_LiteraryAnalysis)
	An essay that analyzes a work of literature (3-5 pages; may include research; MLA style); see pp. 6-7 of this document for advice.

_____	**Essay with Research** (file name: FirstInitialLastName_EssayResearch)
	A longer paper on any topic that incorporates research—e.g., an extended literary analysis or other form of analytical exploration (8-10 pages; at least 5 sources; MLA style); see pp. 6-7 of this document for advice.

_____	**Self Reflection and Portfolio Assessment** (file name: FirstInitialLastName_Reflection)
	A formal evaluative document (using the provided form) containing the candidate's reflections on his or her portfolio; see pp. 8 of this document for advice.

_____	**Optional Work** (file name: FirstInitialLastName_Optional)
	An additional piece of writing—only because the applicant wants to show the committee some other aspect of his/her personal writing style and ability (truly optional!).

Each paper should include an MLA-style heading on the left hand side of the page, as well as page numbers in the *header*, on the right. The heading should look like this:

FirstName LastName
Student Teacher Screening
Name of Document
Date of Submission

Portfolio & Screening Process: What We're Looking for and Why

Candidates for student teaching should take this process very seriously. The screening portfolio is ultimately an examination of the candidate's ability to write with purpose, focus, and style according to the conventions of edited standard English and the professional standards of the Modern Language Association. Moreover, the screening interview assesses the candidate's capacity for proficient oral communication and professional comportment. If the candidate's portfolio is sloppy or immature, if the candidate does not demonstrate skill in oral communication, or if the candidate does not exhibit an understanding of basic English pedagogy, then the committee will ask the student to rescreen the following semester. In some cases, the committee may attach additional stipulations to be completed before rescreening or may request that the student withdraw from SIUE's Program in Secondary English Education. Candidates for student teaching will only be permitted to screen twice. If a candidate does not meet the committee's expectations in his or her second attempt, then he or she will not be approved to student teach. In such cases, upon completion of remaining major/minor coursework, a student will be cleared for graduation from SIUE with an English major and Speech Communication minor. What follows is a breakdown of our primary concerns:

- Professionalism
  There's a good reason this one is first on the list: it'll determine your audience's attitude toward you (your future audience, by the way, will include the principals and teachers who might hire you, as well as your students-to-be). You need to look, sound, and write like you deserve the job, like you belong in front of a classroom. It might be unfair, but *first impressions matter*. If you're sloppy in any way—in your writing or self-presentation, your "audience" will recognize it and dismiss you as a result. It is part of our job, as your screening committee, to let you know what kind of impression you are making (and to be painfully blunt, if that's what's called for).

- Dynamic, Analytical Thinking
  Not only is analytical thinking a skill that you will help your students to develop, it is also a necessary instrument in your own teacherly toolbox. Classrooms change, students' needs change, prevailing social attitudes change, and educational goals change. If you can't think analytically, you won't be able to adjust to these changes; you won't be able to develop new teaching strategies, new interpretations, new assignments, or new classroom management techniques to meet new conditions. Furthermore, if you can't approach reading and writing analytically (that is, if you must rely on others to do the analysis for you, or if you rely solely on previous designs), you'll get bored quickly (and your students will, too). Getting into the habit of thinking analytically will allow you to more effectively think on your feet (an invaluable skill in the classroom).

- Critical Self-Reflection
  Right now, you've got teachers who are looking out for you—teachers who will point out when you are doing something well or poorly. In the future, you won't have that luxury nearly so consistently. While you may have colleagues who can give you feedback, if you wish to really improve as a teacher, thinker, and writer, you'll need to reflect critically on your own performance and find your own motivation to improve. You'll need to be able to measure your own successes and failures (and devise ways of repeating the success or

addressing the failures). In other words, when you become a teacher, it isn't just your students you are teaching—it's yourself as well. You need to become your own primary guide. The committee wants to see you start the process now.

- Clarity
Speaking and writing clearly is always important, of course, but it becomes even more so when you are writing for readers who may be reading quickly, with limited patience, or with less acuity. Your students will not, as a rule, be willing to read your prose carefully to determine meaning, and a member of a hiring committee may not have the time to parse your sentences. Write and speak clearly and concisely, with good audience awareness. While we appreciate creativity and risk-taking (see dynamic, analytical thinking, above), neither of these qualities will be apparent to a reader if your writing is unclear. Seek complexity, but don't sacrifice clarity in pursuit of it.

- Engagement
Teaching is not a job for the dispassionate or ambivalent; it takes fortitude, drive, and genuine investment. If you don't care about your subjects, your students, or the practice of teaching your students will know it. Perhaps more importantly, *you'll know it too*. In order to succeed as a teacher (that is, to continue to educate and inspire your students in spite of low wages, heavy workloads, administrative hassles, and disciplinary headaches), you need to genuinely care about what you are teaching. We want to see intellectual engagement with and enthusiasm for the job, the material, and the process.

- Pedagogical Acumen
Obviously, we don't expect you to know how to handle every classroom situation or how to best teach every concept and skill. These are things that come only with time, experience, and experimentation. However, you should already have a good sense of what effective pedagogy looks like. You should not only be familiar with some basic teaching strategies, but you should be able to apply fundamental pedagogical principles to new situations. We expect you to speak intelligently about your future teaching, approaching the subject from a thoughtful, reasoned perspective that sets high educational standards while recognizing possible limitations and obstacles.

Advice for Portfolio Compilers

Hints and Tips from SIUE English Faculty
Profs. Jill Anderson, Heather Johnson, and Matthew Johnson

Sample 50-Minute Class Plan

As teachers, we make class plans for ourselves—not only to keep ourselves organized, but also to reflect on our own teaching strategies. Any class plan will implicitly answer rhetorical questions about the students we are teaching, anticipating how they will respond to the plan when it's put into practice. Remember that, for this class plan, you have yet another audience in mind: the portfolio readers. These readers will have just read your reflective letter and your teaching

philosophy, and they will expect to see your reflections and your philosophy illustrated in your class plan. A sample of the class planner that we expect you to use will be handed out separately, and copies can be found on the SIUE English Education site http://www.siue.edu/artsandsciences/english/undergraduate/Student%20Teacher%20Screening.shtml
Along with the planner, you should include any handouts or additional materials that are integral to our understanding of the lesson. This may mean that the class plan is quite long. That's fine. If you are using a lesson plan developed in English 475 or 485, you may delete or keep parts of the section titled "Teacher Reflection and Impact on Student Learning." If the section won't make sense to a reader who did not see your demonstration, remove it. If, however, you think some of the information is accessible and *important* or *enlightening*, you may keep it.

Literary Analysis & *Essay with Research*

The literary analysis is your place to demonstrate your critical thinking skills, your ability to engage closely with a text, and your application of effective writing strategies (and by extension, your ability to model these skills effectively for your students). The longer essay with research does this, too, but the best-researched essays will also show your ability to think independently *in spite of* the pressure of other influences (the authors whom you've discovered through research) and your ability to interact with others in your chosen field, as part of a larger community of scholars. No classroom is an island—or at least it *shouldn't be*—you should be open enough to integrate new teaching strategies and philosophies into your own practice, but independent enough to alter them to suit your needs or to reject them when necessary. In other words, these two documents demonstrate what you will aspire to be as a teacher *and* a scholar. As always, the integrated source material and the works cited page for each paper must be professionally formatted in Modern Language Association style.

When writing/revising these two papers, keep the following guidelines in mind:

- Both the literary analysis and the longer essay with research must present and develop **a strong main claim or thesis** that makes an actual argument (that is, the main claim is NOT merely an opinion or a description). Think of the thesis in two parts: first, the claim itself; second, commentary on the *significance* of that claim (this latter element could be addressed in the conclusion, rather than the introduction, of the essay). Some notion of why the claim is important, what we learn from it, or how it inspires us to think differently will serve these papers well.

- Both papers must be logically and effectively organized, with well developed paragraphs and smooth transitions between them. General rule of thumb: if paragraphs can be taken out or put in multiple positions without changing the argument flow substantially or requiring major and careful revision, then the structure of the paper has not been considered carefully enough.

- Both essays must do MORE than merely summarize. In the case of the literary analysis, do *not* just summarize literary work or explain the most basic message of the text; your readers can discover this on their own—*you* need to give them something more, something that they can't get from a simple reading. Same goes for the longer essay with research: don't just summarize your sources, *do* something with them (see next note). You will need to very briefly summarize primary texts, just in case your new audience is unfamiliar with them, but do it *very rapidly*—just a few sentences should be sufficient, if you practice brevity.

- The essay with research must provide evidence from outside sources that you then *use* or *interpret*. A true humanities scholar doesn't simply collect data and then report it: you need to clearly show how the research you've done helps you to develop and complicate your overall argument. In other words, the source material can be used to support claims, certainly, but also can be used to complicate, counterargue, challenge, shape, illustrate, show by metaphor/example, prove, etc. Source material cannot stand on its own, but rather must be dealt with in some way. The essay with research should NOT be a data dump nor a mere report of information. *You* are still the author, the thinker, the person with something to say.

- For the essay with research, you need to integrate at least **six** sources. Excessive use of non-academic online sources, especially websites, is highly discouraged. Try to demonstrate your ability to interact effectively with different kinds of sources, especially traditional scholarly works. *Show* your readers that you've considered the degree to which any given source can be trusted and that you've thought through its appropriate use.

- Papers should be significantly revised. Remember that you are writing in a different context and to a different audience than that for which the paper was originally intended. Don't assume that we're all familiar with specialized jargon that you might have discussed in a class or with the minutiae of particular historical periods.

- This portfolio is a specialized compilation that demonstrates your aptitude for professional writing and presentation. You papers must maintain good diction and proper mechanics (readability) with interesting, varied sentence structure and careful, compelling word choice.

- Each essay should have an interesting and/or catchy title that somehow relates to the paper's main claim or content in general (that is, the title needs to be informative first, clever second).

- Don't use fancy fonts or odd spacing/layout. Since part of the task is to demonstrate your membership in the *profession*, you need to demonstrate that you understand the conventions of that profession. Scholars in English, education, and related fields don't want flash; they want substance. Again, follow MLA style.

- Research conventions differ greatly in different fields—a paper you may have written in a political science or biology course (for example) will most likely NOT be appropriate for this portfolio. If in doubt check with the screening director (heatjoh@siue.edu).

Self-Reflection and Portfolio Assessment

This document should be completed *after* you've compiled the rest of the portfolio, so make sure you leave yourself enough time at the end of the process to fill in the assessment form carefully, thoughtfully, and where applicable, *creatively*. This is your chance *consciously* show how you have *reflected* on your writing, your teaching, your learning—and how that reflection benefits you as writer/teacher. Why/how does this portfolio reveal your abilities/strengths as writer (or development as writer), future teacher, and thinker?

The digital form is available at:
http://www.siue.edu/artsandsciences/english/undergraduate/Student%20Teacher%20Screening.shtml, or you may email Dr. Johnson (heatjoh@siue.edu) for a copy.

Self-Reflection and Portfolio Assessment

Name:

Screening Semester:

Date Completed:

Instructions: First, **review your entire portfolio.** Then answer the questions below. Take this as an opportunity to *explore* where you are in this moment of your academic development. Be positive, but honest. Do a frank appraisal of yourself and "where you are now" as demonstrated in the portfolio.

When the document is complete, save it as FirstInitialLastName_Assessment and email it to heatjoh@siue.edu along with your other files.

1. Skills (Critical Reading, Writing, Thinking, Researching, Revising): Reflect on your "English" skill set, including what you feel you are prepared to *model* and *teach* to your students. What skills are best displayed in this portfolio? What abilities do you feel it is most imperative that you continue develop? (Another way to put this: what elements of the curriculum are you most nervous about teaching, and why?)

Expand as needed here

2. Pedagogy: Interrogate your approach to teaching. What pedagogical strategies are you most attached to? What do you feel are the most important goals in an ELA classroom? How do you link daily classroom practice to the Common Core Standards and other institutional demands? Pay special attention to any concerns that may not have appeared in your lesson plan.

Expand as needed here

3. Professionalism & Engagement: Consider your role as a future colleague (you'll be working both with administrators and with fellow teachers) and role model (you'll represent "responsible adulthood" for your students). What, in your opinion, are the hallmarks of professional behavior? How do you show your professional, responsible attitude in this portfolio and in your approach to education more generally? Assess your engagement with the portfolio process and the secondary education program. Discuss your thoughts about engagement, motivation, and dedication to the field.

Expand as needed here

4. Reflective Learning: Examine portfolio construction as part of a larger learning process. The portfolio is one piece of your college experience, which also includes *lots* of different courses, observations, student teaching, and informal learning through peers. What do you feel you learned from the screening portfolio, and how might you pass your insights along to your future students?

Expand as needed here