

Welcome Letter to ARSC 1201 “Step 1” Students

Dear Students of ARSC 1201:

We’re your instructors for *STEP 1: Inquiry Approaches to Teaching* and are excited to soon meet you! This course is designed to interest math and science-related majors in the possibility of becoming secondary math or science teachers (grades 7-12), and we’re glad you are interested in “trying out” math or science teaching! If you choose to continue in the UAteach program, you can earn a minor in secondary education while getting your degree in math or science, and you’ll be ready to apply for your Arkansas teaching license.

In addition to coming to class once a week, you and a partner will be assigned to a mentor teacher in a local middle school for a ‘practicum’ in a 4th, 5th, or 6th grade classroom. You may be thinking ‘why middle school’ when you are considering teaching secondary school! Well, the middle school audience turns out to be a terrific place to try out teaching for the first time!

- **Practicum: Students will make 5 visits** throughout the semester (with a partner) to a math or science classroom at a local school to observe your assigned mentor teacher’s class and to teach 3 lessons. If you don’t have a car, we’ll pair you with someone who is willing to drive!
- **Each visit requires a 2-2 ½ hour block of time in your schedule** that matches your partner’s and your mentor teacher’s schedule. Under some circumstances, we might be able to schedule you for a lesser block of time. Travel will not exceed a ½ hour drive one way, and is included in our estimated block time. If your schedule is so tight that we cannot find a practicum placement for you, you will have to take Step 1 a different semester. **Please bring your university schedule to class the first day so we can begin scheduling practicums!**
- **Attendance is mandatory**, including the first day of class. Points are deducted for absences. If you do not attend class on the first day, *we may be unable to assign you a teaching team, and you may need to postpone your taking of STEP 1 to the following semester. Also, attendance at a 2 hour final exam period is worth 12% of the final grade – a student who does not attend the final will have a grade drop of one letter grade.*
- **Communication with others is an important element of this course.** Although you are given some class time to prepare for the 3 lessons that you will teach, you will need to stay in contact with your assigned teaching partner, and with your instructor and mentor teacher outside of class time to successfully plan the lessons. Students who have dropped the course partway through the semester tended to have communication problems and did not have adequate commitment to working with a partner.
- **Commitment to your mentor teacher’s class is expected.** You only go out to your assigned school 5 times throughout the semester, but we expect 100% commitment within that timeframe to learning from your mentor, getting to know your students, providing valuable lesson experiences for them, and exhibiting professional behavior.
- For those of you interested in teaching math and science but have fewer than 5 semesters remaining before graduation, we can help you determine if the one-year “Master of Arts in Teaching” (MAT) program might be a better path toward teacher

licensure for you than the undergraduate UAteach program. We still encourage you to take this introductory course as it satisfies a pre-req for the MAT!

- If you decide this course is not for you, remember the drop date for any tuition refund is at the end of the first week of classes!

We look forward to sharing many great teaching moments with you this semester and really think you will enjoy the class! Although we team-teach the Step 1 courses, Dr. McComas typically works with students on developing math lessons and Ms. Childress or Ms. Ward works with the science lessons! All of us are here to help you get interested and knowledgeable about teaching!

There is a map to the UAteach 'house' (UTCH) on our website teach.uark.edu. The UAteach 'house' will be open the Friday before classes, 10:00-2:00, providing an opportunity to find our somewhat-hidden building, and meet our staff, before classes begin.

Please, do not hesitate to e-mail us if you have any questions or concerns about the course, or would like more information about how the UAteach minor can fit into your degree! We are here to help get you interested in teaching math or science as a career option!

Dr. Kim McComas kmccomas@uark.edu
Ms. Michelle Childress mjc1219@uark.edu
Ms. Peggy Ward pdward@uark.edu

UAteach, University of Arkansas
946 W. Clinton Avenue, UAteach House (next door to the Clinton House)
479- 575-3280