This course is designed primarily for prospective and returning English and Language Arts teachers, but also for students just wanting to improve their conscious understanding of English grammar and their ability to apply that understanding to a broad range of problems in language use. The course starts from the presumption that each of us is already a fully competent language user—that is, we are all fully possessed of a perfectly fluent comprehension of the structures and functions of our language. After all, to “know” a language means precisely to be able to sort out tacitly the possible (or grammatical) sentences of a language from the impossible (ungrammatical), and to determine which particular grammatical choices are appropriate in particular contexts of use. The problem, of course, is to learn to make our tacit or unconscious knowledge conscious, and to learn to apply that knowledge in deliberate ways to the language problems we encounter as teachers, as writers and readers, and in our daily language use.

Since all of us already possess a core, underlying knowledge of English grammar, we will not spend a great deal of time reviewing the long lists of traditional grammatical “rules” you all likely recall (though perhaps vaguely) from your earlier school experiences. Instead, we will focus on learning alternative operational strategies designed to help you access and apply that knowledge you already possess. Moreover, we will emphasize the rhetorical nature of the grammatical choices we make when we use language—that is, we’ll look at our grammar not simply as a system of rules to be applied correctly or incorrectly, but as a more complex system of resources that can be manipulated strategically (even violated, in some cases) to achieve our complex rhetorical purposes. Throughout the term we’ll draw as needed from a variety of grammatical frameworks, including prescriptive, descriptive or structural, generative, and performance-based grammars. In our analyses, we’ll aim to sustain a balance of formal and functional approaches. And we’ll work consistently to move beyond our discussions of grammatical structures in isolation to investigate more practically the ways grammatical analysis can inform the decisions we make as writers and how we might teach writing, as well as how it might enrich our understanding of literature and of language in society more generally.

**Texts and Readings**

*Rental:*


**Objectives**

At the conclusion of this course, you should be able to do the following:

• define, identify, and utilize the principal elements of traditional school grammar; (CK)
• demonstrate your abilities to move beyond traditional school grammar to describe and utilize elements drawn from more contemporary, linguistically-oriented grammars of English; (CK, SM)
• describe and utilize operational strategies for identifying grammatical structures; (CK)
• describe and utilize strategies for manipulating grammatical structures for rhetorical effect; (CK) and
• describe and utilize strategies for applying grammatical knowledge to the areas of your own personal interest, including writing, teaching, literary analysis, and the uses of language in society. (CK, SM)