

Fall 8-15-2011

# ENG 2011G-002: Literature, The Self, And The World

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Literature, the Self, and the World (Fiction)  
"Coming of Age Stories"  
English 2011—Fall, 2011  
3:30-4:45, T/R, Coleman 3609

Instructor: Tim Engles  
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Course listserv: 2011fl11@lists.eiu.edu

Phone: 581-6316  
Office hours: 2-3, Tues/Thurs, and  
by appointment

TRS Texts:

We will read these books together--

*The Catcher in the Rye*, J. D. Salinger (1951)  
*Caucasia*, Danzy Senna (1999)  
*Fight Club*, Chuck Palahniuk (2005)  
*Never Let Me Go*, Kazuo Ishiguro (2005)  
*Blankets*, Craig Thompson (2003)

You will choose one of these books to read on your own--

*Hula*, Lisa Shea (1994)  
*The God of Small Things*, Arundhati Roy (1997)  
*American Son*, Brian Ascalon Roley (2001)  
*Bombingham*, Anthony Grooms (2001)  
*Secondhand World*, Katherine Min (2006)  
*Fun Home*, Alison Bechdel (2006)

**COURSE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

*The job of young people is not, as we sometimes assume, to go to high school. It is to imagine and begin to construct their lives. They need to understand both their own interests and abilities and the society of which they are a part. And they need to make a self that makes sense for the times in which they live. This isn't easy.*  
—Thomas Hine

*Bildungsroman: A novel that recounts the development (psychological and sometimes spiritual) of an individual from childhood to maturity, to the point at which the protagonist recognizes his or her place in the world.*  
—Ross Murfin

**(read the following carefully! these words constitute our contract,  
and I will request your written agreement to them)**

**COURSE OBJECTIVES AND GOALS:** A primary goal of this course is to enhance your skills in the art of textual analysis, a skill that any university student should fully develop. We will read, discuss, and write about works that foreground issues of growing up and coming to understand (or misunderstand) the world around us. We will ask how literature and film seem to reflect artistic intentions and social values, and whether they help to shape social values and beliefs. We will take a sociological/anthropological approach to our material, considering along the way such relevant factors as race, class, gender, and sexuality, and how these factors play out differently in different societal contexts. Issues and ideas that many consider touchy and off limits will arise in our readings and discussions, so you will need to approach this course and its material with an open mind and a willingness to seriously consider viewpoints expressed from different perspectives. This course requires regular, dedicated work (reading and talking), periodic pop quizzes, two formal essays, and two exams.

Finally, note that some of the works we'll study contain a good deal of "bad" language, controversial themes, and strong sexual content. If for any reason you strongly object to such material or otherwise find it upsetting, you should consider taking another course. If you decide to stay, do your best to maintain an open mind, to reconsider where your own values and judgments are coming from, and to understand as fully as you can the circumstances of others before judging them.

**GRADES:** Your final course grade will be determined in the following way:

Exam 1	20%
Final exam	25%
Shorter essay (4-5 pages)	15%
Longer essay (6-8 pages)	20%
Participation/quizzes/attendance	20%

Note: There will be no makeup exams in this course; if a student misses an exam, the makeup assignment will be a formal, eight-page essay on a topic chosen by the professor.

**REGARDING WRITING:** All writing assignments are due at the beginning of the class period on the day they are due, whether the student is in class or not. Papers will be graded on a one hundred-point scale, and late papers will be penalized fifteen points each day they are late. You may turn in papers before their due dates if you know you must miss class that day. Good, clear, careful writing and solid, insightful content will improve paper grades dramatically.

**REGARDING THE WRITING CENTER:** If you are aware of chronic problems with your writing, I strongly recommend that you make use of the English Department's Writing Center. Tutoring services there are free, and students are welcome to drop in, or schedule appointments during working hours (Room 3110 of Coleman Hall, <http://www.eiu.edu/~writing>). While I will pay close attention to each student's particular writing problems, I may advise some students to seek additional help at the Writing Center.

Writing Center consultants will not proofread your papers, but they will work with you on a number of important features of your writing, such as these:

- Understanding and analyzing writing assignments
- Moving past writer's block
- Brainstorming topics and ideas
- Revising for stronger content and adapting to audience
- Developing focus and thesis statements
- Organizing ideas and support
- Developing evidence, examples, and supporting details
- Revising for stronger development of and work with source materials
- Guiding writers to effectively integrate source materials
- Providing guidance on using citation systems
- Offering assistance on how to effectively and ethically summarize, paraphrase, and quote source materials
- Implementing strategies for strong paragraphing
- Improving cohesion through transitions and organization
- Revising for sentence-level clarity, precision, and emphasis
- Creating sentence variety for emphasis and cohesion
- Offering strategies for efficient and effective proofreading and editing
- Helping students find their own process for proofreading and editing

**REGARDING READING (AND QUIZZES):** Since one skill you will be developing in this class is the art of textual analysis, you must give the readings more than a quick skimming over (and of course, you must read the novels, rather than notes of some sort about the novels). Instead of wolfing them down right before class, set aside enough time to read all of the assigned pages, and to read them carefully. I suggest that you take notes as you read, then decide for yourself, before coming to class, what each author is trying to describe and bring to light.

Also, to ensure that your final grade reflects your reading effort, I will occasionally give “pop” quizzes at the beginning of class on required readings. These quizzes will not be announced beforehand and because the answers to unannounced quizzes come up in class after they are taken, they cannot be made up (even if you come to class late). These quizzes are one way to reward those who attend class regularly and on time. I recognize that some students must be absent at times; accordingly, when I compile your quiz grades at the end of the semester into an average score, I will drop the lowest one—if you miss a quiz, that will be your one dropped quiz. If you don't miss any quizzes, I will still drop your lowest score from your quiz average.

**E-mail Activity:** Enrollment in this class requires an e-mail account, and you must check it frequently for messages pertaining to the course (that is, several times per week, at least). You already have an EIU account; you're welcome to use another type of account, but just be sure you use one for this course that you tend to check frequently, and be sure that messages pertaining to this course do not end up in your “Junk Mail” folder. We will use our course listserv (or “e-mail discussion list”) for announcements and for occasional extension of in-class discussion. E-mail is also the quickest, easiest way to reach me if I am not in my office; I welcome any and all e-mailed questions and comments.

Using e-mail is crucial for this course—if you do not send me an e-mail message (tdengles@eiu.edu) by Friday, August 26 at 3:00 p.m., I will assume that you have chosen against fully participating in the course, and I will therefore drop you. In that message, (1) tell me which course you're in (English 2011); (2) describe yourself in whatever way you choose, including your career aspirations; (3) write a statement to the effect that you have read and agree to (or perhaps in part disagree with, which is fine, if you explain why) these course policies and requirements; and (4) as with all emails sent to your instructors, "sign" it by adding your name at the end of the message. Sending me this message will also constitute your "signature" of our course contract, that is, these Policies and Procedures that you're reading. I will then use your email address to subscribe you to the class listserv (you don't have to subscribe to it yourself).

**CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT:** In class, my teaching style is to lead discussions as much as possible, rather than perform lectures. Lectures are fun for me, but as studies have repeatedly demonstrated, less effective for you. As in all of your college courses, you should strive to demonstrate that you are an active, engaged, and interested reader by contributing regularly to class discussions, and by paying close, respectful attention to what everyone else has to say. If you have questions, no matter how simple or complicated, go ahead and ask, either in class or via e-mail—chances are that other people have the same question. Again, I plan to keep lectures to a minimum, and I instead want us to contribute together, in a focused conversation, toward a positive, challenging, and interesting learning environment.

Some final details—please note that drinking beverages in class is okay, but chewing gum or eating food can be very distracting to others, so please don't. Also, no caps, please, but if you must wear one, turn it backwards so we can see your eyes. Finally, no computers in class, which are also distracting to others in a smaller, discussion-based class like ours.

**ATTENDANCE POLICY:** I will take attendance, and I expect you to attend class every day, on time and prepared to discuss the material listed for that day on the "Daily Schedule" (you will be receiving a completed Schedule for the entire semester soon). Note that more than three missed classes will lower your class participation grade to an F. Missing class frequently will also harm your grade on the reading quizzes. Regarding tardiness: this is a small class, so late arrivals are disruptive—if for some bizarre reason you wish to get on my bad side, you can easily do so by developing the habit of arriving late for class. If you will not be able to arrive for this class on time because of other commitments, drop it and take another course.

**ACADEMIC HONESTY:** I expect you to act honestly and do your own work in this class, and so does Eastern Illinois University. It is your responsibility to familiarize yourself with the English Department's policy on plagiarism: "Any teacher who discovers an act of plagiarism—'The appropriation or imitation of the language, ideas, and/or thoughts of another author, and representation of them as one's original work' (*Random House Dictionary of the English Language*)—has the right and the responsibility to impose upon the guilty student an appropriate penalty, up to and including immediate assignment of a grade of F for the course, and to report the incident to the Judicial Affairs Office."

**ENGLISH 2011: DAILY SCHEDULE**  
**(this schedule may be subject to change)**

T AUG 23 Introduction to the course; begin watching *Rebel without a Cause*

- After class, and sometime before Friday, August 26 at 3:00 p.m., send an e-mail message to Dr. Engles at [tdengles@eiu.edu](mailto:tdengles@eiu.edu) (see above, "E-mail Activity," for detailed instructions)

R AUG 25 Continue *Rebel without a Cause*; read for today the handout from Tuesday, two reviews of books about teenagers

F AUG 26, 3:00 p.m.: **Deadline** for sending Dr. Engles an e-mail at [tdengles@eiu.edu](mailto:tdengles@eiu.edu) (see above, "E-mail Activity," for detailed instructions)

T AUG 30 Discuss *Rebel without a Cause* and *The Catcher in the Rye*

R SEP 1 *Catcher in the Rye*

T SEP 6 *Catcher in the Rye*

R SEP 8 *Catcher in the Rye*

T SEP 13 *Caucasia*

R SEP 15 *Caucasia*

T SEP 20 *Caucasia*

R SEP 22 Discussion of Essay One, including essay-writing tips

T SEP 27 *Caucasia*

R SEP 29 *Caucasia*

T OCT 4 Read two articles for today (handouts from last week); In-class film: *Two Lies*

R OCT 6 Reading for today TBA; In-class film: *Winter's Bone* (2010)

T OCT 11 Continue watching *Winter's Bone*; Essay One due at the beginning of class

(W Oct 12 Midpoint of the semester)

R OCT 13 Reading for today TBA; discuss *Winter's Bone*

T OCT 18 Mid-term exam

R OCT 20 *Never Let Me Go*

T OCT 25 *Never Let Me Go*

R OCT 27 *Never Let Me Go*

T NOV 1 *Never Let Me Go*

R NOV 3 read two articles for today (handouts from last week); in-class film: *The Smell of Burning Ants*

T NOV 8 *Fight Club*

R NOV 10 *Fight Club*

T NOV 15 *Fight Club*

R NOV 17 *Fight Club*; discussion of final essay, including tips for writing comparison  
-contrast essays

NOV 21 – 25 Thanksgiving Break!

T NOV 29 *Blankets*

R DEC 1 *Blankets*

T DEC 6 *Blankets*

R DEC 8 Last day of class; *Blankets*; final essay due at the beginning of class

DEC 12 – 16 Final Exam Period (our exam: Tuesday, December 13, 2:45-4:45 p.m.)