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ENG 5742Z-600: Studies in Genre

Randall Beebe

Eastern Illinois University

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UN/RELIABLE

Narration & Form in YA Literature

8-week Seminar :: August 24 - October 16, 2020

TEXTS

Stephen Chbosky, *Perks of Being a Wallflower* (1999)

Mark Haddon, *Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* (2003)

Jonathan Gottschall, *The Storytelling Animal* (2012)

Additional texts available on D2L

REQUIREMENTS

Discussion Posts - 20%

Short Papers - 30%

Group Project - 20%

Final Project - 30%

Prof. R. Beebe
rlbeebe@eiu.edu
Coleman Hall 3841

Office Hours:
via CU or Zoom
M,W 10-12 & by appt.

Course Description

This 8-week graduate seminar explores contemporary YA fiction through the problematic and fascinating lens of the unreliable narrator. In addition to reading selected examples of YA fiction, students will also be introduced to narrative theory (concepts, disputes, and history) in order to understand how unreliability—and narration in general—have been discussed in the professional literature. Students will complete weekly online discussions, short papers, and both a group and final project.

Course Format

This is an asynchronous course, and the course activities are organized by weeks with the following approximate schedule:

- Weeks 1-2: Intro to YA and narrative concepts
- Weeks 3-4: Chbosky, *Perks of Being a Wallflower*
- Weeks 5-6: Haddon, *Curious Incident*
- Weeks 7-8: Group Project; Individual Project

Each week, you will complete a discussion-related activity (due midweek) and short paper (due on Sunday).

More specifics about course activities and the course schedule are available in separate documents.

Conferences

Since one of the main goals of this course is to set up and complete a project designed for your professional interests, you should plan to meet with me frequently to discuss your project. At the very least, students will be expected to schedule at least two conferences (one during the first two weeks of the course; the second in weeks 4-5).

Conferences can take place via Collaborate Ultra, Zoom, or by phone and can be scheduled for any time during the day or early evening on Monday, Wednesday, or Friday. I'm happy to talk with just as often as you need.

COVID-19 Policy

The course is structured to be flexible and accommodating to students' needs and circumstances during the pandemic. At no point will you be penalized for not completing work on time. However, I ask that you keep in contact with me about your status so that I can assist you in setting up alternative activities or due dates.

Academic Honesty

Students are of course responsible for knowing Eastern Illinois University's regulations and policies regarding academic honesty. Plagiarism, even if unknowing or accidental, can result in your failing the course and in further action by the university. Please note the English Department's statement 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 own 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 assignments, of a grade of F for the assigned essay and a grade of F for the course, and to report the incident to the Judicial Affairs Office. If you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism, feel free to ask me to clarify.

Course Etiquette

In an online course, most communication is done through written messages either in private posts or public discussions. It is important that students in online courses be especially sensitive to how messages and sentiment are communicated and received. Accordingly, I abide by EIU's policy on acceptable etiquette for online courses (next page).

Eastern Illinois University (EIU) is committed to open, frank, and insightful dialogue in all of its courses. Diversity has many manifestations, including diversity of thought, opinion, and values. We encourage all learners to be respectful of that diversity and to refrain from inappropriate commentary. Should such inappropriate comments occur, the instructor will intervene, removing inappropriate content. The instructor may also recommend university disciplinary action. Learners as well as faculty should be guided by common sense and basic etiquette. The following are good guidelines to follow:

- Never post, transmit, promote, or distribute content that is known to be illegal.
- Never post harassing, threatening, or embarrassing comments. If you disagree with someone, respond to the subject, not the person. Conflicts of ideas are encouraged, while conflicts of feelings are discouraged.
- Never post content that is harmful, abusive; racially or culturally insensitive, or religiously offensive, vulgar; sexually explicit, or otherwise potentially offensive.

Remember you are communicating with real people.

Students and instructors in your course have feelings, lives, jobs, families and a myriad of other issues that you may know little about. Once you have finished writing something, and before you send it, re-read it looking at your words from someone else's perspective. How would they see it? Could it be misinterpreted? Could you rephrase to make it clearer or more on topic?

Write clearly & professionally.

In any course-related communication (emails, chats, discussions), use standard proper English with correct grammar. Using slang, errors in mechanics, and shortcuts maybe difficult for others to understand. Avoid ALL CAPS, bolding and underlining. It could be misinterpreted. Avoid offensive language. Also make sure to sign your name to any post.

Be kind and ethical.

Do not belittle other students or the instructor. You may disagree with what someone says, but focus on the issue, not the person. Behave online as you would in person. Be forgiving of the mistakes of others.

Help others.

If someone asks a question, answer it if you are sure of the correct answer or if you have insight that could be helpful.