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ENG 4903-001: Young Adult Literature

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Course Description:
This course is designed to introduce you to a range of literature for young adults (ages 12-18) as well as provide you with a variety of critical tools for reading, discussing, and writing about the literature. Through the readings, lectures, films, and discussions (both in small and large groups) we will examine the intricacies of multiculturalism in young adult literature; we will explore the role of multiple literacies as pedagogical and theoretical sights of learning; we will write and perform thoughtful, insightful prose; and, finally, yet fundamentally, we will examine the literature from a critical lens.

In this course, special attention will be given to the role of the “other” in young adult literature. As defined by Clarke (2004), “Othering is a process that identifies those that are thought to be different from oneself or the mainstream, and it can reinforce and reproduce positions of domination and subordination” (p. 1). As such, we will examine how the other gets taken up in young adult literature and its cultural implications for readers on micro and macro levels.

Required Texts:
Young Adult Literature: From Romance to Realism (Cart)
Staying Fat for Sarah Byrnes (Crutcher)
Mockingbird (Erskine)
Looking for Alaska (Green)
The First Part Last (Johnson)
The Giver (Lowry)
Sold (McCormick)
Wonder (Palacio)
Persepolis (Satrapi)
Unwind (Shusterman)
*You will also be required to read self-selected texts from the library.
**Additionally, handouts will be distributed throughout the semester

Special Needs:
Students with documented disabilities should contact the Office of Disability Services (581.6583) as soon as possible so we can work out appropriate accommodations.

Cell Phones:
Please put your cell phone on silent or vibrate during class time.

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 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. Respect for the work of others should encompass all formats, including print, electronic, and oral sources.

The Writing Center:
I encourage you to use EIU’s Writing Center located at 3110 Coleman Hall. This free service provides one-to-one conferences with writing center consultants who can help you with brainstorming, organizing, developing support, and documenting your papers.

The writing center is open to help any student from any major at any stage of his or her writing process, and its system of one-to-one conferences demonstrates value and respect for individual writers, all of whom can benefit from feedback about their works in progress.

To schedule an appointment, you can drop by the center (3110 Coleman Hall) or you can call 581-5929. The writing center is open Monday through Thursday, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., and 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. On Friday hours of operation are 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Course Guidelines and Expectations:

1. As this is an interactive course, participation is required. You help create this atmosphere by making an effort to answer and ask questions during class discussion and group work, and by responding thoughtfully to other people’s comments and responses. Participation is worth 40 points of your grade and includes self-directed discussion, questions posed during class, ability to answer questions indicative of close textual reading, and being alert during class sessions (i.e., no cell phone activity, sleeping, disruptive conversations, or use of laptops/ipads/tablets, etc for anything other than work for my class). Points will be deducted for behaviors indicative of anything other than full participation. This is a collaborative learning experience, so constructive criticism and open discussion is encouraged. Attendance is obviously a prerequisite for participation, so if you have more than three (3) un-excused absences, you will lose 5 points per class session you miss.

2. Absences will only be excused when the following conditions are met: a) Circumstances that can be documented on paper (illness, police accident report, university events, etc) b) I receive notification PRIOR to the class that you will be unable to attend. If there is an assignment due the day you will be absent, please
email it to me Prior to the start of class. In the same manner, I expect each student to be on time to class. If you happen to be tardy, please do not disrupt the class. If you are over 10 minutes late to class with no prior notification, you will be marked absent.

3. You are expected to have **ALL** assignments prepared to turn in on the due date. All assignments should be typed, double-spaced, Times New Roman 12 pt. font. Please proofread and edit all papers. **NO LATE ASSIGNMENTS ACCEPTED OR MAKE-UP WORK PROVIDED** unless you are in compliance with the extreme circumstances section above. Do not put extra space between paragraphs. Student information (name, class title, assignment) is single-spaced, in the top left-hand corner of your paper. Additionally, you are expected to bring the proper supplies with you to class each session, including the text we’re reading.

**Caveat:**
In the event that class participation begins to fade, I reserve the right to distribute a pop quiz over the readings and/or class lectures. The quiz will be worth 10 points and will be taken from the final project.

**Assignments:**

1. **Book Club (10 points a piece/20 points total)**
For this assignment, you will self-select a novel from the following categories: Book Awards and “A New Day.” You will read the texts on your own and present them to the class in any creative format you’d like. The idea is to get your classmates so eager to read the text that they would want to be in your book club. You are NOT allowed to choose any of the required novels we’re covering this semester. Your presentation should address elements of multiculturalism and diversity that readers and current/future teachers may find useful. Each student will have 3-4 minutes to present. We will discuss this in further detail during the semester.

A. **Book Awards**- Select a book that has received one of the following awards:

*Pura Belpre Award:* Presented to a Latino/a writer/illustrator whose work best portrays, affirms, and celebrates the Latino cultural experience in an outstanding work of literature for children and youth.

*Michael L. Printz:* Awarded to a book that exemplifies literary excellence in young adult literature.

*Odyssey Award:* Presented to the producer of the best audiobook produced for children and/or young adults, available in English in the United States

*Coretta Scott King Award:* Recognizes outstanding books for young adults and children by African American authors and illustrators that reflect the African American experience.
National Book Award: Annual U.S. literary awards for exemplary writing in the fields of fiction, nonfiction, poetry, and young people’s literature. **DUE January 31st**

B. “A New Day”
After reading Chapter Two in the Cart text, your assignment is to choose a novel from the 60’s or 70’s and think of creative ways to “market” this text to today’s reader (peers and young adults). How can you contemporize a text that may now be considered canonical? What literary elements will readers/teachers find useful? **DUE February 17th**

2. Critical Commentary (10 points a piece/20 points total)

For this assignment, you will use the writing prompts below to develop a typed, one-page, single-spaced critical statement or argument. Please handwrite your name, as I want you to utilize the entire page.

#1 Contemporary realistic fiction is a highly controversial genre in adolescent literature, full of banned and censored books. In this commentary, I’d like you to write a critical review of *Looking for Alaska* and *Staying Fat for Sarah Byrnes* that analyses their usefulness (or lack thereof) in being taught in a classroom, possible connections you think young people could make with the books, your thoughts on the controversial elements of the texts, and finally, a letter grade that you would give each text and why. **DUE February 26th**

#2 After reading the novels, *Mockingbird* and *Wonder*, discuss your initial reaction(s) to the texts. Describe your experience (if any) with students with exceptionalities and how these texts measure up. What are potential take-a-ways for readers? What may be lost in translation? Describe an assignment you would provide students to move them from awareness to activism surrounding young adults with exceptionalities. **DUE April 14th**

3. Book Pairings and Papers: (15 points a piece/30 points total)

Though we will cover multiple book pairings, you will write 2 major papers for 2 pairings: *Unwind* with *The Giver* (**DUE March 21st**) and *Persepolis* with *Sold* (**DUE April 4th**). A total of two papers (thematic and reaction) have to be written for the pairings. For each pairing, you only turn in one paper. For example, if you choose to do a thematic analysis of the first book pairing, the second paper (for the second book pairing) must be a reaction piece. At the end of each of your papers, you must include if you would use these books in your own teaching and/or make recommendations for teachers to use them. Why/Why not? If you are not interested in the field of education, you must make recommendations for readers of young adult literature. **Each paper must be no less than 3 FULL pages. These papers are NOT summaries. Do not retell the texts. Present your argument within the first paragraph and develop it throughout.**

Thematic Analysis: For this paper you need to choose a theme from the texts and carry out that theme throughout the body of the paper. The theme needs to be clearly identified in the first paragraph. You may choose more than one theme.
February 2014: Cont. History/Multiculturalism/Contemporary Realistic Fiction/Banned and Censored Books

3rd   (M) Continued presentations from Book Club A/Discussion of Multiculturalism/Culturally Relevant Pedagogy
Assignment: Complete *The First Part Last*

5th   (W) Class Discussion/small group activity
Assignment: Complete handout on Culturally Relevant Pedagogy

7th   (F) In-class discussion of CRP
10th  (M) Visit Library for Book Club ‘B’
12th  (W) Discussion of texts and ideas
14th  (F) NO SCHOOL-Observance of Lincoln
Assignment: Complete project

17th  (M) Book Club B DUE
Assignment: Complete Chapters 4 and 5 (Cart)
19th  (W) Cont presentations from Book Club B/Discussion of readings
Assignment: Complete *Looking for Alaska* and *Staying Fat for Sarah Byrnes*
21st  (F) Discussion of texts
Assignment: Read Chapters 10 & 11 (Cart)
24th  (M) Continued discussion of texts
26th  (W) Critical Commentary #1 DUE
Assignment: Read Chapter 14 (Cart)
28th  (F) Discussion of Multiple Literacies Project

March 2014: Dystopian Lit/Historical Fiction

3rd   (M) Continued discussion of Multiple Literacies Project/preliminary ideas
Assignment: Read Chapter 7 (Cart)
5th   (W) Discussion of chapter/return to banned books/censorship
7th   (F) Independent Research Day
10-14th SPRING BREAK
Assignment: Complete *Unwind* and *The Giver* and work on Multiple Literacies project
17th  (M) Discussion of texts
19th  (W) Continued discussion of texts
Assignment: Complete Book Pairing #1
21st  (F) Book Pairing #1 DUE
24th  (M) Multiple Literacies Project DUE
26th  (W) Continued project presentations
28th  (F) Class Day to discuss progress/questions/concerns
Assignment: Complete *Persepolis* and *Sold*
31st  (M) Class discussion of texts

April 2014: Historical Fiction/Fiction Part Two/Return to Contemporary Realistic Fiction

2nd   (W) Cont. discussion of texts/Final Project Assignment handed out
4th   (F) Book pairing #2 DUE
7th (M) Discussion of Final Project  
**Assignment:** Complete *Mockingbird and Wonder*  
9th (W) Discussion of texts  
11th (F) Cont. discussion of texts  
14th (M) **Critical Commentary #2 DUE**/ 2nd class discussion of final projects  
16th (W) Movie TBD  
18th (F) Finish Movie  
21-25th Group/individual conferences with Dr. Smith  
28th (F) Critical Commentary #2 DUE/ 2nd class discussion of final projects  
30th (W) No class-Finish projects  

**May 2014**  
2nd (F) **FINAL PROJECT DUE**

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**Evaluation:**

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<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
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<td>Book Club</td>
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<tr>
<td>Book Pairings and Papers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Critical Commentary</td>
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<tr>
<td>YA Lit and Multiple Literacies</td>
<td>40</td>
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<td>Final Project</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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**Grading:**

190-200=A 189-180=B 179-170=C 169-160=D 160 or below=F

**Dr. Smith’s Advice**

If at any point throughout the semester you are confused or unclear about the expectations of the course, course material, a grade you received, or any other matters, I strongly encourage you to come talk with me during office hours. It is my goal that all students succeed in this course; but I can only help if I’m aware of a problem.