

Fall 8-15-2011

## ENG 4903-001: Young Adult Literature

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**English 4903-001**  
**Young Adult Literature**

Fall 2011  
TR 11-12:15  
Office Hours: T/R 1-1:45 and 3:30-4:30; W 1-3 (and by appt.)

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**Course Description and Objectives:** This course in young adult literature balances an historical approach with concentrated emphasis on current fiction, poetry, and other prose written in the young adult genre.

A. An historical approach to the study of this genre is necessary for various reasons:

1. By studying young adult literature from several periods in American literature, we will gain a sense of the genre's literary history.
2. Looking at origins of the young adult literature genre also allows us to analyze the genre's key elements and highlight expectations readers of young adult literature bring to the text.
3. Elements of the genre that are easily recognized and delineated in texts from earlier periods that are alien to us are not as obvious in current works set in a culture in which we are immersed.

B. According to Donelson and Nilson there are three main reasons to know the history of young adult literature:

1. "[We] ought to know not merely where [we] are but also how [we] got there."
2. "For anyone who cares about the mores and morals of our time reflected in adolescent books, there is a fascination in knowing how they came to be. There is no better way to see what adults wanted young people to accept as good and noble at any point in history than to examine adolescent books of the time."
3. "Third . . . many of the older books are surprisingly fun to read" (413).

To give a sense of this genre, we will study works from the 19<sup>th</sup> century to the present, with added concentration on works of today.

You will read some of the following as literature circle choices as well as self-selected YA works of your own, for responses statements, a group presentation, papers, a Wiki page, and exams and quizzes:

Charles H. Frey and Lucy Rollin. *The Classics of Young Adult Literature*, which includes the following:

- Ann S. Stephens. *Malaeska* (1860)
- Horatio Alger. *Ragged Dick* (1867)
- L. M. Montgomery. *Anne of Green Gables* (1908)
- Maureen Daly. *17<sup>th</sup> Summer* (1942)
- S.E. Hinton. *The Outsiders* (1967)
- Alice Childress. *A Hero Ain't Nothin' But a Sandwich* (1973)
- Robert Cormier. *The Chocolate War* (1974)
- Judy Blume. *Forever* (1975)
- Cynthia Voigt. *Homecoming* (1981)
- Gary Paulsen. *Hatchet* (1987)
- Victor Martinez. *Parrot in the Oven* (1996)

M.T. Anderson. *Feed* (2002)

Marion Bauer, Ed. *Am I Blue?* (1994)

Kazu Kibuishi. *Daisy Cutter: The Last Train* (2006)

Marjane Satrapi. *Persepolis: The Story of a Childhood* (2004)

Francisco Stork. *Marcello in the Real World* (2009)

Gene Yang. *American Born Chinese* (2006)

**Course Policies and Requirements:** In order to succeed in this course, you must effectively complete each of the following:

1. Once a week you must write and post to Nicenet a reading response of from 300-500 words answering a question, which you had about the text read for that class (individually or in literary circles). More later.
2. Daily you will be expected to be active in class discussion and in-class activities. Make sure you read the material for each class. In-class writing and quizzes will occur sporadically, as well.
3. You will also write **two papers**, one due at midterm and one due by the final class session.
  - The first paper will give you the opportunity to expand one of your literary circles responses and critically analyze one of the texts on the course reading list in 5-7 pages.
  - The second paper will allow you to look beyond books read for class, examine a “sub-genre” of young adult literature in 8-10 pages.
  - You will also provide a Wiki page for your sub-genre and at least two representative YA works. Paper prompts will be provided.
4. In groups you will also give a 15-20 minute presentation in which you take a specific critical approach to a current piece of young adult literature of your own choice. You will be expected to hand in your presentation in written form along with all other materials used. A group presentation prompt will be provided.
5. You will take a final exam, which will allow you to synthesize information gained from the literature, its genre expectations, and its cultural and historical contexts.

In addition to the above requirements, students enrolled in the course for graduate credit will extend one of their papers to approximately 15 pages. This paper focusing on a particular theme, genre, and/or critical issue will incorporate a selection of works not included on the syllabus. These students will be asked to submit a prospectus for the paper, as will all other students, but should also include a bibliography with their prospectus.

**Note: No late work will be accepted unless I have approved extensions before the date the work is due.**

**Grades:** Grades for this course will be determined as follows

- |                                |     |
|--------------------------------|-----|
| • Weekly Responses             | 15% |
| • Paper 1                      | 15% |
| • Paper 2                      | 20% |
| • Wiki Page                    | 10% |
| • Quizzes and in-class writing | 10% |
| • Group Presentation           | 15% |
| • Final Exam                   | 15% |

## Other Policies:

1. **Plagiarism Statement:** “Any teacher who discovers an act of plagiarism--`the inappropriate imitation of the language, ideas, and/or thoughts of another author, and representation of them as one’s original work’—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.”
2. If you have a documented disability and wish to receive academic accommodations, please contact the Coordinator of the Office of Disability Services (581-6583) as soon as possible.
3. Please also note that this course is Writing Intensive, so a paper completed for the course can be turned in to your electronic writing portfolio—some time during the actual course of the class.
4. Ambitious students can also seek help from the Writing Center. Call for an appointment (581-5920) or visit ((CH3110) at any point in the writing process, from brainstorming, planning and drafting, to final editing. Bring your assignment sheet and any written work and/or sources with you. The Writing Center is open Monday-Thursday, 9-3 and 6-9, and Friday from 9-1.
5. You must complete all major assignments to complete this course.
6. Students seeking Teacher Certification in English Language Arts should provide each of their English department professors with the yellow form, “Application for English department Approval to Student Teach.” These are available on a rack outside the office of Dr. Donna Binns (CH 3851).

**Fall 2011 English 4903, Young Adult Literature  
Tentative Course Calendar (Subject to Change)**

**August**

**Introduction to Young Adult Literature**

- 23     **Introductions + Book Tasting:** Self-select a book to read for next Tuesday, 8/30. You will write a response explaining how your book does or does not fit the “Characteristics of the Best YA Literature,” as defined in the handout I’ll give you today. Read handout and introduction to *Classics* for Thursday.
- 25     Entrance card for readings. What is YA literature discussion, in groups and as a class. For Tuesday, finish your self-selected book. Then, based on discussion and reading, write a response and post it to Nicenet explaining how your does or does not fit the “Characteristics of the Best YA Literature.”
- 30     **Reading Response due on Nicenet.** In groups, discuss your books and responses. Be prepared to share your ideas with the rest of the class. Read “A Brief History of YA Literature” PDF for Thursday.

**September**

**Historical Young Adult Literature**

- 1     Entrance card for readings. How did YA literature evolve? What cultural changes affected its parameters? Brief book talks on historical YA literature: *Malaeska*, *Ragged Dick*, or *Anne of Green Gables*. Choose one of the books and read the first half of your novel for next Tuesday and write a response and post it to Nicenet discussing how your work fits into the history of YA literature.
- 6     **Reading Response due on Nicenet.** In groups, discuss your books and responses. Be prepared to share your ideas with the rest of the class. Read the rest of your chosen novel for Thursday.
- 8     Entrance card for novel choice. How do these novels illustrate the early era of YA literature? Read *The Outsiders* or *A Hero Ain't Nothin' but a Sandwich* for Tuesday and write a response and post it to Nicenet in relation to how these works extend definitions of YA literature to include class and race issues and diverse authors.
- 13    **Reading Response due on Nicenet.** In groups, discuss your books and responses. Be prepared to share you ideas with the rest of the class. Introduce Paper I prompt. Bring in ideas for Paper I on Thursday.

- 15 Entrance card for possible paper topics. Discuss paper I and model ways to approach it. Complete a draft of paper I for peer review and conferencing on Tuesday.
- 20 **Paper I draft due for peer review and conferencing**
- 22 **Paper I Due. Book Tasting** for group presentations: Contemporary and Multicultural Young Adult Literature. Discuss Group Presentations. Choose a group and work/works to explore. For Tuesday, write a response and post it to Nicenet responding to your group's chosen text (s). (Ballenger Center, Library)

### **Contemporary Young Adult Literature, Phase I**

- 27 **Reading Response due on Nicenet.** In your groups, discuss your books and responses. Be prepared to share your ideas with the rest of the class. Discuss ways to approach your group presentations. Finish your book (s) for Thursday.
- 29 Entrance card for your group's book. Finish your group literature circle work and prepare for presentations next week.

### **October**

- 4 **Group Presentations.**
- 6 **Group Presentations.** Read the first half of either *Forever* or *Homecoming* for Tuesday and write a response and post it to Nicenet responding to your chosen text in relation to gender issues.

### **Gender and Young Adult Literature**

- 11 **Reading Response due on Nicenet.** In your groups, discuss your books and responses. Be prepared to share your ideas with the rest of the class. Finish your book for Thursday.
- 13 Entrance card for conclusion of your chosen book. What does your book tell us about femininity? About gender? Read *Hatchet* or *Parrot in the Oven* for Tuesday and write and post a response to Nicenet responding to your chosen text in relation to gender issues.
- 18 **Reading Response due on Nicenet.** In your groups, discuss your book and response. Be prepared to share your ideas with the rest of the class. What does your book tell us about masculinity? About gender? Read the first third of *Feed* for Thursday.

## Multicultural and Genre Fiction

- 20 Entrance Card for first impressions of *Feed*. How would you define the genre of this work? How might we define the genre in relation to this novel? Finish *Feed* for Tuesday and write a response and post it to Nicenet.
- 25 **Reading Response due on Nicenet.** Discuss *Feed* and its context with help from Nicenet and our Wiki. Read the first third of *Marcello in the Real World* for Thursday.
- 27 Entrance Card for *Marcello...* beginning. How is this work multicultural? Think through the novel's genre, as well.? Finish *Marcello...* for Tuesday and write a response and post it to Nicenet.

## November

- 1 **Reading Response due on Nicenet.** Discuss *Marcello...* and its context with help from Nicenet and our Wiki. Introduce graphic novels. Read *Daisy Cutter: The Last Train* for Tuesday.
- 3 Entrance card for *Daisy Cutter*. Model reading of graphic novel panel(s) with help from document camera. Discuss the graphic novel and the included context. Choose either *Persepolis* or *American Born Chinese* and read the work for Tuesday and write a response and post it on Nicenet reading a series of panels from the work.
- 8 **Reading Response due on Nicenet.** Discuss your graphic novel and responses in groups and then, by group, read a series of panels for the class with help from the document camera. Discuss relationship between graphic novels and film to prepare for Thursday's screening. Note: No class during class time. Please attend the film screening to enjoy the introduction and respond to the film in relation to graphic novels and *Marcello in the real World*.
- 10 *Martian Child* Screening—5-7 p.m. For Tuesday, write a response to the film and post it to Nicenet.
- 15 **Reading Response due on Nicenet.** Discuss *Martian Child* and film and young adult literature. Read selections from *Am I Blue?* For Thursday to begin preparing for subgenre paper and Wiki page.
- 17 **Book tasting** to explore anthologies, collections of Young Adult poetry and short fiction, YA nonfiction, and other subgenres of YA Lit. Read handouts/PDFs and choose your subgenre for your second paper and Wiki page for the Tuesday after Thanksgiving. Enjoy your break! (Ballenger Center, Library)
- 21-25 Thanksgiving Break—no school

- 29 Entrance card for your chosen subgenre. Discuss paper topic and Wiki possibilities. Read selections (a selection) from your subgenre for Thursday and write a response and post it to Nicenet.

### **December**

- 1 **Reading Response due to Nicenet.** Discuss chosen subgenre and selection(s) in groups and as a class. Discuss paper and Wiki further. Complete a draft of your final paper and Wiki for Tuesday for peer review and conferences.
- 6 **Paper II and Wiki Draft Due. Revise paper for Thursday. Complete Wiki.**
- 8 **Final Draft of Paper II due. Prepare for Final Exam! Share Paper topics and Wikis.**

### **Final Exam:**

Mon., Dec. 12

10:15 a.m.-12:15 p.m.