ENG 4903-001: Young Adult Literature

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Eastern Illinois University

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ASSIGNMENTS AND OBJECTIVES

This semester, we will explore a wide range of literary works written for “young adult” readers (approximately ages 12–18). Assigned and self-selected readings will include Young Adult literature in variety of genre and formats, and from a range of time periods and perspectives.

In class discussions, writing assignments, group projects and presentations we will focus on critical analysis of the literary qualities of these works and the rhetorical strategies of their authors and illustrators. We will also give significant attention to some of the other inter-related criteria used to evaluate youth literature such as reader appeal, developmental appropriateness, and pedagogical usefulness. And we will consider the ways these works reveal evolving social attitudes and distinct authorial slants on teenagers and their world, with special attention to those fictions that have been or continue to be challenged—and commended—by adult gatekeepers.

By the end of the course, you should have a broader understanding of the field of Young Adult Literature—where it is going and where it has been—and a working knowledge of the resources available to professionals (librarians, literary critics, teachers, scholars) who work with it. You will also do some important thinking about adolescent readers, YA literature, and the contexts in which they meet, and will, I hope, read some books you find genuinely interesting and enjoyable.

*Students taking this course for graduate credit* will write a research paper instead of taking the final exam

*This does not include post-baccalaureate students seeking teacher certification and non-degree students
# Tentative Schedule of Readings & Assignments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 1</th>
<th>August 24, 26, 28</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>Introductions + Book Tasting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W</td>
<td>Begin reading your self-selected novel; Also from chapter one of Literature for Young Adults—hereafter Lit—read pp. 1-9 + 28-35 (you can skim from 10-28).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Continue novel; Compose WebCT post (200 word minimum) explaining how your book does/not fit the “Characteristics of the Best YA Literature” in our textbook; Review the “Stages of Literary Appreciation” in Lit ch. 1, pp. 38-43</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** Always bring books to class for discussions of assigned reading. When reading, take notes and mark key passages with post-it notes. Articulate your questions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 2</th>
<th>August 31 + September 2, 4</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td><strong>Meet in the Ballenger Teacher Center in Booth Library</strong> Finish self-selected novel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W</td>
<td>Begin Monster</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Continue Monster</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** For each of these novels—Monster, Inexcusable, Rules of the Road, A Step from Heaven—compose one WebCT post (200 word minimum) in which you analyze two specific (quoted) passages from an assigned section of the novel. (See WebCT for more detailed prompts.)

*Bring a copy of your post to class.* (You could take this opportunity to ask for feedback on it.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 3</th>
<th>September [7], 9, 11</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>No Class Meeting (Labor Day)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W</td>
<td>Finish Monster; Begin Inexcusable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Continue Inexcusable</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 4</th>
<th>September 14, 16, 18</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>Finish Inexcusable; Begin Rules of the Road</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W</td>
<td>Continue Rules of the Road</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Finish Rules of the Road; Begin A Step from Heaven</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 5</th>
<th>September 21, 23, 25</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>Continue A Step from Heaven; Quest Passage from self-selected novel DUE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W</td>
<td>Finish A Step from Heaven</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td>amid-term Quest</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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*Before our next class meeting, introduce yourself—and your chosen book—on WebCT*  
*Note: Assigned WebCT posts are due by midnight the day before our class meeting*
Brief descriptions of major assignments . . .

WebCT Posts (up to 300 points total)
Topics for analytic and reflective posts will be announced in class and spelled out more fully on WebCT. At least twice—at mid-term and again at the end of the course—I will give you a score that reflects my assessment of the quality and usefulness of your posts as demonstrated by these qualities:

- attention to specific (quoted) details from literary works or secondary resources you analyze
- exploration and development of ideas, spelled out as fully & precisely as possible
- use of terms and concepts introduced in class, our textbook and other secondary readings
- recursiveness ~ exploration of connections between the texts you are analyzing and others and willingness to refine your ideas as you accumulate experience and information
- completeness. *Late posts will be penalized substantially; deductions for missing posts will have an even more devastating effect on your score (so it’s better late than never)

Mid-term Quest (up to 150 points) ~ analytic responses to passages and/or short answer questions

“Blast from the Past” Review Essay (up to 250 points) ~ a formal essay (750 word minimum) in which you describe, contextualize, and evaluate a self-selected work from earlier in the development of Young Adult literature (pre-1980 in most cases). In your essay you will need to provide a descriptive summary of your book and explain to an interested audience (like the readers of Horn Book magazine) where this work fits in the history of Young Adult literature. Your goal is to show readers how informed attention to this work can enhance our understanding of the development of literature for young adults. Your readers will be interested in knowing how this work compares to more contemporary works (like the ones we have been reading), and they will want to know what, if anything, this work offers contemporary teen readers.

Final Quest* (up to 200 points) ~ an in-class essay focusing primarily on works read since mid-term in relation to a theme, technique or issue of your choice. Open book. You may bring an outline. *Graduate Students will turn in a research-enriched paper in lieu of the in-class Final Quest

Participation (up to 100 points) includes individual or group presentations plus your day-to-day contributions to a class atmosphere in which people are comfortable saying what they think and, in collaboration with classmates, thinking about what they have just said. You create this atmosphere by answering and asking questions during class discussion and in small groups—and by responding thoughtfully to other people’s comments and responses. This is not, after all, a social event, but a collaborative learning experience, so it is not impolite to disagree. By voicing questions and concerns you make it possible for us to complicate and clarify our ideas about Young Adult Literature, which is what we are here to do. You can also contribute to our success in non-verbal ways, by paying respectful attention to others (not your cell phone). Attendance is obviously a prerequisite for participation, so if you have more than three (3) un-excused absences, you will lose 50 points (half a letter grade). If you will need to miss class due to illness, a university event or other reason, please let me know as soon as possible.

GRADES
Your course grade will be based on the percentage you earn of the 1000 points available.

Note: I will adjust these point values if we add, cancel, or revise any assignments.

Web-CT Posts (scored at mid-term & at the end of class) = 30%
Mid-term Quest = 15%
Blast from the Past Review Essay = 25%
Participation and Attendance (50 points each) = 10%
Final Essay or Research Paper (graduate students) = 20%

The bottom line . . . grades are not curved.
91% & up (910+ points) = A; 81 - 90% (810+) = B; 71 - 80% (710+) = C; 61 - 70% (610+) = D; 60% & below = F

RESPONSIBILITIES AND POLICIES

1.) Keep in touch! Late work will be penalized unless we come to an understanding before the due date. If you are experiencing temporary difficulties, contact me as soon as possible. No late work will be accepted during the last week of classes.

2.) Use MLA or APA style for the layout of your paper and for documentation—your Works Cited page (MLA) or References page (APA) and the in-text citations that refer readers to this list. Be sure you are using the latest versions of the MLA Handbook (7th edition) and the Publication Manual (6th ed.) or a reliable print or electronic guide with up-dated information and examples.

3.) Plagiarism is the act of taking someone else's phrasing, ideas or visuals and using them in your written work or oral presentation without identifying and giving credit to the source. This is a serious academic offense, and could result in a failing grade for the plagiarized assignment or this course, and might also incur other university penalties. At the very least, works with problematic citations will have to be revised before they can receive a grade. Consultants in the Writing Center will gladly answer your questions about how to quote, paraphrase, summarize—and cite—primary and secondary sources. Call for an appointment (581-5929) or come by (CH3110) at any point in the writing process, from brainstorming, planning & drafting to final editing. The Writing Center is open Monday thru Thursday 9 am – 3 & 6 – 9 pm, and 9 am – 1 pm Fridays.

4.) Students with documented disabilities should contact the Office of Disability Services (581-6583) so we can work out appropriate accommodations.

5.) You must complete all major assignments to pass this course.

6.) Students seeking Teacher Certification in English Language Arts should provide each of their English dept. professors with the yellow form: “Application for English Department Approval to Student Teach.” These are available in a rack outside the office of Dr. Donna Binns (CH 3851).
**Professor Fern Kory**

**Office** Coleman Hall 3365  
**Mailbox** Across the Hall  
**Phone/Voicemail** 581.6291  
**E-mail** fkory@eiu.edu  

**Office Hours** M + W 12:00 - 1:30 & by appointment  
**Web-site** www.eiu.edu/~childlit

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# English 4903 Young Adult Literature

**MWF 11:00 – 11:50 in Coleman Hall 3691**

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**Tentative Schedule of Readings & Assignments Post Quest**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 6</th>
<th>September 28, 30; October 2</th>
<th>Banned Books Week (ALA)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>Read <em>The Arrival</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W</td>
<td>Continue discussion of <em>The Arrival</em>; Begin <em>Daisy Kutter: The Last Train</em> with the help of the handouts “Graphic Novels 101” and “Reading Lesson” [available on WebCT]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Finish <em>Daisy Kutter</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[1st WebCT Score (up to 100 points) will cover posts up through this week]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 7</th>
<th>October 5, 7, (9)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>Begin <em>American Born Chinese</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W</td>
<td>Finish <em>American Born Chinese</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Fall Break</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 8</th>
<th>October 12, 14, 16</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>Finish discussion of <em>American Born Chinese</em>; Begin <em>Feed</em> (1-40)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W</td>
<td>Continue <em>Feed</em> (41-119); post a list of popular literary works and media that were a significant part of your life during your teen years: books, magazines, comics, TV shows, games, movies, music, blogs, social networking sites &amp; other internet destinations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Continue <em>Feed</em> (120-203); Read “Pop Culture, YA Lit, Big Business, . . .” (Lit 3: 77-97 only)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 9</th>
<th>October 19, 21, 23</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>Finish <em>Feed</em> (134-end); Read “Fantasy, Science Fiction, Utopias, and Dystopias” (Lit 7: 199-232)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W</td>
<td>Read “Am I Blue?,” “Fifty Percent Chance of Lightning,” “The Honorary Shepherds,” and another story (your choice) in <em>Am I Blue?</em> Also study this book’s “paratexts.” Paratexts include anything used to frame or package a work of literature—in this case, everything except the stories: consider the purpose or meaning of the text and visuals on front &amp; back covers, the dedication, quotes from reviewers &amp; others, author bios, appendices,...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Read “Starbucks Boy” and another story (your choice) from <em>How They Met</em> + one supplementary reading on WebCT from LGTBQ section</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Week 10  October 26, 28, 30
M  
*Meet in Ballenger Teacher Center at Booth Library*
Read “A Brief History of Adolescent Literature” (Lit 2: 47-76); in class you will choose a 
work of early "Young Adult Literature" to read and evaluate.

W  Begin self-selected reading from YA literary history; post a response to the first third (or 
so), describing and analyzing characters, setting, situation and style. Use *Title of Book +
the original year of publication* as your subject line.

F  
*Meet in the Ballenger Teacher Center*
Read the next hunk of your book. Write a post in which you quote and analyze two key 
passages from the novel and articulate some questions about this book that you could 
answer through research into the critical reception of the book, author biography, etc. 
In class, we will explore relevant research resources.

Week 11  November 2, 4, 6
M  Finish your book. Annotate printed research materials (reviews & biography) and post a 
response to two separate quoted statements from clearly identified and properly cited 
sources. (In class, you will turn in these research materials plus a works cited page.)

W  Read “A Second Look at *Annie on my Mind*” by Roger Sutton (available on WebCT); 
Focus your post on what your book had to offer readers back in the day (you may find 
Lit 2 helpful). Then consider what it has to offer readers in our time. Has its interest or 
appeal changed? What sorts of readers would find it illuminating or engaging now?

F  
Informal Group Presentations

Week 12  November 9, 11, 13
M  Continue Informal Group Presentations 
Draft DUE

W+F  
*Individual Conference Appointments; No Regular Class Meeting*
Instead, go to the Ballenger Teacher Center to spend some time looking at and for contemporary 
young adult novels. Choose three you might like to read and explore in more detail. When you 
have chosen three books, write out an MLA-style “Works Cited” page with citations for all three as 
part of a *WebCT post* in which you also do the following things for each of the three books:

- Describe it. What is the packaging trying to tell you about this book?
- Explain how and why you chose it. Did you use NoveList or do a keyword search to find 
books in a particular genre or on a particular topic? Had you heard something about this 
book or read something else by this author? Did you check out reader’s reviews on-line or 
get advice from a real live reader? Did you browse the “Recent Arrival” shelves? Or what?
- Answer this question: How would this book help you think about issues that interest you? 
Which aspects of this book would you expect to focus on if you choose it?

At the end of your post, indicate which of the three books you have chosen to focus on and why.

Week 13  November 16, 18, 20
M  Blast from the Past Essay DUE 
*Bring your Contemporary YA selection*

W  Begin Contemporary YA; post on first chapter (or equivalent)

F  Skim “Censorship” (Lit 12: 360-397) + Read Censorship materials on WebCT (web links)

*Thanksgiving Week*
Week 14
M November 30; December 2, 4
Finish Contemporary YA;
Post bullet points for book talk + a quote from your book + a quote from a review;
Begin Book Talks (8); Post a response to at least one book talk each day this week

W
Book Talks (9)

F
Book Talks (8)
[Final WebCT Score will cover posts to this point]

Week 15
M December 7, 9, 11
Begin The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian
Quest Topics DUE before next class meeting

W Continue The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian

F Finish The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian

Finals Week
W 10:15-12:15 December 16
Final Quest: In-class Essay

[see first unit syllabus for more information about assignments and policies]

GRADES
Your course grade will be based on the percentage you earn of the 1000 points available.
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignments</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Web-CT Posts (scored at mid-term &amp; at the end of class)</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
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<td>Mid-term Quest</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Blast from the Past Review Essay</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<td>Participation and Attendance (50 points each)</td>
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