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ENG 4905-001: Studies in Youth Literature

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Dr. Jamila D. Smith  
ENG 4905 Studies in Youth Literature  
Summer 2013  
Coleman Hall 3170  
TR 3:00-5:30pm  
Office: Coleman 3775  
Office Hours: TR (1:00-3:00pm) and by appointment  
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Course Description:
This course will introduce you to the exciting world of youth literature as well as provide you with a variety of critical tools for reading, discussing, and writing about the literature. Through readings, film, lecture, and discussions (both in small and large groups) we will develop our multicultural and social justice awareness and plans for activism, our understanding of culturally relevant pedagogy, our ability to write and perform thoughtful, insightful prose, and our ability to read texts for both their literary merit and aesthetic value.

Learning Goals:

• Awareness of and excitement for a wide variety of youth literature and elements of story.

• Awareness of historical developments related to this literature and understanding of the varied social contexts in which it has been produced.

• Familiarity with characteristics of various genres of youth literature.

• Awareness of the interaction of oral, literary, visual and narrative elements in works of youth literature in different genre and formats.

• Experience with literature-related activities that may be used with children.

• Exploration of cultural relevancy in pedagogy along with multiculturalism and social justice, to include such topics as intersections of race, place, gender, class, age, and (dis)ability in local and global contexts.

• Experience analyzing and evaluating children’s literature in a variety of oral and written forms for a variety of audiences.

• Experience identifying and using some of the many print and electronic resources available to scholars and professionals in the various fields that work with youth literature, such as English Studies, Education, and Library & Information Science.
These include review journals, reference books, web-sites and blogs, scholarly books and journals in relevant disciplines.

**Required Texts:**

*White Socks Only*, Coleman  
*Out of My Mind*, Draper  
*Literature and the Child, 7th edition*, Galda, Cullinan, & Sipe (Textbook)  
*The Red Book*, Lehman  
*Rules*, Lord  
*Remember: The Journey to School Integration*, Morrison  
*Esperanza Rising*, Munoz-Ryan  
*The Storm in the Barn*, Phelan  
*and Tango makes three*, Richardson  
*My Brother Charlie*, Robinson-Peete  

**Handouts will be dispersed throughout the course.**

**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. 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 two (2) 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 15 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.

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. “Back in the day” narrative (5 points)

Choose one of the following three writing prompts to develop a 2-page narrative about an experience from your childhood:
-“I’ll never forget the day…”

-Think about your first crush/love. “I wonder what ever happened to…”

-“If my mother/father ever found out about…”
This is not an essay, but rather a story in which the listener feels a part of your childhood experience. We will share these in class. **DUE June 13th**

2. **Book Pairings and Papers (30 points- 15 points a piece)** Four of the books have been paired: *Esperanza Rising* with *The Storm in the Barn* (Paper Due June 27th ), and *Out of my mind* with *Rules* (Paper Due July 11th). 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? 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.

Critical Reaction Paper: In this analysis, you are to provide a critical examination of your thoughts. That is, if you choose to discuss likes/dislikes, your rationale for disliking the texts should be clear and well-supported using textual evidence, in-class experience with students surrounding topics addressed in the texts, and/or other books that you would have chosen for students to read in the genre. Remember, I am not endorsing any text as “stellar” or necessary for your teaching. I am, however, providing you with literature that is indicative of various multicultural and pedagogical occurrences in schools and communities. **YOU need to be able to take a stand for or against them.**

3. **Reflexive Journal (15 points)** Reflexivity involves thinking about what has happened so far in order to plan for the next step. It is a means of systematizing your thoughts to improve practice. As such, your task is to journal about the process of reading and writing about youth literature. Focus should center on the following questions: 1) What am I learning about myself as a potential or current teacher/scholar/writer through class discussions, readings, and/or research? 2) What areas of my critical reading, writing, and/or thinking need additional work? 3) What is (or should be) the role of cultural relevance in my teaching and how do I (will I) incorporate this approach? What genres of literature and/or texts will be helpful in this process? 4) How can youth literature help students and teachers develop a meaningful approach to multiculturalism and social justice?

You do not have to stick to these questions for each entry. They are merely meant to help guide your thinking. You will, however, need to write throughout the course (during/after reading and writing, class discussions, etc), sharing your journal at times with peers for their evaluation and feedback. **Minimum of 15 entries. DUE July 16th**
4. **FINAL PROJECT Lesson Plan (40 points)** Create a teaching unit on a social justice topic derived from two themes we’ve covered this semester, in a genre of your choosing. For example, you may choose the topic of discrimination in the genre of historical fiction, using the themes “hate never prevails” and “knowledge of history is essential.” From here, you will either choose 6-8 picture books, 4-6 novels, or a combination of the two in order to develop this unit. In addition to the above criteria, your lesson plan must include:

- A unit rationale (Why this topic/themes/genre?)
- Grade level, setting/culture, timeline (e.g., 3rd grade, Midwestern city, underserved public school, 2 week lesson plan)
- Goals and objectives of unit (What is the take away? What should students get out of this plan?)
- A letter to parents detailing the purpose of the lesson plan and addressing any sensitive topics/issues that could possibly arise (this can be an extension of the goals/objectives)
- TWO DETAILED major assignments for students to complete that fit within the parameters of their grade level. These assignments need to be culturally relevant and incorporate the texts you’ve chosen and should reflect your teaching of the social justice topic. You may choose to develop in-class and/or homework assignments.
- ONE DETAILED creative assignment that reflects students’ ability to move from awareness to activism with social justice using the specified themes. It isn’t enough to have students make posters that state a need to end discrimination; they need an action plan. If the posters are the set-up, what’s the follow-up? How will you make anti-discrimination an ongoing part of your classroom culture? For example, in your plan, you could state that students and parents will participate in monthly activities in various cultural settings (soup kitchens, community centers, children’s hospitals, etc) to discuss the effects of discrimination in these settings and write reports on their findings. These students will then become student leaders for next year’s class to take similar trips. The point is to make action a major part of the awareness process.
- Finally, you need to create an annotated bibliography using MLA format of the books you’ve chosen. Summarize the texts in one to two sentences, then discuss the usefulness of this text to your overall project. Please make use of EIU’s online resources to search for books and read their reviews.

I have designated library time to work on this assignment. **DUE July 18th**

**Tentative Schedule of Readings and Assignments:**

**June 2013: Introduction to Children’s Lit/Historical Fiction**

11th (T) First Class: Introduction to course and one another.

**Assignment:** Complete *The Red Book* and *Back in the Day Narrative*

13th (R) Ages and Stages/Sharing *Back in the Day Narrative*

**Assignment:** Read pages 6-18 in textbook (Beginning at “Defining
Literature for Children and Adolescents and Ending at “Current Trends” AND pages 55-72 (Beginning of Chapter Three and Ending at “Media and Technique”)

**Bring in your favorite picturebook**

18th
(T) Discussion of Awards with Examples/Begin Historical Fiction **Read and discuss Morrison and Coleman texts in class**
**Assignment**: Complete The Storm in the Barn and Read pages 255-260 in textbook Chapter 8 (Ending at “A Close Look at Crispin: The Cross of Lead”)

20th
(R) Discussion of The Storm in the Barn/Graphic Novels/Watch and discuss clip on culturally relevant pedagogy
**Assignment**: Complete Esperanza Rising and handout

25th
(T) Discussion of text/Visit Library for Final Project
**Assignment**: Complete Paper #1

27th
(T) Paper #1 DUE/Visit Library
**Assignment**: Complete My Brother Charlie and begin reading for next book pairing

July 2013: Contemporary Realistic Fiction/Banned and Censored Books/Social Justice

2nd
(T) Discussion of text/Watch and discuss “The Danger of a Single Story” in class
**Assignment**: Complete Out of My Mind and Rules

4th
(R) NO SCHOOL

9th
(T) Class discussion on both texts/Visit Library
**Assignment**: Complete Paper #2

11th
(R) Paper #2 DUE/Visit Library
**Assignment**: Complete Reflexive Journal

16th
(T) Reflexive Journal DUE/Read and discuss and Tango makes three in class/ Possible final library session

18th
(R) FINAL CLASS/FINAL PROJECT DUE

Evaluation:
Participation 10 points
“Back in the Day” 5 points
Book Pairings and Papers 30 points (total)
Reflexive Journal 15 points
Lesson Plan/Final Project 40 points
Total 100 points

Grading:
90-100=A  89-80=B  79-70=C  69-60=D  60 or below=F