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ENG 4903-001: Young Adult Literature

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English 4903: Young Adult Literature  

Textbook  
Young Adult Literature: From Romance to Realism (2010), Michael Cart

“Trade Books”
1994  
Am I Blue? (short fiction, mixed genre), ed. Marion Bauer

1999  
Monster (novel, realism), Walter Dean Myers (illus. Christopher Myers)

2001  
A Step from Heaven (novel, realism), An Na
**Bad Boy (memoir), Walter Dean Myers

2002  
Hole in my Life (memoir), Jack Gantos
Feed (novel, dystopia), M.T. Anderson

2006  
Daisy Kutter: The Last Train (graphic novel, steampunk fantasy), Kazu Kubuishi
**American Born Chinese (graphic novel), Gene Yang

2007*  
Does My Head Look Big in This? (novel, realism), Randa Abdel-Fattah
*orig. pub. 2005 in Australia, 2006 in the UK

**The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian (novel, realism),
Sherman Alexie (illus. Forney)

2009  
**Marcelo in the Real World (novel, realism), Francisco X. Stork
Claudette Colvin: Twice Toward Justice (biography + social history), Phillip M. Hoose

2010  
**Borrowed Names (collective verse biography), Jeannine Atkins

Self-Selected Readings
- Contemporary YA
- International YA (Anglophone or Translated) or YA Oldie (pre-1985)
- YA Non-Fiction, Poetry or Short Fiction (collection or anthology)
- Your Choice YA (may select from *unassigned books from TRS)

ASSIGNMENTS AND OBJECTIVES

We will explore the range of literary works written or marketed as “Young Adult” (YA), for a readership usually defined as 12–18 year olds. Assigned and self-selected readings will include literature in a variety of genre and formats from a variety of places, times, and perspectives.

Class discussions, writing assignments, projects, and presentations will invite critical analysis of both the literary qualities of these works and the rhetorical strategies of the authors, artists and publishers who produce and market literature for this audience. We will also explore other criteria used by professionals to evaluate youth literature: reader appeal, developmental appropriateness, pedagogical usefulness, cultural authority, ideology, and authenticity. And we will consider the ways each of these works expresses authorial, social, or cultural attitudes about teenagers and the world(s) they inhabit, giving special attention to those narratives of adolescence that have been challenged by adult gatekeepers (e.g. parents, teachers, librarians) or championed by them.
By the end of this course, you should have a broader understanding of the field of Young Adult Literature and a working knowledge of the resources available to readers and to the students, scholars and professionals who work with it. You should also do some important thinking about adolescent readers, YA literature, and the contexts in which they meet, and, I hope, read some books that you find genuinely interesting and enjoyable—as a scholar, pre-professional, or reader.

*Students taking this course for graduate credit will complete a more substantial research paper + extra readings unless you are a post-baccalaureate student seeking teacher certification or a non-degree student

**Tentative Schedule of Readings & Assignments**

Note: The final exam for this class is scheduled for Wednesday, Dec. 11, 12:30-2:30 p.m.

**Week 1**

**August 19, 11, 23**

**M** Introduction + Book Tasting

*Before our next class meeting, introduce yourself—and your chosen book—on D2L

**Note:** Assigned D2L posts are due before our class meeting, by 10 AM

**W** Begin reading your self-selected work: identify two passages or pages that exemplify its style

**Note:** Always bring trade books or the textbook to class for discussions of assigned reading.

**Bright Idea:** You could mark key passages with a sticky note & write any questions or comments on it.

**F** Continue reading; Compose D2L post (200 word minimum) explaining—using specific examples—how well your book fits the "Characteristics of the Best YA Literature" (handout)

**Week 2**

**August 26, 28, 30**

**M** **Meet in the 4th Floor Technology Room in Booth Library** (along east wall)

Finish self-selected novel; Peruse *Horn Book* magazine, including reviews of YA; Post (see prompt on D2L). In class, we will explore databases used by scholars & professionals.

**W** Bring post + annotated version of reviews printed or copied from *Novelist* or the *Children's Literature Comprehensive Database* with marginal comments (hand written or electronic) near interesting points made by reviewers; Read chapter 8, "So How Adult is Young Adult?" in *Young Adult Literature: From Romance to Realism* by Michael Cart (hereafter Cart).

**F** Begin *Monster* (1-46) by Walter Dean Myers, the current Laureate for youth literature. Mark two early passages worth discussing, one in the script and one in Steve's journal.

**Week 3**

**September [2], 4, 6**

**M** *No Class Meeting: Labor Day Holiday*

**W** Continue *Monster* (47-161): Bring a copy of your D2L post to share with classmates in class.

*Grad Students read + post on "The Irony of Narration" by Mike Cadden (Project Muse); (Undergrads can respond to this essay so as an "extra" score-enhancing post.)*

**F** Finish *Monster*; In your post, respond to the ending and then articulate an overall evaluation of *Monster* as YA lit., focusing on the features of *Monster* and the evaluative criteria that are most relevant to you; Read Cart, ch. 4 + 5, which describe the state of YA during the 1990s.
Week 4  September 9, 11, 13
M Begin Hole in my Life; By Friday, read, annotate & respond to a pre-approved scholarly essay.
W Continue Hole in my Life; Post TBA
F Finish Hole in my Life
**1st D2L Score (up to 100 points) for posts to this point + reflective post due Wednesday

Week 5  September 16, 18, 20
M Begin A Step from Heaven; Post for today on the first section OR next time on later chapters.
W Finish A Step from Heaven; Read Cart ch. 6, “A New Literature for a New Millennium”
F Begin Does My Head Look Big in This?; Read Cart ch. 9 “Back in the Real World”; Posts TBA.

Week 6  September 23, 25, 27
M Continue Does My Head Look Big in This?
W Finish Does My Head Look Big in This?
F Read Read Cart 10 (on sex) and 11 (on LGBTQ YA) + these stories from the anthology Am I Blue?: “Am I Blue?,” “Dancing Backwards,” “The Honorary Shepherds,” and one more (your choice). Post a comparison of any two. Also take a look at this book’s “paratexts”—the words and images that frame or package this work of literature. We’ll discuss the purpose or meaning of the text and visuals designers and marketing staff placed on front & back covers, plus the dedication, quotes from writers and review journals, author bios, appendices,…

Week 7  September 30; October 2, 4
M **Meet in Ballenger Teacher Center at Booth Library. Bring your library card!**
Read Cart 1-3 on Young Adult Literary History from the beginning through the 80s; Post a response to one passage from each chapter. In class, you will have a chance to select works of international and "classic" (pre-1985) YA that you could use for the next project.
W Read and annotate the review essay “A Second Look at Annie on my Mind” by Roger Sutton. Post: write an MLA or APA citation for each book you checked out and answer these questions: How and why did you choose each of these books? What are the covers and paratexts trying to tell you about them? How might each book help you think about issues that interest you? Which aspects of each book would you expect to focus on if you chose to read it? Which one do you choose? Why?
F Begin self-selected reading of international or “classic" YA; draft a D2L post after reading the first third, using the original place of publication, Title (Author), original Year of publication as your subject line—for example, US Annie on my Mind (Garden) 1982. Describe your first impression and provide analytic description of characters, setting, theme, plot + key features of literary or visual style. Comment on physical features, including paratexts.

Week 8  October 7, 9, [11]
M Read the next hunk of your book. In your post, quote and analyze two or three key passages, at least one in which the dated-ness or foreign-ness of this book is demonstrated.
**Meet in the 4th Floor Technology Room in Booth Library**

Finish your book. In your post, comment on the ending, and the impact of book as a whole. What would you say are the outstanding features of this book? To what extent does it meet your criteria for "good" YA? To what extent (and how) did its foreign-ness or dated-ness matter to you as a reader? Also articulate some questions you might be able to answer by reading reviews, author bio, context information (literary, historical, socio-cultural...), etc.

In class, we will explore a larger range of authoritative print and electronic resources, including reference works like *Something About the Author* and the *Children's Literature Review*, to find relevant information about authors, the critical reception of their work, and the literary and social contexts in which it was published.

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Stephanie Bruni

Week 9 October 14, 16, 18

[Note: IATE Fall Conference this weekend in Normal]

M	Annotate research material (at least contemporary reviews & basic biography). In your D2L post, discuss the significance of specific bits of information and opinion in these materials. How do they help us understand this work or YA? Incorporate at least 3 quoted statements from clearly introduced and properly cited sources, including our textbook.

*Grad Students turn in annotated bibliography of research

W	Introductory paragraph + Rough Outline DUE

F	Read "Graphic Novels 101" + "Reading Lessons" (handouts) + the beginning of *Daisy Kutter*

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Week 10 October 21, 23, 25

*Bring Draft to individual conference appointment this week

Essay DUE next week, one week after your appointment

M	Finish *Daisy Kutter*; Post (see D2L for prompt); Read Cart 12 on visuals in YA

**2nd D2L Score (up to 150 points) covers posts to this point + reflective post due Friday

W	Begin *Feed*

F	Continue *Feed*; identify one or more issues you could track as you continue reading

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Week 11 October 28, 30; November 6

*Review Essay DUE this week, 1 week after appt.

M	Continue *Feed*

W	Finish *Feed*

F	Begin *Claudette Colvin: Twice Toward Justice*

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Week 12 November 4, 6, 8

M	Continue *Claudette Colvin: Twice Toward Justice*; Read Cart 13, "The Eyes Have It."

W	Finish *Claudette Colvin: Twice Toward Justice*; Browse *Borrowed Names*
Week 13 November 11, 13, 15
M Post: write an MLA or APA citation for each book you checked out and answer these questions: How and why did you choose each of these books? What are the covers and paratexts trying to tell you about them? How might each book help you think about issues that interest you? Which aspects of each book would you expect to focus on if you chose to read it? Which one do you choose? Why?

W Post after reading the first third of your book, using genre, Title of Book, author + original year of publication as your subject line—for example, Collective Verse Biography: Borrowed Names (Atkins) 2010. Provide analytic description of the organization of this book and key features of textual or visual style. Make preliminary comments on the impact of organization, content and form using examples from specific chapters, sections, stories or poems.

F No Class Meeting: I will be out of town at an AFT conference
Read the next hunk of your book. Write a post in which you quote and analyze key features and/or themes in more depth, commenting on their reader-appeal and developmental appropriateness. Articulate some questions that you might be able to answer by reading reviews of the book, author biography, scholarship focused on genre characteristics, etc.

Week 14 November 18, 20, 22
M **Meet in the 4th Floor Technology Room in Booth Library**
Finish your book: In your post, focus on the ending and the book as a whole: was it a satisfying to you as a reader? What sort of closure does it provide for teen readers? In class we will search for reviews + journal articles through Project Muse & other databases.

W Post: Respond to reviews + relevant information from other sources; Outline Book Talk. Quest Topic DUE on D2L by Friday

F Begin Book Talks + Your Choice YA

Thanksgiving Break

Week 15 December 2, 4, 6
M Continue Book Talks + Your Choice YA

W Continue Book Talks + Your Choice YA; Quest Topic DUE on D2L

F Finish Book Talks.

**3rd D2L Score (up to 100 points) covers posts to this point

Finals Week Wednesday, Dec. 11, 12:30-2:30 p.m.
W Final Quest: In-class Essay
Brief descriptions of major assignments...

**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 (100 + 150 + 100) = 350 points
- Analytic Book Talk Presentation = 100
- Review Essay = 300
- Participation & *Attendance = 100
- Final Quest = 150

*If you have more than three (3) un-excused absences, you will lose 50 points. If you need to miss class due to illness, a university event or another reason, let me know as soon as possible.

**D2L Posts (up to 350 points total)**
Topics for analytic and reflective posts will be announced in class and spelled out more fully on D2L. Two or three times—once before mid-term for sure—I will give you a score that reflects my assessment of the productiveness of the effort you put into your posts, as demonstrated by these qualities:

- attention to specific, “quoted” details from literary works or secondary resources you discuss
- exploration and development of your ideas—spelling them out fully and as precisely as you can
- use of terms and concepts introduced in class, our textbook, and other secondary readings
- “recursiveness”—efforts to refine your ideas about YA literature as you accumulate experience, ideas & information about it; on-going exploration of connections between texts
- completeness. NOTE: Late posts are penalized substantially (typically 5 points each); larger deductions for missing posts (10-15 points each) have a devastating effect on D2L scores.

**Review Essay (up to 300 points)** — a formal essay (1000 word minimum) in which you provide summary, description, relevant context information (literary, social, cultural, historical), and your own evaluation of either a work of Young Adult Literature published early in its development (pre-1980) OR a contemporary work of international YA, either Anglophone (published in an English-speaking country) or translated from another language and then published in English for young adults. Your readers will want to know how this work compares to contemporary and/or American Young Adult literature (like the books we’ve been reading), and what this work offers teen readers. Your goal is to demonstrate to a specialized but not scholarly audience (like the readers of *Horn Book* magazine) how informed attention to this particular work can enhance our understanding and appreciation of Young Adult literature as a cultural artifact.

*Graduate Students* will turn in a longer, more research-enriched version of this paper

**Presentation (up to 100 points)** an efficiently informative analytic “book talk” on a self-selected work of YA non-fiction or a collection/anthology of poetry or short fiction.

**Final Quest (up to 150 points)** — an in-class essay in which you do a comparative analysis of three works you’ve read for class in relation to a theme, technique or issue of your choice (subject to my approval).

**Participation (up to 100 points)** starts with attendance and requires your undivided attention to the conversation taking place in *this* room. It includes the contributions you make in class discussion and in group work plus your leadership in the creation of an atmosphere in which people are comfortable saying what they think and, in collaboration with classmates, thinking about what they have just said. You help create this atmosphere by answering and asking questions, and by responding respectfully to other people’s comments. By voicing your own questions and concerns you make it possible for each of us to complicate and clarify our own ideas about Young Adult Literature, which is what we are here for.

**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 if we do not come to an understanding before the due date. If you are experiencing temporary difficulties, contact me as soon as possible. No late work or extra credit will be accepted during the last week of classes.

2.) Use MLA or APA style for documentation on your Works Cited page (MLA) or References page (APA) and the in-text citations that refer readers to this list. Use the latest versions of the *MLA Handbook* (7th edition) and the *Publication Manual* (6th ed.) or a reliable print or electronic guide—like the Purdue OWL—with up-to-date information & examples.

3.) Plagiarism is the act of using *someone else’s* phrasing, ideas, data or visuals in your oral or written work without identifying and giving proper credit to the author and source. In its impurest form (lying, cheating and/or stealing), plagiarism is a serious academic offense that will result in a zero for the assignment or an “F” for the course, plus university-level penalties and remediation. But any writing you turn in to me that has problematic citations will have to be revised before you can receive a grade for it. Until the documentation is right, there is a zero in the grade book for the assignment.

Concerned? Writing Center consultants can help you figure out how to quote, paraphrase, summarize—and cite—your primary and secondary sources. Come by at any point in the writing process, from brainstorming, planning & drafting to final editing. Bring the assignment sheet your primary & secondary sources with you.

**Writing Center (Coleman Hall 3110)**

Monday – Thursday 9 am – 3 & 6 – 9 pm

Fridays 9 am – 1

Call (581-5929) or drop by to make an appointment.

4.) Students with documented disabilities should contact the Office of Disability Services (581-6583) as soon as possible so we can establish 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. Melissa Ames (CH 3821). Why don’t you just get these to your professors this week?
Before Class W 8.21 ~ Please introduce yourself & your book

Please use the Title of Your Book, date of publication, and author's name as your subject line (for example, every day (2012) David Levithan).

First, it would be helpful if you could say a little bit about yourself so we can start to get to know one another and find out what we do and don't have in common. Of course, I'd be particularly interested in hearing about your relationship with Young Adult Literature, if you have one, what you hope to get out of this class, and why.

Then you could explain why you chose the book you will be reading for this first unit. What did you already know about it--or, if you judged this book by its cover, what do you hope for? Why? If you've already gotten started, what you think about it so far? Is it enjoyable? Does it raise any issues for you?

That'll be enough to be getting on with. And after class on Wednesday, you can go back through and see what people had to say. Feel free to reply if you connect to someone else's hobby or book choice, but NO SPOILERS!

Start a New Thread

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every day (2012) David Levithan
Fern Kory posted Aug 18, 2013 10:13 PM

Hi. I'm Dr. Fern Kory and I'm very glad you've decided to take this class. I've been at EIU since 1990 and I teach various classes in modern American literature and youth literature. I'm also the Director of the Writing Center, so I train and supervise the graduate students who work there. And I...

books.jpeg (12.37 KB)

0 Unread Replies 0 Replies 1 Views