

AML4242: Studies in 20th Century American Literature and Culture
Teenage Dream: The American Teenager & Literature
Summer A 2014 | Section 01G8
MTWRF 3 | Turlington 2333

Instructor: Casey Wilson

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Office Hours: Tuesday and Wednesday Period 4, or by appointment

Course Description

The American “teenager” is a twentieth-century invention: the first time the word appeared in print was in a 1941 issue of *Popular Science*. Our modern conception of the teenager as a distinct developmental and social group soon followed, emerging in the wake of World War II as a consequence of a long incubation period of social, political, and economic change. In this course, we will study novels, films, and other cultural artifacts from across the century that center on the figure of the teenager, and relevant historical and literary criticism that illuminates these works. We will also consider the teenager’s role as both subject and producer in the development of a distinctively American literature. Questions we will explore include: How do we define the teenager? What political and social circumstances created the teenager? How has the teenager evolved since the post-war era? What does the teenager tell us, more generally, about American ideals and identity?

Required Texts

The following texts are required; any complete version is acceptable. They have been ordered at the UF bookstore and are readily available online. I have included ISBN numbers for reference.

Keene, Carolyn. *Nancy Drew: The Secret of the Old Clock*. (1930) ISBN 0448095017

King, Stephen. *Carrie*. (1974) ISBN 0345805879

Jackson, Shirley. *Hangsaman*. (1951) ISBN 0143107046

Lattany, Kristin Hunter. *The Soul Brothers and Sister Lou*. (1968) ISBN 0595344690

Palladino, Grace. *Teenagers: An American History*. (1996) ISBN 046500766X

Woodson, Jacqueline. *The House You Pass on the Way*. (1997) ISBN 0142417068

Supplementary readings listed on the course schedule will be available either online or via course reserves.

Films and TV Shows

You will also be required to obtain and view the following films and episodes from television shows. All but *My So-Called Life* have been placed on course reserves as a 24-hour loan at Library West. They are also available in different formats such as DVD, Netflix, Amazon Streaming, and iTunes downloads.

Rebel Without a Cause (1955)

The Breakfast Club (1985)

My So-Called Life, episodes "Pilot" and "Guns and Gossip" (1994)

Buffy the Vampire Slayer, episodes "Surprise" and "Innocence" (1997)

Assignments

Response Papers: Throughout the semester, you will write brief response papers that take up a theme, argument, or other point of interest from the day's assigned reading. These responses are meant to generate both class discussion and potential ideas for your final paper. You will have six opportunities to write response papers across the semester; you must submit three. (2-3 double-spaced pages; 30% of final grade)

Midterm Exam: The midterm exam will be given in class approximately halfway through the semester. It will consist of some combination of true/false, multiple choice, matching, short answer, and essay questions, all of which will be based on our readings and in-class discussions. (30% of final grade)

Final Paper: You will submit a brief research paper at the end of the semester that takes up one or more texts or themes from our course. We will discuss possible approaches to the final paper throughout the semester; you should include relevant secondary sources to support your ideas. (7-9 double-spaced pages; 30% of final grade)

Participation: The participation component of your grade will include in-class discussion, reading quizzes, and general preparedness for each day's class session. The rubric for grading participation will be posted on the class website and available for reference throughout the semester. (10% of final grade)

Grading Scale

A	4.0	93-100	C	2.0	73-76
A-	3.67	90-92	C-	1.67	70-72
B+	3.33	87-89	D+	1.33	67-69
B	3.0	83-86	D	1.0	63-66
B-	2.67	80-82	D-	0.67	60-62
C+	2.33	77-79	E	0.00	0-59

Grading Rubric

A brief overview of how I arrive at the grades for all major assignments is below. We will discuss each assignment in more detail as it arrives.

In each paper, I will evaluate:

- 1) content, including argument, development, and support
- 2) organization, including paragraph structure, overall flow of ideas, transitions

3) mechanics, including grammar and style.

You should strive to excel in all three areas; more specific grade breakdowns are as follows:

The A-range essay has strong content, strong organization, AND strong mechanics. An “A” is not the baseline. It is earned.

The B-range essay has one key area (content, organization, mechanics) notably in need of revision.

The C-range essay has two key areas (content, organization, mechanics) notably in need of significant revision.

A D-range essay has two or more key areas in need of substantial revision.

An “E” is usually reserved for students who do not do the assignment or fail to attend class. However, an “E” may also be given if an essay blatantly ignores all three areas of evaluation.

Course Policies

Attendance: Attendance is mandatory for the success of this course. You may miss **two** classes without penalty; each absence after two will lower your final grade by 10%. If you miss **more than four** classes, you cannot pass the course. I consider all absences equally excused. The only exception to this policy is for university-sponsored events such as athletics and band. If you anticipate having a prolonged absence for any reason, please speak to me in advance.

If you are absent, it is still your responsibility to make yourself aware of all class discussion and announcements. You are also still responsible for turning in assignments on time. Any in-class assignments – including quizzes – cannot be made up.

Late Arrival: Our class is discussion-based, and as such late arrival is highly disruptive. Class starts **sharply at 11:00**, and anyone not in the room at that time will be counted as tardy. Early departures from class will also count as a tardy; any student missing more than ten minutes of class may be marked absent at the instructor’s discretion. Two tardies count as an absence.

Technology: E-readers will be allowed; this does not include cell phones, which must be put away and on silent during class. Other devices, such as laptops and tablets, will be allowed on a provisional basis. I reserve the right to ban them from the classroom at any time.

Paper Submission: I do not accept late assignments. Failure of technology (hard drive crashes, printer out of ink, etc.) is not an excuse.

All written assignments must follow MLA format. Papers submitted via hard copy must be stapled, and electronic submissions must include your last name in the document title. Failure to follow any of the above criteria will result in the loss of a letter grade on the assignment. I will not grade any papers that do not include a works cited page.

Final Grade Appeals: Concerns about grading on individual assignments should be addressed to the instructor. A student who is sure his or her final grade is inaccurate may appeal a final grade by filling out a form available from Carla Blount, English Department Program Assistant. Grade appeals may result in a higher, unchanged, or lower grade; the decision is final.

Statement of student disability services: The Disability Resource Center in the Dean of Students Office provides information and support regarding accommodations for students with disabilities. For more information, see: <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/>

Statement on harassment: UF provides an educational and working environment that is free from sex discrimination and sexual harassment for its students, staff, and faculty. For more about UF policies regarding harassment, see: <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/sexual/>

Statement on academic honesty: All students must abide by the Student Honor Code. For more information about academic honesty, including definitions of plagiarism and unauthorized collaboration, see: <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/honorcodes/honorcode.php>

Course Schedule

The following schedule is tentative and subject to change throughout the semester. All assignments, viewings, and readings are due the day they are listed. Check your email and Sakai daily for announcements and updates.

Week One: "They're getting older younger."

May 12: Course Introduction

May 13: The Teenager Arrives

Read: "The Rise and Decline of the Teenager" by Thomas Hine; *Teenagers*: Introduction

May 14: Fitzgerald's Teenager

Read: "Bernice Bobs Her Hair" by F. Scott Fitzgerald; *Teenagers*: Chapter 1

May 15: Plath's Teenager

Read: "Initiation" by Sylvia Plath; *Teenagers*: Chapter 2

Due: Reading Response One

May 16: Cormier's Teenager

Read: "The Moustache" by Robert Cormier; *Teenagers*: Chapter 3

Week Two: "Do act mysterious."

May 19: *Nancy Drew*

Read: *Nancy Drew: The Secret of the Old Clock*

May 20: *Nancy Drew*

Read: "Teen Reading at the Turn of the Century (Part II): Edward Stratemeyer" by Kent Baxter

May 21: *Nancy Drew*

Read: *Teenagers*: Chapter 4

May 22: In-class screening: Clips from *Love Finds Andy Hardy*

Read: *Teenagers*: Chapters 5, 6

May 23: *The Rebellious Teen*

Watch: *Rebel Without a Cause*; **Read:** *Teenagers*: Chapter 7

Due: Reading Response Two

Week Three: "I delight in what I fear."

May 26: No class

May 27: *Hangsaman*

Read: *Hangsaman*

May 28: *Hangsaman*

Due: Reading Response Three

May 29: *Hangsaman*

May 30: Midterm

Week Four: "The same disreputable aura."

June 2: *The Soul Brothers and Sister Lou*

Read: *The Soul Brothers and Sister Lou*

June 3: *The Soul Brothers and Sister Lou*

Read: *Teenagers*: Chapters 8, 9

Due: Reading Response Four

June 4: *The Soul Brothers and Sister Lou*

Read: *Teenagers*: Chapters 10, 11

June 5: *The Soul Brothers and Sister Lou*

June 6: In-class screening TBA

Week Five: "Being bad feels pretty good, huh?"

June 9: *Carrie*

Read: *Carrie*

June 10: *Carrie*

Due: Reading Response Five

June 11: *Carrie*

Read: Selection from Stephen King's *On Writing*

June 12: *Carrie*

Read: *Teenagers*: Conclusion

June 13: *The Breakfast Club*

Watch: *The Breakfast Club*; **Read:** "Fitting In, Standing Out, and Keeping Up" by Murray Milner, Jr.

Week Six: "I got older."

June 16: *The House You Pass on the Way*

Read: *The House You Pass on the Way*

June 17: *The House You Pass on the Way*

June 18: *My So-Called Life*

Watch: Episodes "Pilot" and "Guns and Gossip"

Due: Reading Response Six

June 19: *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*

Watch: Episodes "Surprise" and "Innocence"

June 20: Final Thoughts

Due: Final Papers