

ENC 1145: Topics for Composition
Writing About the American High School
Fall 2014

Section 3309
MWF Period 5 (11.45am – 12.35pm)
BLK 0315

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course looks at the American high school as a mythological space. To this end, we will examine various representations of high school—in literary texts, critical and sociological studies of teenagers and high school environments, as well as select films/television shows. We will analyze the tropes that inform a high school narrative, and discuss the intersections of narrative/genre expectations and “reality.” We will be looking into how the idea of the high school has permeated the American popular cultural imagination for decades, concentrating for the most part on post 70s texts that compulsively engage with this socio-cultural institution to the point of fetishizing it.

COURSE GOALS

Students will be learning and writing about narratives of the American High School system(s) in order to improve their ability to craft sustained arguments. This course focuses on the essential stylistics of writing clearly and efficiently within the framework of argumentative research writing with respect to literary/theoretical texts. You will learn how to formulate a coherent thesis and defend it logically with evidence drawn from both primary and secondary sources. You will also learn how to work through the stages of planning, research, organizing, and revising your writing. Along the way, you will learn efficient library research techniques, correct documentation styles, and ways to avoid plagiarism.

This course is designed to provide 6000 words toward the meeting of the Writing Requirement. This is a General Education course providing student learning outcomes listed in the Undergraduate Catalog. For more information, see <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/advising/info/general-education-requirement.aspx>

TEXTS

Literary Texts

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

1. Laurie Halse Anderson, *Twisted* [ISBN: 978-0142411841]
2. Sherman Alexie, *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* [ISBN: 978-0316013697]
3. Meg Cabot, *How to be Popular* [ISBN: 978-0060880149]
4. Stephen Chbosky, *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* [ISBN: 978-1451696196]
5. Robert Cormier, *The Chocolate War* [ISBN: 978-0375829871]
6. Madeleine George, *The Difference Between You and Me* [ISBN: 978-0670011285]

Writing Handbook (Suggested reading for reference)

1. Wayne Booth, Gregory Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams, *The Craft of Research* (3rd ed.) [ISBN: 978-0226065663]

Films and TV Shows

You will also be required to obtain and view the following films and episodes from television shows. They are available in different formats such as DVD, Netflix, Amazon Streaming, Hulu, and iTunes downloads.

Michael Lehmann (dir.), *Heathers* (1988)

My So-Called Life [Episode: "Pilot"] (1994) [Free Streaming at Hulu.com]

Daria [Episode: "Esteemsters"] (1997) [Available at UF]

Articles/Book Chapters

[Provided by instructor on course reserves OR available online/via UF databases]

1. Amy Best, *Prom Night: Youth, Schools and Popular Culture*. (2000) [Ch. 2: "Coming of Age at the Prom: Adolescence and Popular Culture"; Ch. 6: "The Divided Dance Floor: Race In School"]
2. Jen Doll, "The Ongoing Problem of Race in Y.A.," 2012.
<http://www.thewire.com/entertainment/2012/04/ongoing-problem-race-y/51574/>
3. Thomas Hine, *The Rise and Fall of the American Teenager* (1999) [Excerpts from "Introduction: Are Teenagers Necessary?"; Chapter 8: "The Invention of High School"]
4. Grace Palladino, *Teenagers: An American History*. (1996) [Introduction; Part 1: "The High School Age"]

In addition to the above texts, I may also suggest further secondary texts, as scholarly/critical/contextual material that enhances the understanding of and engagement with the main literary/film texts. I will provide these via UF library course reserves.

I may also suggest readings that will help students become better researchers and writers, including (but not limited to) sections from *The Craft of Research*. I may refer you to this handbook to in order to help you improve certain parts of your writing.

ASSIGNMENTS

This course is both reading- and writing-intensive, and focuses on teaching students to write critical arguments about literary and theoretical texts. Over the course of the semester, you will write:

- 1) One final research paper [6-7 pages]
- 2) One draft of the final research paper that you will discuss in a conference with me [min. 4 pages]
- 3) One annotated bibliography, related to the final research paper [4-5 pages]
- 4) Four Structured Response papers [2 pages each]
- 5) One scholarly article review [2-3 pages]

You will also

- 6) present/lead on one text as part of a group, with accompanying hand-outs [1-2 pages each]
- 7) turn in daily homework via the course blog (at <http://writinghighschools.blogspot.com>)
- 8) and take occasional pop quizzes to test whether you have done the required reading for the day

Assignment Descriptions

- **Final Research Paper:** Your essay will present a clear literary argument about a chosen text or texts from the course, or in certain (rare) cases, an outside text *that I have approved*. The topic is open, but there should be some effort to engage with a theme or issue that we discuss in class. You may develop one of the Structured Response Papers into a longer essay, but in any case, the essay must articulate a thesis and defend the thesis with evidence from the text(s).

- ***Draft of Final Research Paper:*** Must have a clearly articulated thesis, and show development of the ideas/arguments supporting your main thesis, as well as the inclusion of relevant scholarly sources. While it does not need to be entirely polished and complete, it does need to be a substantial draft for it to get credit. Bare “outlines” of your argument are not acceptable. This is a mandatory requirement for submission of your final paper.
- ***Annotated Bibliography:*** This assignment will help in preparation for the final essay. You would need to do secondary research on the text(s) you will be using in your final paper and write a short 250-word summary and evaluation of each source, discussing the article's thesis and how each article relates to your final paper topic/argument. Each entry should also discuss your critique of the article. Your annotated bibliography should consist of minimum 5 academic sources. The document will open with your proposed/tentative thesis to that point. The bibliographies should be arranged in alphabetical order, formatted in MLA style. The entire annotated bibliography should be 4-5 pages long.
- ***Structured Response Papers (SR):*** These should be considered as practice for longer papers, and will develop your close reading skills. Developing any idea from class discussion (and not just summarizing it) is a good way to start thinking about these papers. They should be minimum two pages each. For each of these papers, choose some element (a setting, passage, or character) from one of the assigned texts and analyze its significance with respect to the text as a whole or an issue that we discuss in class. What this means is you will have to perform a close reading of a particular section of the text in question and to argue for your interpretation of that section. We will be discussing further what “close reading” means in class, but for a general overview take a look at <http://www.personal.psu.edu/users/s/a/sam50/closeread.htm>. These papers are not journal entries. They must be well-organized and polished explications of a clearly articulated thesis. You may develop one of your Structured Responses into your final paper, but you need to discuss it with me first.
- ***Scholarly Article Review:*** This will build on the skills you learn while doing your annotated bibliography. You will take one scholarly article—either a supplementary article that you have come across while doing research for your final paper, or one of the book chapters/academic articles we have discussed in class—and write an **analytical review** of it. **You need my approval of the article you are reviewing.** You will present critically the basic argumentative premise of the article, mention its supporting points, comment on its structure, and on the strengths and weaknesses of its argument. This will not be a mere summary of the article, but an in-depth analysis of its form, structure and content. We will discuss in class what this may entail.
- ***Discussion Lead/Oral presentation on a literary OR theoretical text:*** Choose any critical essay and evaluate its main argument, its conclusions, and how it might apply to the creative text we are reading; OR choose from one of the creative/literary works and do a close reading to demonstrate how it illuminates central themes of the work as well as the historical/cultural/authorial context of its production. Each presentation should be about 10 minutes. **A one/two page handout is required.** Leads on critical/theoretical texts are due on the day they are assigned; those on primary, creative literature are due on the last day of readings for that novel/play. Please see schedule of assignments for more information.
- ***Homework:*** For each reading assignment (except for class periods in which an SR or essay is due or for a class period in which you are presenting), write two possible discussion questions based on the reading. These should be open-ended questions, but they should not be purely speculative; rather, they should elicit plausible answers that can be supported with details from the text. These questions are to be submitted to the class blog, so that others in class may also see the comments/questions you have on the text. Homework is due by 9 am on the days

we have class.

- **Class participation:** You will receive credit for participating if you contribute anything at all to the discussion on a given day: a complex thought, clarification, any kind of valid question related to the assignment, etc. If you do not participate in the discussion, you will receive no credit. You are also required to comment on **at least 10** blog entries of your classmates throughout the semester, responding to their discussion questions/comments/observations.

Please feel free to discuss your class work with me. I am available after class on Monday, or by appointment. Writing help is also available at the Reading & Writing Center (<http://www.at.ufl.edu/rwcenter/>). Other resources are noted on the University Writing Program's website (www.writing.ufl.edu).

Assignment Submission Protocols

- Papers must be typed and double-spaced with 1-inch margins and 12-point font, either Times New Roman or Arial. I take these protocols seriously—deviating will result in a reduced grade.
- Sources, including primary, literary sources, must be documented according to MLA conventions (in-text, parenthetical citations and a Works Cited page).
- **Papers must be stapled. No exceptions.**
- Formal submission of an assignment means handing in a paper (hard) copy of your assignment to me or leaving it in my Turlington mailbox. I do not grade/accept papers via email. You do, however, have to upload back-up copies of your papers on Sakai—these DO NOT constitute formal submission. However, they are a mandatory requirement.
- If you are absent from class on a day an assignment is due, you still need to submit it in my mailbox in the English department mailroom in Turlington by the end of the class period on that day. You are expected to catch up on any missed work.

GRADE DISTRIBUTION

Final Essay (<u>Submission of draft is mandatory</u> to receive grade on final essay) ---	250 points
4 Structured Responses ---	200 (50x4)
Annotated Bibliography of at least 5 sources ---	150
Article Review ---	100
Discussion Lead/Presentation ---	100
Homework ---	100
Participation ---	100
Final Grade	1000 points

Grading Scale

A	93-100
A-	90-92
B+	87-89
B	83-86
B-	81-82
C+	77-80
C	73-76
C-	71-72
D+	67-70
D	63-66
D-	61-62
E	60 or below

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.

English Department Procedures for Complaints about Grades

Complaints about grading on individual assignments **should be addressed to the instructor**, NOT the Director of Writing Programs, nor the Chair. A student who is sure his or her final grade is lower than deserved may appeal a final grade by filling out a form available from **Carla Blount**, Program Assistant.

Students must submit 1) completed forms, 2) all graded assignments, 3) a record of absences, and 4) a review of class participation to the Program Assistant. A committee of faculty members will review each student’s work and determine the final grade. Grade appeals may result in a higher, unchanged, or lower final grade; the decision is final.

COURSE POLICIES AND CLASSROOM BEHAVIOUR

Texts

You are required to bring the assigned books/readings to class every day. This is non-negotiable.

Absences

You are allowed a total of FIVE absences. If you miss a class, you are still responsible for the work assigned and material covered—it is **your** responsibility to make yourself aware of all class discussion and announcements. You are also still responsible for turning in assignments on time (in my Turlington mailbox). **Missing more than five classes means you fail, automatically.** Religious holidays and participation in university events are the only things that count as excused absences. Please notify me in advance if you will miss a class for either of the excused reasons, OR if you anticipate having a prolonged absence for any reason.

Missed daily work, quizzes, and participation reflect negatively on those components of the final grade. Missed daily work, in-class assignments, quizzes etc. cannot be made up. **If you come in more than 15 minutes late to a class, it counts as an absence. Three tardies constitute one absence.**

(N.B. 1 – **Illness is NOT an excused absence.** If you have some medical condition that requires you to miss the class for extended periods of time, I would encourage you to drop the class instead. Prolonged absences, even for medical reasons, will not be excused, as class discussions of reading and writing assignments are a key part of the course content.)

(N.B. 2 – Student athletes may have excused absences for participation in University athletic events, but they must make up the work. In addition, the English Department extends this same courtesy to students in the band or theater who need to travel for a university-sponsored event. However, you need to **consult me in advance** about an absence and/or how to make up the work.)

Late Assignment Submission

I do not grade late assignments. If you miss a deadline, you miss that grade. If you have a legitimate reason for requesting an extension on an assignment, please notify me well in advance. I rarely ever grant extension requests, but may be persuaded depending on the circumstances.

Technology

E-readers will be allowed; this does not include cell phones, which must be put away and on silent during class. Cell phones should not be answered during class time. If your phone rings, I answer it. **Reading newspapers or other materials not related to class and surfing the web/playing games, etc. is prohibited, as is texting during class.** Students who violate these rules will be asked to leave the class and will incur an absence.

I do not allow laptops/tablets in classrooms, except on a provisional basis on certain in-class writing assignment days. I will notify you in advance if you need to bring your laptop/tablet/chosen writing implement to the class.

Classroom Courtesy

Students come from diverse socio-cultural, economic, religious, and ethnic backgrounds. Some of the texts we will discuss and write about engage controversial topics and opinions. Diverse student backgrounds combined with provocative texts require that you demonstrate respect for ideas that may differ from your own. Harassment of any kind will not be tolerated. For more about The University of Florida policies regarding harassment, see the University of Florida Student Conduct Code: <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/judicial/conductcode.php>

Failure to adhere to these basic courtesies could require you to leave the class and be marked absent for the day.

Statement of Composition (C) and Humanities (H) credit

This course can satisfy the UF General Education requirement for Composition or Humanities. For more information, see:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/advising/info/general-education-requirement.aspx>

Statement of Writing requirement (WR)

This course can provide 6000 words toward fulfillment of the UF requirement for writing. For more information, see:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/advising/info/writing-and-math-requirement.aspx>

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.hr.ufl.edu/eo/sexharassment.htm>

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: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/advising/info/student-honor-code.aspx>

(Tentative) COURSE SCHEDULE

*This schedule is **subject to change** and is not a complete list of assignments. **Students will be required to complete additional reading and writing assignments**, including (but not limited to) in-class writing assignments and/or pop quizzes that contribute to the class participation grade.

*Assignments must be completed **BEFORE** the class period for which they are assigned.

*Please have each selection read **BEFORE** the class period it is due.*

Week 1: Introducing the Teenager and Her “Natural” Habitat

M Aug 25 Course introduction and syllabus

W Aug 27 Hine, Excerpt from “Introduction: Are Teenagers Necessary?”; Introducing YA Lit

F Aug 29 (Drop/Add ends) Palladino, “Introduction”; American High Schools: Stereotypes/Narratives

Week 2: Disturbing the Universe: High School Power Plays

M Sep 1 **No class: Labor Day**

W Sep 3 Begin Cormier, *The Chocolate War*; discuss Research Topics, Research Questions, and how to find a good Research Problem

F Sep 5 Cormier contd.; Rhetorical Analysis/Close Readings

Week 3

M Sep 8 Finish Cormier; **Group Presentation 1**

W Sep 10 Workshop: Writing Argumentative Thesis Statements and Structured Responses

F Sep 12 Hine, Chapter 8: “The Invention of High School”; Discuss Research Sources and citation styles (*OWL at Purdue* website)

Week 4: Rage Against the Machine: Teen Angst

M Sep 15 Annotated bibliographies: research tool for final project

W Sep 17 Begin Anderson, *Twisted*; **Group Presentation 2**

F Sep 19 Anderson contd.

DUE: Structured Response 1 (SR) [on Cormier/Hine Ch. 8/Palladino]

Week 5: Transformational Teens: The Politics of Popularity

M Sep 22 Finish Anderson; Discuss Article Review Assignment

W Sep 24 Best, Ch. 2: “Coming of Age at the Prom”

F Sep 26 Begin Cabot, *How to be Popular*; **Group Presentation 3**

Week 6

M Sep 29 Finish Cabot

W Oct 1 Discuss *My So-Called Life* [“Pilot”]; Final Research paper topics

Deadline: Get the scholarly article you will review **APPROVED** by me.

F Oct 3 Writing workshop: Quoting, Paraphrasing, Summarizing; Integrating quotations into your argument

DUE: SR 2 [on Anderson/Cabot/Best]

Week 7: Coming of Age in High School Narratives

M Oct 6 Begin Chbosky, *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* **Group Presentation 4**

Deadline: Get Final Research Paper topic **APPROVED** by me

W Oct 8 Chbosky contd.

F Oct 10 Chbosky contd.

Week 8

M Oct 13 Finish Chbosky

W Oct 15 Workshop: Article Review

F Oct 17 **No class: Homecoming**

Week 9: Rainbow High

M Oct 20 Start George, *The Difference Between You and Me* **Group Presentation 5**

W Oct 22 George contd.

DUE: Article Review

F Oct 24 Finish George

Week 10: Whitewashing the American High School

M Oct 27 Workshop: Annotated Bibliography

W Oct 29 Discuss *Heathers*

F Oct 31 Best, “The Divided Dance Floor: Race In School”; Doll, “The Ongoing Problem of Race in Y.A.”

DUE: SR 3 [on Chbosky/George/*My So-Called Life*]

Week 11: Diversity In the American Classroom

M Nov 3 Start Alexie, *Part-Time Indian*; **Group Presentation 6**

W Nov 5 Alexie contd.

F Nov 7 Alexie contd.

Week 12

M Nov 10 Finish Alexie

DUE: Annotated Bibliography

W Nov 12 Summing up High School Narrative Tropes; Palladino, “The High School Age”

F Nov 14 Organizing your argument—Introductions, Conclusions, Paragraphs (Handout)

Week 13

M Nov 17 Revising and editing paper drafts

DUE: SR 4 [on Best/Alexie/*Heathers*]

W Nov 19 Final Paper Class Presentations

F Nov 21 Final Paper Class Presentations

Week 14

M Nov 24 Workshop: Final paper draft; Discuss *Daria*

W Nov 26 **No class: Thanksgiving**

F Nov 28 **No class: Thanksgiving**

Week 15 (Final paper draft DUE during individual conferences)

M Dec 1 Final Paper Conferences

W Dec 3 Conferences contd.

F Dec 5 Conferences contd.

Week 16

M Dec 8 Conferences contd.

W Dec 10 Course Wrap Up

Final research paper due on Friday December 12 by 4pm