

LIT 4333-11B8: Literature for the Adolescent

Wednesdays, Periods 9-11 (4.05-7pm)

Turlington 2333

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Office Hours: Wednesdays, 1-3 pm and by appointment

Course Description

In this course, we will account for major themes and trends in American “young adult” (or “YA”) literature. As we analyze each of the assigned texts, we will pay particularly close attention to the ways in which works of YA literature draw on culturally-constructed notions of adolescence in order to shape the adolescent characters within them. We will also question how such works imagine and address their intended teenaged audience. Additionally, we will address issues of class, race, gender, sexuality, national identity, and consumerism that are implicit within these texts.

Assigned Texts (in the order in which we will be reading them)

J.D. Salinger, *The Catcher in the Rye*

S.E. Hinton, *The Outsiders*

Paul Zindel, *The Pigman*

Robert Cormier, *The Chocolate War*

Anonymous, *Go Ask Alice*

Judy Blume, *Forever*

Francesca Lia Block, *Weetzie Bat*

Francine Prose, *After*

Walter Dean Myers, *Monster*

Sherman Alexie, *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*

Gene Luen Yang, *American Born Chinese*

Ransom Riggs, *Miss Peregrine 's Home for Peculiar Children*

MT Anderson, *Feed*

One novel nominated by the class during the first week of the semester

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Attendance/Participation : 10 %

Quizzes: 10%

Discussion Question: 5%

Three Formal Writing Assignments: 75% (25% each)

Attendance/Participation

This is a discussion-based class. Therefore, it is important that you not only attend each class meeting but that you actively participate in each class discussion.

This class meets only once a week, for approximately three hours at a time. Therefore, if you miss one class meeting, you are missing the equivalent of three meetings of a regular MWF class. Consequently, I reserve the right to drop your grade each time you miss more than one class meeting. **In order to earn a full participation grade for each class, you must be present for the entire three hours of the session.**

Absences may be excused only in the following circumstances: illness, family emergencies, and religious holidays. If you miss a class because of an illness or a family emergency, you must furnish proper evidence (e.g., a doctor's note). If you plan to miss class because of a religious holiday, you should inform me of your intended absence ahead of time.

N.B. -I consider texting evidence of a missed class. When you text, your body might be present, but your mind is not. Therefore, **I reserve the right to strike an attendance/participation grade from your record for each instance in which I observe you texting in class.**

Quizzes

During the course of the semester, I will administer brief pop quizzes that test (a) your reading comprehension of the assigned texts and (b) your comprehension of previously discussed topics. Please be prepared to respond to relatively detailed quiz questions. I insist

that you thoroughly read each of the assigned texts; my pop quizzes will test the extent to which you have closely read these novels.

Discussion Question

Each of you will be responsible for submitting and orally presenting one (1) critical reading question on the topic of a text of your choice. This question should be focused and detailed; moreover, it should be on a topic that is of interest to you and that you believe may be interesting to the class. **(For example:** “Why do you think *The Chocolate War* begins with the line, ‘They murdered him?’” **Or:** “How does *Weetzie Bat* employ conventions of magical realism?” **Or:** “How might *After* be read as a critique of American national security measures instituted in the wake of September 11, 2001?”).

You should submit your question to me via email at least 24 hours before our class session - that is, no later than 4pm on the Tuesday before class.

When you submit your question to me, you should also send a brief (paragraph-long) response to your own question.

You will sign up for your text and question date on Wednesday, 15 January.

Please be prepared to share your question on the day that the text of your choice is discussed.

Three Formal Assignments

During the course of the semester, you will compose three (3) formal papers. Each of these papers should be *at least* five (5) pages long. You will write each of these papers in response to prompts that I give you; these prompts will be informed by our class discussions.

I will evaluate these papers according to the following criteria: originality; strength of argument; deployment of textual support and analysis; use of strong, fluid academic prose; solid construction and organization; and evidence of good proof-reading. **An “A” paper is one that not only meets but exceeds these criteria.**

Each of your papers should conclude with a list of works cited - even if you cite only one, primary text. **I will not assign a grade to a paper that does not include a list of works cited.** You may use your choice of style and citation - e.g., MLA, Chicago, Turabian, etc - as long as your citation/style choice remains consistent.

N.B. - Evidence of plagiarism is punishable by failure.

Note on Disabilities

If you have a disability, please offer me proper documentation by the second week of class so that I can work with you to make the proper accommodations.

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

8 January: Course Introduction

15 January: J.D. Salinger, *The Catcher in the Rye*

22 January: S.E. Hinton, *The Outsiders*

29 January: Paul Zindel, *The Pigman*

5 February: Robert Cormier, *The Chocolate War*

First Assignment Given

12 February: Anonymous, *Go Ask Alice*

19 February: Judy Blume, *Forever*

26 February: Francesca Lia Block, *Weetzie Bat*

First Assignment Due

Second Assignment Given

5 March: NO CLASS - HAPPY SPRING BREAK!!!

12 March: Francine Prose, *After*

19 March: Walter Dean Myers, *Monster*

26 March: Sherman Alexie, *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*

Second Assignment Due

2 April: Gene Luen Yang, *American Born Chinese*

9 April: Ransom Riggs, *Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children*

16 April: MT Anderson, *Feed*

23 April: Class Choice!!!

30 April: Third Assignment Due - in my office or via email no later than 7pm,