ENT 459.01: Studies in Young Adult Literature—Fall 2014
M-W 1:10—2:30
LA 233

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by appointment

Course Goals: This course is designed to introduce students to the wide variety of Young
Adult literature appropriate for students in grades 5 through 12. YA literature is
tremendously diverse and constantly changing. Our readings will focus primarily on
contemporary (21st century) novels by authors from diverse ethnic backgrounds writing
in a variety of genres. Class discussion and assignments will be structured so as to
broaden student’s understanding of the history of YA literature.

This course is a pre-requisite or co-requisite to ENT 441: Teaching Reading and
Literature. While our course will not focus specifically on techniques for teaching
literature, we will employ a variety of approaches for exploring literary texts drawn in
part from the reference texts listed below and appropriate to a wide range of readers
including students in grades 5 through 12. These literary “engagements” are integral to
this class—our goal is not just to become familiar with the texts of YA literature, but also
to experience, appreciate, and celebrate the aesthetic value of this literature. This is first
and foremost a literature class.

From David Foster Wallace’s “Literary Analysis I” syllabus

[This course] aims to show you some ways to read fiction more deeply, to come up with
more interesting insights on how pieces of fiction work, to have informed, intelligent
reasons for liking or disliking a piece of fiction, and to write—clearly, persuasively, and
above all interestingly—about stuff you’ve read. We’ll use the basic analytical
categories of plot, character, setting, point of view, tone, theme, symbol, etc., to take the
books apart, rather than heavy-duty lit-crit or Literary Theory. For the most part, we’ll be
reading what’s considered popular or commercial fiction, and from a variety of genres...

. . . If the course works, we’ll end up being able to locate some rather sophisticated
techniques and/or themes lurking below the surface of novels that, on a quick read on
airplane or beach, look like nothing but entertainment, all surface.

Course requirements:

Readings and Response Papers—you are expected to keep up with the readings
listed on the class schedule below and bring the appropriate text(s) to class. You are
responsible for reading the entirety of each text for the first day it is to be discussed
unless otherwise specified. You will write 8 response papers over a period of 14 weeks.
All students will write a response paper for week 2. After week 2 it will be your
responsibility to choose which books you will respond to and to make certain that you
complete the 8 response papers by the last week of class. The form of the response
papers will be discussed in class. You can expect that the format of the response papers will evolve during the course of the term and students are responsible for being certain that they are up to date on the format for each week. Response papers are due at the beginning of the Monday class meeting, except for week 2 when they will be due on Wednesday. Students must turn in a hardcopy of their response paper at the beginning of class. If for any reason you miss a class when a response paper is due, you will need to e-mail me your response before class and submit a hardcopy when you next attend class in order to receive credit for the assignment.

You will write one formal essay during the course of the term analyzing a selected text from the reading (preferably not one for which you have written a response paper). The specific form of this essay will be addressed in class well before the paper is due.

You will develop a text set composed of YA literature, describe your text set in an annotated bibliography, write a critical analysis of your text set, and share your project with the class in a brief presentation. Due dates are listed in the schedule below.

Participation in whole class discussions and small group activities is expected and attendance is mandatory. You are expected to attend each class session. If you miss more than three classes (for any reason) your participation grade will be lowered by 3 points (out of a possible 20 points) for each absence over three. [The fact that can miss three classes without penalty is not meant to underwrite vacations—they are meant for serious illness or other emergencies.] You are expected to be on time for class and to stay for the entire class meeting. Coming to class significantly late, or leaving early will be considered an absence. Please keep cell phones and other electronic media off when you are in class.

Due dates listed in the course schedule below are firm. Late work will be considered within reason, but it will not receive full credit.

GRADUATE STUDENTS: For students enrolled for graduate credit the text set project will be defined somewhat differently than for students enrolled for undergraduate credit. Please see me after the first class for clarification on this point.

Grading:  
Response Papers: 40 points  
Critical Essay: 10 points  
Text Set Project: 30 points  
Participation: 20 points  
Total possible points--100
Required texts:

Collins, Suzanne: *The Hunger Games*, Scholastic.
Hinton, S.E.: *The Outsiders*, 1967
Nix, Garth: *Sabriel*
Stead, Rebecca: *When You Reach Me*, 2009, Yearling.

Reference texts:

*The Girl with the Brown Crayon*
Atwell, Nancy: *In the Middle*

**Additional Resources by Beverly Ann Chin**

TEACHING MULTICULTURAL LITERATURE: A WORKSHOP FOR THE MIDDLE GRADES
<www.learner.org/resources/series203.html>

THE EXPANDING CANON: TEACHING MULTICULTURAL LITERATURE IN HIGH SCHOOL <www.learner.org/resources/series178.html>

Guides to Quality: Awards and lists:

- Caldecott Medal
- Coretta Scott King Award
- Newbery Medal
- Horn Book Awards
Course Schedule:

Week 1: M Aug 25: Introduction

W Aug 27: Picture Book Text Sets

Week 2: M Sept 1—Labor Day holiday

W Sept 3: The Outsiders

Week 3: M Sept 8: How I Live Now

W Sept 10: How I Live Now continued—"Save the Last Word for Me"

Week 4: M Sept 15: House on Mango Street

W Sept 17: House on Mango Street cont.—"Found Poetry"

Week 5: M Sept 22: Out of the Dust

W Sept 24: Dust cont.—Reading aloud—around the room, popcorn, choral

Week 6: M Sept 29: The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian

W Oct 1: Absolutely cont.—"Readers’ Theater"

Week 7: M Oct 6: Sabriel

W Oct 8: Sabriel cont.

Week 8: M Oct 13: Paper Towns

W Oct 15: Paper Towns cont.—critical essay due

Week 9: M Oct 20: Mystery text set: When You Reach Me & The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time

W Oct 22: Mystery text set cont.—Literature Circles
Week 10: M Oct 27: The Hunger Games
   W Oct 29: The Hunger Games cont.

Week 11: M Nov 3: Monster
   W Nov 5: Monster cont.

Week 12: M Nov 10: Feed
   W Nov 12: Feed cont. — text set annotated bibliography due

Week 13: M Nov 17: The Miseducation of Cameron Post
   W Nov 19: The Miseducation of Cameron Post cont.

Week 14: M Nov 24: American Born Chinese
   W Nov 26—Thanksgiving Travel Day—no class

Week 15 M Dec 1: Into the Wild — text set project due
   W Dec 3: Into the Wild cont.

Friday, Dec. 5—last day of classes
Final Exam Period: Monday Dec. 8—Friday, Dec. 12