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MORAVIAN COLLEGE
Bethlehem, Pennsylvania

Education 131
Spring 2012
The YA Novel: Inquiring, Analyzing, Teaching, Enjoying

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Unit essential questions

In what ways can fiction written for secondary and middle-school readers qualify as literature? To what degree should they be taught alongside traditional novels?

Since the blossoming of the Harry Potter series, the growth of the Young Adult/Middle School (YA/MS) genre has virtually rescued the publishing industry. What about this genre is speaking to the next generation? What can this success tell us about the next generation of readers? How did J.K. Rowling gain traction?

How might digital, multi-modal, cinematic and other enhancements lend further understanding of seminal YA texts to both teachers and students? What strategies can we develop to teach YA and Middle School literature to Millennials raised in a digital culture?

Objectives

To examine and analyze various YA/MS texts with an eye toward cultural significance and context (socio-economic; racial; ethnic).

To develop strategies for teaching YA and MS texts to reluctant readers and ELL students.

To examine strategies for developing meaningful storytelling and literary criticism techniques through "mini-units" as we read thematically similar books in pairs each month.

To better analyze texts and through in-class literature circles.

To develop Personal Learning Networks to enhance understanding of the genre: how to read it, how to teach it.

To remember: Fun Is Good

Class Environment

Educ 131 will offer five live conversations with authors and editors.

Educ 131 will be held in a classroom which will be more an interactive learning lab than a lecture hall. Every member of the classroom will contribute, question and collaborate. It will not be built upon a "chalk-and-talk" model. We will learn to teach, teach to learn and share insights and opinions with each other. Educ 131 will be a twice-weekly meeting of ideas.

Course Requirements

Each student will be expected to give her or his utmost effort. Effort will be considered as important as any other aspect of the course requirement; final grades will include serious consideration of each student's effort throughout the term. Intellectual engagement and involvement in the curriculum and its themes will be a paramount part of the final grade.

Each student will schedule one individual conference with instructor prior to midterm.

Each student will write four brief (two/three double-spaced page) reviews upon the completion of four of the books (see syllabus for the titles in question), with emphasis on a) its effectiveness dramatically; b) its essential themes; c) how best the text might be taught (for assessment, this will be the **Review Journal of Texts -- RJT** -- dropped into appropriate on-line syllabus folders.) Check out Philbrick's 5 Steps for Writing a Book Review <http://teacher.scholastic.com/writewit/bookrev/index.htm>

Each student will be required to find **one** website used by the YA author/teacher/reader world, and, at the end of each half-term, submit a short report on its content and what she/he has learned. (A head-start prompt: If you Google "Young Adult Website," the third entry is "www.reading.lib.pa.us/youngadult_links.asp," which features a dozen YA websites on its home page.)

Each student will be familiar enough with each text to pass spot quizzes which will not be listed on the syllabus, which will ensure that the student is doing the reading. Of the net texts we will read, five will involve quizzes.

The Midterm Exam will involve a) identification of characters, locales, etc. from our first-half texts, b) an essay about one of the mini-units.

Due March 13: Each student will construct a multi-media digital book review presentation -- using any/all resources -- and hopefully have some fun creating it. It will be three minutes maximum. In-class presentations will be on the dates listed in the syllabus. This exercise encourages creativity. (For a head-start prompt see <http://voicethread.com/?#q.b69839.i359105> ... but Voicethread is sophisticated. You need not be. A cell phone video camera might have all you need. Or a thread of social-media posts with like-minded colleagues out there in the cloud.)

Due April 24: Final project: Each student will write a final take-home exam for a text that is not on the reading list, designed to test the student's command of the themes and subtexts of the book. And then take it.

There will be no written final exam.

Attendance

Attendance at each meeting is crucial. Yes, 7:30 is an ungodly hour to have a class. On the other hand, you could be in a cult where they force you to get up at four every morning. If you must miss a session, please call the instructor to explain. Each unexcused absence will have a cumulatively adverse effect on the final grade. More than two unexcused class absences or repeat late arrivals may result in a failing grade for the course.

Academic Honesty

Be **certain** to avoid plagiarism. It's a felony. The Moravian College Student Handbook defines it "the use, **deliberate or not**, of any outside source without proper acknowledgement" (52). Consult The Bedford Researcher (<http://bcs.bedfordstmartins.com/bedfordresearcher/>) for more information on how to avoid plagiarism. Academic dishonesty will result in a zero for the assignment and notification of the Academic Dean, in accordance with Moravian College policy.

Course Schedule

Please note that while every effort will be made to follow the schedule indicated below, the syllabus is malleable.

(Day students who wish to disclose a disability and request accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act [ADA] for this course must first meet with either Mr. Joseph Kempfer in the Office of Learning Services or Dr. Ronald Kline in the Counseling Center. Comenius Center students who believe that they may need accommodations in this class are encouraged to contact the Dean of the Comenius Center as soon as possible to enhance the likelihood that such accommodations are implemented in a timely fashion.)

Grading

1. Classroom Participation:	10%
2. RJT	20 %
3. In-Class Quizzes on readings	10%
4. Mid-Term Examination	15%
5. YA website reports	10%
6. Digital Book Review	15%
7. Research Project:	20%

Required Texts

Alexie, Sherman: "The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian"
Anderson, Laurie Halse Anderson, "Speak"
Bucher, Katherine, and Kavonia Hinton. "Young Adult Education: Exploration, Evaluation and Appreciation."
Cisneros, Sandra. *The House on Mango Street*. New York: Vintage, 1991. Print.
Cormier, Robert "The Chocolate War:"
Franco, Betsy, ed. *Things I Have to Tell You: Poems and Writing by Teenage Girls*. Cambridge, MA: Candlewick Press, 2001. Print.
Hinton S. E. "The Outsiders" ISBN-13n 978-
Marsh, Katherine: "The Night Tourist"
Richmond Peter, "Always a Catch"
Roth, Veronica, "Divergent"
Shakur, Tupac: "The Rose That Grew From Concrete"
Yagoda, Ben "How to Not Write Bad"

Additional Print Resources

Appleman, Deborah. *Critical Encounters in High School English: Teaching Literary Theory to Adolescents*. 2nd ed. New York: Teachers College Press, 2009. Print.

Eagleton, Terry. *Literary Theory: An Introduction*. 2nd ed. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996. Print.

Fisher, Jerilyn, and Ellen S. Silber, eds. *Women in Literature: Reading through the Lens of Gender*. Santa Barbara: Greenwood Press, 2003. Print.

Gallo, Donald. R., ed. *On the Fringe: Stories*. New York: Penguin, 2001. Print.

Herz, Sarah K., and Donald Gallo. *From Hinton to Hamlet: Building Bridges between Young Adult Literature and the Classics*. 2nd ed. Santa Barbara: Greenwood Press, 2005. Print.

Howe, James, ed. *13: Thirteen Stories That Capture the Agony and Ecstasy of Being Thirteen*. New York: Simon Pulse, 2006. Print.

Kelly, Patricia P., and Robert C. Small, Jr., eds. *Two Decades of The ALAN Review*. Urbana: NCTE Press, 1999. Print.

Monseau, Virginia. R. *Responding to Young Adult Literature*. Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook, 1996. Print.

Ohler, Jason. *Digital Storytelling in the Classroom: New Media Pathways to Literacy, Learning, and Creativity*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press, 2008. Print.

Sitomer Alan Lawrence, and Michael Cirelli. *Hip-Hop Poetry and the Classics*. Beverly Hills: Milk Mug Publishing, 2004. Print.

Trelease, Jim. *Read All About It!: Great Read-Aloud Stories, Poems, and Newspaper Pieces for Preteens and Teens*. New York: Penguin, 1993. Print.

Trelease, Jim. *The Read-Aloud Handbook*. 6th ed. New York: Penguin, 2006. Print.

Wolf, Shelby A., Karen Coats, Patricia Encisco, and Christine A. Jenkins, eds. *Handbook of Research on Children's and Young Adult Literature*. New York: Routledge, 2011. Print.

Selected Electronic Resources

Teen Reads

<http://www.teenreads.com/index.asp>

Web English Teacher Young Adult Literature

<http://www.webenglishteacher.com/ya.html>

Writing with Writers

<http://teacher.scholastic.com/writewit/index.htm>

Young Adult Library Services Association

<http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/yalsa/booklistsawards/booklistsbook.cfm>

Term Syllabus

Tues January 14

In class

Intros: Course overview

Literacy autobiographies: we discuss our history of reading, and why we're here: On a talk show episode devoted to YA literature, what point would each want to be certain to make? If you were also an invited guest on the show, what would you add from your own past experience as a teen reader?

Thur Jan 16: Beginning of Mini-Unit 1: Fringe Folk

Due in Class:

First half of **The Outsiders**

Yagoda, "**How to Not Write Bad**," pps. 52-79.

In class:

Web interview with S.L.Hinton: <http://theoutsidersfanclub.weebly.com/exclusive-interview-with-se-hinton.html>

Video book report example: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qi68dtCpGPw>The Outsiders: What's working? What isn't? Why? Why not?

Tues Jan 21

Due in Class:

Finish **Outsiders**

RJT on **Outsiders**, filed on syllabus folder

Bucher & Hinton reading: Chapter 1

In class:

Literature circle for **Outsiders**: One student will assume the role of a character; one will take notes; the others will talk to the character. Class reconvenes to discuss the circles. (*NOTE: This protocol will apply to all ensuing literature circles: the dynamic of the circle will change, depending on the text, but there will always be someone serving as the note-take/scribe, who will then issue her/his report to the rest of the class. when it reconvenes, about that circle's discussion.*)

Thurs Jan 23

Due in class:

First half of "**The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian**"

Read bio of Alexie: <http://contemporarylit.about.com/cs/authors/p/alexie.htm>

Watch Ben Yagoda's "Nine writing mistakes you're probably making"

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/ben-yagoda/writing-mistake_you_b_2618359.html

In class:

Viewing: Green, John; Mental Floss, 38 Spelling and Grammar Errors

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hRMRCeQBAKI>.

Skype conversation with author Ben Yagoda.

Grammar review: we compose a 100-word story using plot elements and characere development while reviewing each part od speech as a way to review of most common grammar mistakes: Misplaced modifiers; confusion of homophones; aural reliance on commas; the elusive semi-colon; the elusive "literally"...Review of most common style mistakes....)

Tues January 28

Due in class:

Finish "**The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian**"

In class:

Literature Circles: This book banned from some schools: Why?

We read his defense of accusations:

<http://blogs.wsj.com/speakeasy/2011/06/09/why-the-best-kids-books-are-written-in-blood/>

Thurs January 30: Beginning of Mini-Unit Two: Growing up as `Girl`"

Due in class:

First half "**Speak**"

Bucher Chapter 2: Evaluating & Selecting Young Adult Literature"

In class:

Is this a class/ethnic novel? A gender novel? A rape novel? A coming of age novel? an empowerment novel? A Finding one's voice novel?

What does the text tell us about the role of art? And what's it relationship to the closet, symbolically?

Can you think of other metaphoric "safe places"? In your own experience?

Strategies for teaching.

Tues Feb 4

Due in Class

Finish **Speak**

In class:

Lit circles.

Video Clip: Laurie Halse Anderson Reads "Listen"

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ic1c_MaAMOI&feature=related

Thurs Feb 6

Due in Class:

First Half of "**The House on Mango Street**

Sandra Cisneros: A Feminist Critique of *The House on Mango Street* (1991)

<http://www.missourireview.com/archives/bbarticle/interview-with-sandra-cisneros/> .

In class:

Discussion topics: How does your reading of the interview enhance your understanding of the novel?

A class/ethnic novel? A gender novel? A rape novel? A coming of age novel? an empowerment novel?

Finding one's voice novel?

What is the role of the house as a symbol?

If ethnicity is a theme for our narrator, how has yours affected your path?

How as teachers do we adjust for different upbringings/ethnicities when teaching texts?

Tues Feb 11

Due in Class:

Finish **Mango Street**

RJT due on **Mango Street**

In class

Lit circles.

We read her poetry: Which is more effective? Her text or her poetry? Why?

Thurs Feb 13 Beginning of Mini-unit 3: YA Poetry

Due in Class:

First Half "**The Rose That Grew from Concrete**"

Read wiki bio of Tupac, and two-graf history of Black Panthers:

<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/68134/Black-Panther-Party>

Define through on-line research: • foot • stanza • quatrain • couplet • tercet • free verse.

Bucher & Hinton from Chapter 11, p. 292-302 "Poetry"

In class:

Effectiveness of the work as poetry vs. prose.

Discussion: When is free-form poetry more effective than conventional schemes/rhymes?

Teaching specific strategies for students who might have divergent opinions of Tupac, rap, hip-hop.

Tue Feb 18

Due in Class:

Finish "**Concrete**"

Watch Tupac on Youtube:

"Keep Ya Head Up" <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zBhm7GcEk6E>

"I Wonder if Heaven got a Ghetto

["http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I1w0nPzMrUo](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I1w0nPzMrUo)

In class:

Lit circles: What can we intuit of his opinion
Of women? Is it cultural?
Of god? Is it cultural?
Of racism? Is it cultural?

Has your opinion of the man changed? His culture? His music?

Thurs Feb 20

Due in Class:

First Half **"Things I have to Tell You: Poems and Writing by Teenage Girls."**

In class: YA Poetry Open Mic

Tues Feb 25

Due in Class:

Finish **TIHTTY**
Have your YA novel chosen for the take-home final

In class

Discuss reading.
Lit circles
Comparison of styles of two books.
Discussion teaching techniques for poetry.

Thurs Feb 27 Midterm exam.

Tues March 4 No class Spring Break

Thurs March 6 No class Spring Break

Tues March 11: Mini-unit 4: The Middle-School Mode"

Due in class:

How it Happened In Peach Hill

In Class:

Lit circles
Discussion with author Marthe Jocelyn

Thur March 13

Due in Class

First Half **Night Tourist**
Reading of Wiki Account of Orpheus & Eurydice Myth

Tues March 18

Due in Class: Finish **Night Tourist**

RJT on Night Tourist

In Class:

Skype interview with **Night Tourist author Katherine Marsh**

Thurs March 20: Mini-unit 5: Mob Rule

Due in Class:

First Half of **Always A Catch**

Written: Wiki-style biographies of Jack (our hero) and Zowitzki (our villain)

In Class

Discussion: Practical classroom applicability of the bully dynamic:

Educational environment as progenitor of bullying/bifurcation poles. To what degree does a school's structure, physical and symbolic, promote Alphas and Omegas in a school society?

Tues March 25

Due in class:

Finish **Always A Catch**

In class

Lit circles: One student takes bully role, one takes victim role, other two mediate.

Q&A with author

Thurs March 27

Due in Class:

First Half of **Chocolate War**

In class:

Book appears at number three on the [American Library Association's](#) list of the "Top 100 Banned/Challenged Books in 2000–2009." Why? Fair?

How did Cormier deal with Archie and Jerry as opposed to Richmond w/ Jack and Zowitzki?

Tues April 1

Due in Class:

Second Half **Chocolate War**

RJT Chocolate War

In Class:

Bullying Lit Circles

In class: Cinematographer of Keith Gordon's movie **Chocolate War**

Thurs April 3

Due in Class:

First Quarter **Divergent**

In class:

Discussion of Dystopian and Fantasy genre,

Why is science fiction often marginalized in traditional literature curricula? When boys go crazy for it?

Tues April 8

Due in Class:

Second q. **Divergent**

In class:

What purpose does each of the five factions serve in society? What personality types are drawn toward each faction? Do you think these factions represent every basic personality type and fulfill all the basic needs of people? If not, what faction(s) would you create to fill in any gaps?

Are the factions working “toward a better society and a better world” (as they say they are? What's working for Tris's society? What doesn't seem to be working?

Tris says about Candor, “It must require bravery to be honest all the time” Do you agree? Which do you think is a braver faction, Dauntless or Candor? Would you like to live in a society like Candor, where everyone tells the truth no matter how hard it is to hear?

During initiation, is it selfish of Tris to crave victory, or is it brave? Do Tris's friends have a right to be jealous when she's ranked above them? If you were Tris, would you forgive them for their reactions?

Thurs April 10

Due in class:

Third q. **Divergent**

In class:

Does the idea of “faction before blood” have a place in today's society, or is it contrary to what most people believe? In our society, what ideas and beliefs are people loyal to in the way Tris's society is loyal to the concept of the factions?

During initiation, is it selfish of Tris to crave victory, or is it brave? Do Tris's friends have a right to be jealous when she's ranked above them? If you were Tris, would you forgive them for their reactions?

What faction do you think you would have been born into, given your family and its values? Which faction would you select at your Choosing Ceremony? Why? How would you feel about making a decision that would determine your life's course at the age of sixteen?

Tue April 15

Due in class:

Finish **Divergent**

RJT Divergent

In class: Lit circles

Thu April 17

Due in Class:

"Snowman," short story by Tom Chiarella

In class:

Lit Circles

Short story format vs. novel.

Tue April 22

Due in Class:

Book review presentations

In class: Presentations

Thurs April 24

Book review presentations

In class: Presentations

Finals Week: Take-home final exam due Tue Tues 4/30

Instructions on take-home final, which is designed to test your abilities as both student and educator: Design a final for your chosen text., to be completed within a 1:15. It should not include any multiple-choices, obviously. You'd nail them. It should entail five questions pertaining to plot, character development, social significance -- that is, five questions that test the student on the various themes, and interpretations...worth 50%. Then: An essay question about the text...or comparing/contrasting it to other texts...or comparing it to your own real-life experiences. It will be graded on its effectiveness as an exam, and on the effectiveness of the answers.

