

## **EDUC 131**

# **The Young Adult Novel: Inquiring, Analyzing, Teaching, Enjoying**

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### **Unit essential questions**

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

Since the blossoming of the Harry Potter series, the exponential 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? Why 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 Young Adult and texts with an eye toward cultural significance and context.

To develop strategies for teaching YA novels. To critique YA novels. To read YA novels.

To better 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 plumb the strata of the texts through in-class literature circles. (Whether the circles' particular personnel stay fixed or rotate will be the class's decision.)

## **Class Environment**

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 (unless to do so is truly painful), 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" over the course of the semester will be the most important part of the final grade.

Each student will schedule one individual conference with instructor prior to midterm to help both of us find the best way for you to learn.

Each student will write essays -- in class, in a notebook -- upon the completion of some 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.

Each student will, with two or three other members of the class, research one of the authors of eight of the ten books (the poetry anthology has no author, and I am not worth researching)

Each student will be familiar enough with each text to pass occasional spot quizzes which will not be listed on the syllabus, simply to ensure that the student is doing the reading. If the student is doing the reading, a 9 out of 10 will be the usual result.

The class will be broken into seven "teams," each of which will research the author of one of our texts; each respective team will share its findings when we're reading that author's book.

The Midterm Exam will involve a) identification of characters, locales, etc. from our first-half texts (25%), b) an essay (75%).

There WILL be reading over spring break, but it will be aimless: *The Outsiders*.

Final project: 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 who's reading the same book you

are...) Last spring, students did paintings, videos and spoken reviews accompanied by on-line illustrations/music. One woman who reviewed a book involving a red shoe brought in a red shoe.

There will be no written final exam.

### **Attendance**

Due to the nature and structure of the course, attendance at each meeting is crucial. If you must miss a session, please e-mail the instructor BEFORE THE CLASS to explain. More than two unexcused class absences or a pattern of late arrivals to class may, at the discretion of the instructor, result in a failing grade for the course.

### **Academic Honesty**

Since most of the writing will be done in class, plagiarism should not be an issue. But plagiarism, which the Moravian College Student Handbook defines as “the use, deliberate or not, of any outside source without proper acknowledgement,” will be a dealbreaker: a failing grade, and the dean finds out.

### **Disabilities**

Students who wish to request accommodations in this class for a disability should contact Ms. Elaine Mara, Assistant Director of Academic & Disability Support, located on the first floor of Monocacy Hall (extension 1401). Accommodations cannot be provided until authorization is received from the Academic & Disability Support office.

### **Course Schedule**

Please note that while every effort will be made to follow the schedule indicated below, the syllabus is subject to change as the instructor deems necessary to help students meet the objectives of the course.

### **Assignments and Grading**

#### **Grading**

1. Overall, semester-long Effort:	25%
2. Classroom Participation	20%
3. In-Class Quizzes on readings	10%
4. Mid-Term Examination	15%

5. YA website reports 10%

6. Multi-media Book Review 15%

And you get 5% by showing up.

### **Required Texts**

Asher, Jay. "Thirteen Reasons Why"

Franco, Betsy, ed. "Things I Have to Tell You: Poems and Writing by Teenage Girls."

Hinton S. E. "The Outsiders"

Lowry, Lois. "The Giver"

Marsh, Katherine: "The Night Tourist"

Richmond Peter, "Always a Catch"

Roth, Veronica, "Divergent"

Shakur, Tupac: "The Rose That Grew From Concrete"

Strasser, Todd. "Boot Camp"

Stein, Tammer. "Kindred"

### **Term Syllabus**

#### **Tues January 20**

In class

Course overview

We say Hi.

Literacy autobiographies: we discuss our history of reading, and why we're here.

#### **Thur Jan 22: Beginning of Mini-Unit 1: Dystopia!**

Due in Class:

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

Roth on anxiety: <http://www.people.com/people/article/0,,20798669,00.html>

In class:

Discussion of our own YA experiences: Students pair off for interviews about their own YA experiences.

Adolescent anxiety as a factor

### **Tues Jan 27**

Due in class: First quarter of **Divergent**

In class: Discussion of text.

Watch Ben Yagoda's "Nine writing mistakes you're probably making"  
[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/ben-yagoda/writing-mistake-you\\_b\\_2618359.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/ben-yagoda/writing-mistake-you_b_2618359.html)

Green, John; Mental Floss, 38 Spelling and Grammar Errors  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hRMRCeQBAKI>.

### **Thurs Jan 23**

Due in class: Second quarter of **Divergent**

In class: Writing

### **Tues January 27**

Due in class: Third quarter **Divergent**

In class: Research teams break away to research authors

### **Thurs January 29:**

Due in class: Last quarter of **Divergent**

In class: writing

Roth research report.

### **Tues Feb 3**

Due in Class First quarter of **The Giver**

In class: We plot a novel

### **Thurs Feb 5**

Due in class: first half of **The Giver:**

In class: Lowry research report.

Dystopia Discussion!

We plot the novel

### **Tues Feb 10**

Due in class: third quarter of **The Giver**

In class: we keep plotting the novel.

### **Thurs Feb 12**

Due in Class: Finish **The Giver**

In class

Write about both books.

And finish plotting the novel.

### **Tues Feb 17 Mini-unit 2: YA Poetry**

Due in Class: **"The Rose That Grew from Concrete"**

Read wikipedia bio of Tupac Shakur

Read very brief two-graf history of Black Panthers:

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

In class:

**"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)

Effectiveness of the work as poetry vs. prose.

Discussion: Is free-form poetry more effective?

Tupac report

### **Thurs Feb 19**

Due in Class: "**Things I have to Tell You: Poems and Writing by Teenage Girls.**"

In class

Write about a poem.

Compare the two anthologies

**Tues Feb 24 Mini-unit 3: Adolescence can suck**

Due in Class: First Half of **Always a Catch**

In class: Q&A w/ author

**Thurs Feb 26**

Due in class: Finish **AAC**

In class: write

**Tues March 3**

Due in class: Review for mid-term

In class: Review

**Thurs March 5 Midterm exam.**

**Tues March 10 No class Spring Break**

**Thurs March 12 No class Spring Break**

**Read "THE OUTSIDERS"**

**Tues March 17:**

Due in class: First third of **Boot Camp**

In Class: Report on Strasser

Discussion: Boarding school!

**Thur March 19**

Due in Class: Second third of **Boot Camp**

**Tues March 24: Finish Boot Camp**

In class: Writing  
First multi-media reports

**Thursday March 26**

Due in Class: First third of **Night Tourist**

In class: report on Marsh  
Multi-media book reports

**Tues March 31**

Due in class: Second third of **Night Tourist**

In class: Skype interview with **Katherine Marsh**

**Thurs April 2**

Due in class: Finish **Night Tourist**

In class: reading of Wiki Account of Orpheus & Eurydice Myth  
Writing  
Multi-media book reports

**Tues April 7**

Due in Class: First third of **Kindred**

In class: Report on Stein  
Multi-media book reports

**Thurs: April 9**

Due in class: second third of **Kindred**

In class: Discussion  
Multi-media book reports

**Tues April 14:**

Due in class: Final third of **Kindred**

In class: writing  
Multi-media book reports

Thurs **April 16**



Due in Class:

First Quarter of **Thirteen Reasons Why**

In class: Multi-media book reports

Asher report

**Tues April 21**

Due in class: Second quarter **13**

In class: Bullying discussion

Multi-media book reports

**Thurs April 23**

Due in class: third quarter of **13**

In class: TBA

**Tues April 28**

Due in class: Finish **13**

In class: writing

**Thurs April 30**

Wrapping it up.