

EDUC 131

The Young-Adult Novel as Literature: Inquiring, Analyzing, Teaching, Enjoying

Spring 2016

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Unit essential questions

In what ways can fiction texts written for secondary and middle-school readers qualify as "literature?" ...

...and, while we're at it, What is "literature?"

Ever since a kid named Harry Potter arrived on the scene, the exponential growth of the Young Adult/Middle School (YA/MS) genre has virtually rescued the endangered solvency of the publishing industry. At least half of YA readers are adults. So: What about this genre is speaking to the next generation? To the current generation? To older generations? And why?

To what degree does "literature" inform our daily lives? And if, as has been persuasively argued (<http://nymag.com/news/features/high-school-2013-1/>), our "high-school" years are the seminal years in our identity-building process -- and forever after the touchstone of our sense of self -- to what degree, in 21st c. America, will this newest form of literature shape the generations who are immersed in the genre?

To what degree has the genre shaped your worldview, self-view and ways of bridging the two (world and self)?

Objectives

To critically analyze various Young Adult texts with an eye toward cultural significance and context vis a vis the "adult" novels that informed past generations.

To identify universal literary themes, and read YA novels for the effectiveness/power of their depiction/transmission of universal literary themes.

Class Environment

EDUC 131's classroom will serve as an interactive learning lab. Each member of the class will contribute, question and collaborate in their own fashion. We will share insights and opinions with each other. Educ 131 will be a twice-weekly meeting of ideas in a transactional (not transmissive) environment. (The old "I talk, you take notes" model has long passed its expiration date.)

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, with three other members of the class, research one of the authors (excluding me) to help the class gain insight into the process of the text's creation, and give a presentation in class during the course of our reading that author.

There will be regular writing exercises in class during the reading of each text.

There will be no final exam. There will be a final paper. There will be, in the first half of the term, spot quizzes occasionally -- simple IDs to make sure you're reading. If you're doing the reading, they'll be a snap...

Accommodations

Students who wish to request accommodations in this class for a disability should contact the Academic Support Center, located on the first floor of Monocacy Hall (extension 1401). Accommodations cannot be provided until authorization is received from the Academic Support Center. They can be reached at 610 861 1401

Grading guidelines

Grades will be determined by mutual decision between instructor and students, based on attendance, effort, class participation, effort, completion of assignments and effort. But these are guidelines:

Attendance 20%
Quizzes 20%
In-class writing 20%
Class Participation 20%
Final paper: 20%

Attendance...

...is crucial. If you must miss a session, please e-mail me at richmondp@moravian.edu to explain. When an absence is unavoidable, a written response to the assigned readings must be submitted on or before the next regularly scheduled session. A missing or incomplete written response to readings following an absence will reduce the final grade. More than two class absences or a pattern of late arrivals to class may, at the discretion of the instructor, result in a failing grade for the seminar.

Academic honesty...

...Is Essential. In other words, all work that you submit must be your own. Be certain to cite the sources that you used, and take care to avoid plagiarism, which the *Moravian College Student Handbook* defines as “the use, deliberate or not, of any outside source without proper acknowledgement. Academic dishonesty will result in a zero for the assignment and notification of the Academic Dean, in accordance with Moravian College policy.

On top of which: You don't need to use other peoples' stuff!

Required Texts

Greene, John "Looking for Alaska"

Hinton S. E. "The Outsiders"

Lowry, Lois. "The Giver"

Richmond Peter, "Always a Catch"

Roth, Veronica, "Divergent"

Rowell, Rainbow "Eleanor and Park"

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

Stein, Tammer. "Kindred"

Articles/papers/web

The Daily Skimm

clo0701 <http://the-artifice.com/popularity-of-dystopian-literature/>

Feeney, Nolan (2015). The 8 Habits of Highly Successful Young Adult Fiction Writers
retrieved from <http://www.theatlantic.com/entertainment/archive/2013/10/the-8-habits-of-highly-successful-young-adult-fiction-authors/280722/>

Friedman, R. (2014, July 28). Why Teenagers Act Crazy.
New York Times. C 24

Gould, S.J. (2000). Stephen Jay Gould on evolution and storytelling.
Retrieved from <http://www.brainpickings.org/index.php/2013/09/10/stephen-jaygould>

Roxburgh, Steve: The Art of the YA Novel. <https://scholar.lib.vt.edu/ejournals/ALAN/v32n2/roxburgh.pdf>

Shipka, Jody. (2005) A Multi-Modal Task-Based Framework for Multi-Modal
Composing. *College Composition and Communication*. 57(2). pps. 277-306

Steinberg, L. (2014). The case for delayed adulthood. Retrieved from
<http://www.nytimes.com/2014/09/21/opinion/sunday/the-case-for-delayed-adulthood.html>

Links

<http://www.nytimes.com/roomfordebate/2012/03/28/the-power-of-young-adult-fiction>

<http://voicethread.com/?#q.b69839.i359105>

About this syllabus

No unit plan is set in stone -- especially before the class begins, and the instructor doesn't yet know each student's individual learning style, interests and skills. The pieces of the

term's puzzle will be put into place as the course progresses, and our collective learning progression evolves.

Term Syllabus

Tues January 19

In class

We say Hi. Discuss syllabus...details of group writer presentations, and how to go about them (including trying to contact the author).

Thur Jan 21: Beginning of Mini-Unit 1: Dystopia!

Due: **Divergent**, chaps. 1-6.

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

clo0701 <http://the-artifice.com/popularity-of-dystopian-literature/>

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

In class:

We assemble tams

<http://voicethread.com/?#q.b69839.i359105>

Tues Jan 26

Due: **Divergent**, chaps. 7-15.

<http://www.theatlantic.com/entertainment/archive/2013/10/the-8-habits-of-highly-successful-young-adult-fiction-authors/280722/>

In class: Discussion of texts.

Yagoda's "Nine writing mistakes you're probably making" 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 28

Due: **Divergent**, chaps. 16-24

Tues Feb. 2

Due: **Divergent**, chaps. 20-38

In class: writing

Roth presentation (Gibson, Bergsma, Jordan, Geyana)

Thurs Feb 4:

Due: Friedman, R. (2014, July 28). Why Teenagers Act Crazy.
New York Times. C 24

Steinberg, L. (2014). The case for delayed adulthood. Retrieved from
[http://www.nytimes.com/2014/09/21/opinion/sunday/the
case for delayed adulthood.html](http://www.nytimes.com/2014/09/21/opinion/sunday/the-case-for-delayed-adulthood.html)

Tues Feb 9

Due: First quarter of **The Giver**

Thurs Feb 11

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

In class: Dystopia Discussion!

Tues Feb 16

Due: third quarter of **The Giver**

Thurs Feb 18

Due : Finish **The Giver**

In class: Write
Lowry presentation

Tues Feb 23

Due First half: **"The Rose That Grew from Concrete"**
Read wikipedia bio of Tupac Shakur
Read 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>

Effectiveness of the work as poetry vs. prose.

Thurs Feb 25

Due : Roxburgh, The Art of the YA Novel <https://scholar.lib.vt.edu/ejournals/ALAN/v32n2/roxburgh.pdf>

In class: What the hell is boarding school? And why?

Tues March 1 Mini-unit 2: Adolescence Can Suck.

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

In class: Q&A w/ author

Thurs March 3

Due: Finish **AAC**

In class: Write

SPRING BREAK

Tues March 15

Due: **Looking for Alaska**

In class: Write

Thurs March 17:

Due: First third of **Kindred**

http://www.slate.com/blogs/bad_astronomy/2016/01/18/tabby_s_star_faded_substantially_over_past_century.html

In Class: Greene presentation

Religion or science?

Tues March 22

Due: Second third of **Kindred**

Thurs March 24: Finish **Kindred**

In class: Writing

Stein presentation

First multi-media report

Tues March 29

Due in Class: First third of **Eleanor and Park**

In class: Rowling presentation

Multi-media book reports

Thurs March 31

Due: Second third of **Eleanor and Park**

Tues April 5

Due in class: Finish **Eleanor and Park**

In class:

Writing

Multi-media book reports

Thurs April 7

Due in Class: First third **The Outsiders**

In class:

Multi-media book reports

Tues: April 12

Due in class: second third of **The Outsiders**

In class: Hinton Presentation

Multi-media book reports

Thurs April 14:

Due in class: Final third of **The Outsiders**

In class: writing

Multi-media book reports

Tues April 19

Due: Nada

In class: Multi-media book reports

Thurs April 21

Due <http://www.brainpickings.org/index.php/2013/09/10/stephen-jaygould>

<http://www.how-to-write-a-book-now.com/plot-outline.html>

In class: we plot

Tues April 26

Due: TBK

In class We write

We plot

Thurs April 28

In class: We wrap it up.