

ENGLISH 375/575: YOUNG ADULT LITERATURE

SPRING 2019

INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Rebecca Stephens
OFFICE: 445 CCC
OFFICE HOURS: M 2:00-3:00, W 3:00-4:00 and by appt.

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COURSE PURPOSE: English 375 is a class designed to help you read and analyze works of literature categorized as "young adult literature." Much of this literature has been customarily dismissed as simplistic or relegated to a place on the margins of the canon of "great" literary works, often even for those who theorize about teaching young adults. This course, however, will seek to examine these works to reassess their literary merit, to situate them in their historical and cultural moments, and to examine their role in the middle and high school classroom.

English Education Students: In order to receive program credit for English 375, you must also complete a field experience component. We will meet after the first class to cover the procedures and requirements for this element of the course. (WI INTASC Standards 2, 3, 4, 9, 10)

COURSE OBJECTIVES: When you leave this course, you should have:

1. An understanding of the development of young adult literature in the US from the nineteenth century to the present (WI INTASC Std. 1)
2. Developed skills in evaluating young adult literature through genre and critical considerations (WI INTASC Stds. 1, 2, 3, 9)
3. Gained a greater understanding of the interest, needs, and concerns of young adults (WI INTASC Stds. 2, 3, 7, 9)
4. Developed strategies to effectively link young adult literature to popular culture and other materials to promote understanding and interest in the work (WI INTASC Stds. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7)
5. Examined some of the most crucial issues—censorship, cultural diversity, and gender concerns—surrounding young adult literature today (WI INTASC Stds. 1, 3, 9).

COURSE MATERIALS:

Required Textbooks:

- **Rental**

Nilsen and Donelson, *Literature for Today's Young Adults*. 9th Edition. Longman, 2013.

- **Purchase**

Alcott, Louisa. *Little Women*, Modern Library; **OR** Alger, Horatio, *Ragged Dick*, Modern Library.

Daly, Maureen. *Seventeenth Summer*, Archways.

Hinton, S.E. *The Outsiders*, Penguin.

Giles, Lamar, ed. *Fresh Ink*, Crown Books.

Bennett, Cherie and Jeff Gottesfeld, *Anne Frank and me*, Putnam.

Uchida, Yoshiko, *Desert Exile*, U of Washington Press.

COURSE WORK:

Journal Responses (20%):

For the first part of the course, you will be writing 6 short (2— 3 pages, typed, double-spaced), informal journal responses to the books and other assigned readings. These are designed to help you to pull together the novel readings and the readings from your Nilsen and Donelson text, so you may simply voice your reactions and the connections you see in an informal (yet mechanically correct) way. The journal writings will be graded as credit/no credit. They will frequently be used in class for discussion purposes, so please bring your completed journals for the week's readings to class.

Paper (20%; 575=5%)

You will have three options for the paper assignment:

- A literary analysis of an additional young adult book of your choice (not one of the books read previously for the course, but one selected from the lists in your Nilsen and Donelson text or from browsing the Young Adult section of a bookstore or the public library). The paper should be 4-5 pages long and should examine in a well-structured and well-supported way one of the important themes or literary characteristics of the book you select and it must also take audience into account, i.e., why this book is appropriate, appealing, etc. for young adults.
- An interview with a young adult. (4-5 pages). This should examine the information you gain from the interview about the young adult's reading habits, needs, concerns and interests in reference to the ideas we've covered to this point in the class. This should NOT be a transcription of the interview (though you will certainly want to use quotes from it), but an analysis of the information you gained. You should attach a list of the questions you pre-prepared for the interview.
- A short story or an introductory chapter of a young adult novel (no longer than 10 pages). This will be evaluated using the criteria/characteristics for effective young adult literature outlined your Nilsen and Donelson text.

575 Students (5%): Instead of a paper, you will need to submit a proposal for your final project (format will be provided). We will work out the details of an appropriate project given your goals and your program needs and I will provide you with guidelines for preparing your proposal. Please schedule a conference time with me at least 2 weeks before the due date so we can get you started on ideas.

Censorship Debate/Skit (25%; 575=15%)

This will be a collaborative effort where, as a group, you will research a case where a young adult book has been challenged in a school classroom or library. I will provide you with a list of recently challenged books on the presentation guidelines handout and your group will select from among those on the list. For the debate/skit, you will need to prepare a handout for the class that describes the book itself, the events pertaining to the challenge, and a bibliography; then you and your group members will assume representative roles to briefly argue the pros and cons of its controversial content.

Thematic Lesson Plan Activity (25%; 575=15%)

Your collaborative task for this component of the course is to select a book or book(s) [again, I will provide you with a list] to present using interaction and media to generate interest and excitement about the book and what you feel are its important teaching concepts and ideas. This presentation will be structured as an informal thematic lesson plan and I will provide you with a handout and guidelines to help your group put the presentation and supporting materials together.

Participation (10%)

Participation means actively engaging in class activities and discussion, especially in collaborative situations. Because this is class meets only one night a week, each class is equivalent to one week's worth of classes on a usual schedule; therefore, attendance at each class meeting is essential and after one missed class meeting, your participation grade will be reduced by one full grade for each additional class missed. Missing more than 3 class meetings will be grounds for failing the course.

575 Students (5%): Graduate students will need to do one additional short presentation (15-20 minutes during the genre segment of the course, covering information and application of the genre agreed upon Week 2—we'll meet separately to cover the details of this requirement.

575 Final Project (30%): To be designed on an individual basis as outlined above.

COURSE CALENDAR

This schedule is tentative and may be changed.

PART I: THE HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL EVOLUTION OF THE YOUNG ADULT NOVEL

Week 1 1/23	Course Introduction DISCUSSION: Who is a "young adult"? Issues and controversies in young adult literature Practicum Placement Information
2 1/30	CLASS CANCELLED—UNIVERSITY CLOSED FOR WEATHER
3 2/6	Alcott, <i>Little Women</i> OR Alger, <i>Ragged Dick</i> Nilsen and Donelson, Chapter 1 DUE: Journal #1
4 2/13	Daly, <i>Seventeenth Summer</i> Nilsen and Donelson, Chapter 2 DUE: Journal #2 Contact Form due for Engl. Ed students

PART II: CONSIDERATIONS OF GENRE AND LITERARY CRITICISM

5 2/20	Hinton, <i>The Outsiders</i> Nilsen and Donelson, Chapter 4 and Chapter 7 DUE: Journal #3
6 2/27	Short Story: <i>Fresh Ink</i> (pick at least 3 stories from the book on which to focus your journal) Poetry: (handout, in-class) Nilsen and Donelson, Chapter 6 DUE: Journal #4
7 3/6	Fiction and Narrative Structures: Bennett and Gattuso, <i>Anne Frank and Me</i> Nilsen and Donelson, Chapters 3 and 5 DUE: Journal #5
8 3/13	Autobiography/Non-fiction: Uchida, <i>Desert Exile</i> Nilsen and Donelson, Chapters 8 and 9 DUE: Journal #6

PART III: ISSUES RESEARCH

3/18-3/22	Spring Break
9 3/27	DUE: Paper/575: Project Proposal Introduction to Censorship
10 4/3	Library Session (tentative) Nilsen and Donelson, Chapter 12
11 4/10	Conferences/Group Meetings
12 4/17	Censorship Debates/ Skits Introduction of thematic lesson plan assignment Nilsen and Donelson, Chapters 10 and 11
13 4/24	Group Conferences
14 5/1	Group Meetings
15 5/8	Lesson Plan Presentations I
5/13-5/17	FINALS WEEK Participation log and reflective narrative due for English Education students <u>due at scheduled exam time:</u> 5/17/2019, Friday 10:15 AM-12:15 PM

