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TLS 585: Literature for Adolescents

Course Description

This course offers teachers, librarians, and others an opportunity to explore and critique the wealth of literature written especially for young adult readers.

Course Intent:

Young adult literature is in the midst of a renaissance with an explosion of new books and innovative authors exploring a range of topics and issues and trying out a tremendous diversity of formats, styles, and content. These books are enjoying an expanding readership, with some books having a large adult audience in addition to teen readers. We will read widely from novels, picture books, poetry, and nonfiction to build our understandings of cultural and literary diversity through our experiences with varied characters, settings, plots and themes. We will explore the authors, illustrators, and poets who create literature for adolescents, identify recent trends, and examine the role that young adult literature can play in the lives of adolescents in different settings, including classrooms. We will nurture our ability to develop personal meanings and interpretations from literature as well as to critique the cultural lenses through which we view the world and process our experiences.

We will challenge media portrayals of adolescents as youth struggling with their identities and making risky choices. We will critically examine whether adolescence is portrayed as a biological stage of “raging hormones,” a purely biologically or psychologically determined life stage, or as a social construct that reflects the varied experiences of teens. Adolescence as a social construct develops from a youth lens with a focus on the intersection of race, gender, and sexuality within the lives of adolescents and portrayals of complex, contradictory, and multiple differences among adolescents.

Our primary reading will be young adult literature with some shared novels read together as a whole class or in small groups and with each class member choosing an area of interest for in-depth reading. The literature we explore together will cover a range of genres and global contexts. These literary readings will be accompanied by related professional articles that relate to trends or issues in YA or in adolescence. Mini-inquiries will focus on trends in the field and authors, while final inquiries will focus on an issue in young adult literature. This class is an opportunity to immerse yourself in good books and compelling writing in order to experience the multiple worlds of adolescents.

Our class experiences are based on the following beliefs about learning:

1. Learning is a process of inquiry.
We will search out the questions that matter in our lives and develop strategies for exploring those questions and sharing our understandings with others
2. Learning is an active process.
We will immerse ourselves into reading and responding in various ways to YA literature and in pursuing trends and issues of interest to class members.
3. Learning is a social process of collaborating with others.
We will explore our thinking about our reading through dialogue in small groups and whole class. There will be many opportunities for informal interaction and sharing about literature.
4. Learning occurs when we make connections to our own experiences.
We will respond to literature through making personal connections to our reading and then exploring and critically examining those responses in literature circles with other readers. Our

focus will not be on a specific literary interpretation. We will make decisions about the books we read and the resources we develop based on our needs and experiences.

5. Choice allows learners to connect to their experiences and feel ownership in their learning.
We will have choices in what we read, how we respond, and the specific focus of projects and small group activities.
6. Learning is reflective as well as active.
We will have many opportunities to reflect on what we are learning through writing, talking, and self-evaluations.
7. Learning occurs in a multicultural world with many ways of knowing.
We will explore literature from a multicultural and international orientation to expand our understanding of the cultural pluralism in the lives and worlds of adolescents and will build on the diversity of cultural experiences and perspectives of class members.

STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES ON MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION (LRC)

The term "multicultural education" expresses the essential mission of the LRC program and the university. Multicultural education is not just "about" certain subjects; it does not merely offer "perspectives" on education. It is an orientation to our purposes in education - and ultimately an orientation to life, one that values diversity of viewpoints and experiences and sees people as valuable contributors to the experience of school and society. Life in universities is a self-consciously multicultural. Learners bring a variety of linguistic and cognitive strengths from their families, communities and nations into the classroom; these strengths are resources to be appreciated as such by educators. Education must expand on the linguistic and cognitive strengths that learners already possess and bring with them to the classroom, rather than ignore or try to replace them with others. Respect and appreciation for cultural and community knowledge means that universities serve the interest of education when they allow for an exchange of views, rather than rely exclusively on a transmission model of instruction. We recognize the existence of a variety of communities - each with its own voice and interests - both within and outside the university; a broad education offers the opportunity to hear and study as many of these voices as possible. Such an accommodation must include those communities that have traditionally been excluded or under-represented in the university. Recognition of the validity of these general principles must be reflected in our courses, our relations with students, staff and other faculty members, and in the community life of LRC.

Course Readings:

Many young adult books.

Short, K.G., Tomlinson, C., Lynch-Brown, C. and Johnson, H. (2014). *Essentials of Young Adult Literature, 3rd Ed.* Pearson (available on 2/14)

Articles and chapters on d2l

Sources of young adult books

Room 455 paperback collection from which books may be checked out each week

Tucson Public Library or School Libraries

University of Arizona Main Library

Worlds of Words, open 9-5 M-F and 9-1 on Saturday starting in February

Tentative Daily Time Blocks:

4:15-5:00	Read aloud, introduction of class focus, literature circles
5:00-5:20	Browsing
5:20-5:45	Class discussion of books as related to professional readings
5:45-6:00	Break
6:00-6:30	Small group discussions and explorations of issues
6:30-6:45	Sharing/Reflection/Announcements

LEARNING PROJECTS

Book Blog

Extensive and intensive reading of recent young adult literature is a primary focus of this course. You will be sharing your journals, responses, and reviews with your classmates via your course blog. You will each create your own blog and post weekly responses and reviews on required and selected books. You will also respond to your blog partner every other week, although you are welcome to respond more often and to blog postings of other classmates as well. Your blog can include your reading list, books you want to read, books you have read for small group discussions, books that you are reading for your inquiries, etc. Many free blogging resources are on-line so you can explore the format of your blog.

Blogging resources

- <http://edublogs.org/> is a site for teachers and students to create their own blogs.
- www.blogger.com/start is a service from google that has templates and presentation options

Book Blog Examples

- http://kidlitosphere.org/KidLitosphere_Central/Welcome.html The Society of Bloggers in Children's and Young Adult Literature. Click on —members to see examples.
- <http://omsbookblog.blogspot.com/> This book blog belongs to Marcia Kochel,
- www.readingrants.org
- <http://guyslitwire.blogspot.com>
- <http://nerdybookclub.wordpress.com/> - see list of Nerdy Book Club Bloggers on right column

The readings and postings for this course need to be done weekly. This course is based on continuous reading of young adult literature and you will greatly decrease your learning and participation if you are not reading regularly throughout the course. You will negotiate the types of books to read for this course based on your needs and interests. Our primary focus will be on books published in the last 10 years.

Bring two copies of the response from your blog to class to refer to during literature circles and to turn in at the end of the class session to your instructors.

Literature Circle Books

Each week you will have a young adult book to read for whole group or small group discussion in class. For each focus book, you will:

- Read the book
- Blog about your personal connections and response
- Research the author, check their website, twitter, facebook or whatever social media they use
- Check the reviews on the Children's Literature Comprehensive Database (available on the UA Library site, gathers reviews from various sources)
- Gather 1-2 informational texts that relate to the content of that book
- Add further comments to your blog after dialogue with other readers in our class session.

Mini-inquiry on Adolescence

Based on our discussions about adolescence as a social construct and the history of YA literature, select a question of interest to you and complete a mini-inquiry. This question might involve interviewing teens or observing a group of teens in a particular setting, engaging in further professional reading about an issue, reflecting on your own past history as a teen reader or interviewing others about their experiences, interviewing librarians or bookstore owners, examining YA books from earlier time periods, etc.

Reflection on what you did and what you learned are due on **February 5**.

Mini-Inquiry on Trends in YA Literature

Based on our overview of the different genres of YA literature, choose a trend of interest to you and engage in further research on that trend by gathering books related to the trend as well as researching what has been written about that trend or teen's perceptions of the trend.. Trends can range from the popularity of a particular type of book such as dystopias or steampunk to shifts in how particular topics or issues are dealt with such as sexuality. Other examples of trends might be related to readership, such as the emergence of a strong adult readership for many YA authors, the use of social media by authors to appeal to adolescents as readers, or Hollywood's focus on YA literature as a source of movie scripts. A reflection of what you did and what you learned is due on **March 26**.

Participation in the Tucson Festival of Books – March 15-16, 2014

We have a large number of young adult authors who will be presenting at the festival, both well-established authors like Laurie Halse Anderson, Lois Lowry, Cornelia Funke and Matt de la Peña and authors who are publishing their first book. Meeting authors and hearing them talk about their work changes your understandings of their work. You can either choose to attend sessions as a participant or volunteer to host an author but plan to attend at least one of the two days of the festival. You can also receive a professional development certificate if that is significant for you. We will discuss the various options in class. Attendance at the festival will replace a class session later in the semester.

Author/Illustrator Mini-Inquiry

You will select one of the festival authors or illustrators who particularly intrigues you or to whom you feel a strong connection. Gather a collection of that person's books and spend time reading and exploring their work and life through on-line and print resources. Plan to attend their session at the festival. We will share these mini-inquiries on **March 12**, immediately before the festival, through a display and small group sharing, and then will debrief on March 26 to talk about your experiences with the authors. Select someone by **February 19**. We will either create handouts for class members or use our blogs to share with each other as well. For March 12, write an initial reflection indicating why you selected a particular author, your process of research, the sources you used, and what you learned about that person.

Write a final reflection, **due on March 26**, Reflect on this experience and how it has influenced your understandings of YA literature and/or that author.

Final Inquiry Project

Choose a topic, issue, or question related to young adult literature that interests you and that you want to explore in greater depth. Form a project group with several other people. As a group you will meet to brainstorm, share resources, and talk about ideas or issues related to your topic. We will discuss this project in greater depth at mid-semester and you will be asked to select a topic and *submit a proposal on April 2*. You can choose to work alone or with a class member.

Possible projects include

- Develop a list of books and resources around a particular theme or issue
- Develop further author/illustrator/poet studies.
- Develop a genre study
- Examine issues such as censorship and stereotyping
- Engage with a group of adolescents in literature circles with YA books.
- Write and/or illustrate your own young adult book (or several chapters of a novel).

Note that you may want to write a book review of a young adult book from your project to submit to *Wow Review* for possible publication (wowlit.org).

On May 7, each person will put together some type of display or invitation related to focus as well as hand in projects and self-evaluations. A group that focused on several authors could put up a display of those authors' books along with handouts with information. A group where members put together text sets around themes or issues could put up displays of those books and prepare webs and annotated list to give to class members. A group focused on issues could create invitations to engage class members in considering those issues. A group that focused on writing their own books could share their writing. As part of the display, each group should also include a short experience or invitation to involve class members in the content of their projects.

Adolescence text set

As you read throughout the semester, keep track of the books that are most significant in helping you develop more complex understandings of adolescence as a social construct. *On the last day of class, May 14, you will gather these books to display and to use for a class engagement to explore our current understandings of adolescence as a social construct.*

ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION

Class attendance and participation are essential to this course. This course has been designed as a highly experiential course involving book browsing, literature discussion groups, response engagements, and class discussions. You cannot make up for absences by getting class notes or reading the text. Preparation and participation in class is significant, not only for your learning, but for the learning of others. Participation includes class sharing times, literature circles, project groups, written responses, and workshops as well as keeping up your blog and responding to your blog partner's blogs. Reading books for each week's literature circles and preparing for these discussions is essential. Other short engagements are part of class sessions and response engagements will be used to prepare for literature circles.

More than one absence and/or chronic tardiness will lower your grade for the class. If you absolutely must miss a class session due to illness, leave a message in advance at the LRC office (621-1311) or on e-mail. Contact a class member so that you are fully prepared for the next class meeting. Meet with one of your instructors at the next class session to determine how you will make up the work for the class you missed. Your attendance and active participation in course engagements is highly valued and an essential aspect of the course. If you need accommodations due to a documented learning disability, please discuss your needs with the instructors early in the semester, well in advance of assignment due dates.

EVALUATION:

Self-evaluation is an integral part of this course. *On January 29, you will write your initial statement of goals for this semester.* For each project, you will be asked to turn in a self-evaluation in which you state your goals for that particular project and evaluate the process you went through in reaching those goals. I will add my evaluative comments based on your statement of goals. At mid-semester (**March 5**), you will revise your goals for the course and evaluate your learning at that point in the semester. At the end of the class, you will write an overall self-evaluation of your learning throughout the class.

Your final grade will be based holistically on both your and our evaluation of your growth and learning, the quality of your written work, and your attendance, participation, and preparation for class sessions. While you can negotiate the ways in which you define and complete class projects, you must complete all of these projects to fulfill course requirements and your final grade for the course will be based on the thoughtfulness and quality of this work with a B reflecting the completion of all course projects at a satisfactory level. Incompletes will not be given for the course except in extreme situations and only with prior approval by the instructor.

TENTATIVE FOCUS FOR CLASS SESSIONS:

January 15	Course Introduction Defining Adolescence	
January 22	History of YA Literature Adolescence as a Social Construct	Chapter 1, Finders, Klein Read and respond to Daly/ <i>Seventeenth Summer</i> Collage of Me as an Adolescent Bring a text you read as a teen
January 29	Current trends in YA literature	Chapter 2, Koss & Teale Green/ <i>The Fault in our Stars</i> & research Research YA blogs, establish your blog Statement of goals
February 5	Realistic fiction trends and issues	Chapter 3 and article Literature circle book Mini-inquiry on adolescence
February 12	Fantasy and science fiction trends	Chapter 4 and article Literature circle book
February 19	Historical fiction trends	Chapter 5 and article Literature circle book Selection of YA author for inquiry
February 26	Nonfiction trends and issues	Chapter 6 and article Literature circle book
March 5	Cultural diversity in YA Literature	Chapter 8 and article Literature circle book Mid-term reflections
March 12	Poetry and plays Sharing of author inquiries	Chapter 7 Literature circle book Author mini-inquiry
March 15-16	Tucson Festival of Books	
March 19	Spring Break	
March 26	Festival author experiences Mini-inquiries on trends	Final reflections on author inquiry Mini-inquiry on trends
April 2	Movies and YA Literature	Paired reading and viewing of a YA novel/movie Proposal for final inquiry
April 9	Literature in the Curriculum	Chapter 9, article
April 16	Literature in the Curriculum	Chapter 9, articles

April 23	Experiencing Literature	Chapter 10, article
April 30	No class	
May 7	Sharing of group projects	Inquiry Projects Reflections on blog
May 14	Adolescence Text Sets Written reflection	Final self-evaluations Course evaluations

** TLS Graduate Student Colloquy – February 20, 2014

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/TLS-Grad-Student-Colloquy/179664812064970>

University Policies

- Approved Absences All holidays or special events observed by organized religions will be honored for those students who show affiliation with that particular religion, Absences pre-approved by the UA Dean of Students will be honored
- Students with Disabilities: If you anticipate issues related to the format or requirements of this course, please meet with me. I would like us to discuss ways to ensure your full participation in the course. If you determine that formal, disability-related accommodations are necessary, it is very important that you be registered with Disability Resources (621-3268; drc.arizona.edu) and notify us of your eligibility for reasonable accommodations.
- Policies against plagiarism. <http://dos.web.arizona.edu/uapolicies>
- Policies against threatening behavior <http://policy.web.arizona.edu/~policy/threaten.shtml>