IST 578 – Young Adult Literature
University at Albany
Syllabus – Spring 2017
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There is a difference in the two emails. Please note that gmail uses an “R.”

SCHEDULE
(Note: Readings and assignments are due on the dates listed. The instructor reserves the right to adapt to current circumstances as the semester progresses, making changes to the syllabus if necessary.)

COURSE DESCRIPTION
This is an introductory survey of literature for young adults (ages 12-18), with an emphasis on current authors. Includes a discussion of the characteristics, needs, and reading interests of teenagers, a critical study of the literature, an overview of basic selection tools, practice in booktalking and usage of the literature with Common Core Learning Standards.

REQUIRED READING
Books may be read in any edition, hardcover or paperback. If you listen to audio books, please acknowledge that in your “Book Notes.” Your best friend is a library card to your local public library. You don’t have to purchase these titles:

(Books are in the order of the syllabus)
The Sun is Also a Star by Nicola Yoon
Beyond Magenta: Transgender Teens Speak Out by Susan Kuklin
I’ll Give You the Sun by Jandy Nelson
This One Summer by Jillian Tamaki and Mariko Tamaki
The Crossover by Kwame Alexander
The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian by Sherman Alexie
All American Boys by Jason Reynolds and Brendan Kiely
American Born Chinese by Gene Luen Yang
March by John Lewis and Andrew Aydin (There are three parts to this series – read any part that you want.)
Persepolis by Marjane Satrapi
The Hired Girl by Laura Amy Schlitz
Salt to the Sea by Ruta Sepetys
Ship Breaker by Paolo Badigalupi

REQUIRED READING - CHOOSE ONE FROM GROUP

Catcher in the Rye; Forever; The Outsiders
1 item from “Quick Picks” bibliography OR 2 teen magazines (different titles)
1 title from “Scientists in the Field” series (copyright date 2010-2017)
1 Memoir from 5 choices (see full list in syllabus)
1 book by Steve Sheinkin (see list in syllabus)
SUPPLEMENTAL TEXT (NOT REQUIRED BUT HIGHLY RECOMMENDED)

- I find this book extremely valuable for assessing literature. It will help you with book notes and make you aware of what to look for. However, it is a tool that is evaluating *children's* literature, not young adult literature. There is a crossover in age categories: children's literature goes to age 14, while young adult literature starts at age 12.

**January 24**

**Welcome and Introductions**
Please post in “Meet Your Classmates” on Blackboard something about yourself: interests/hobbies, favorite books/movies/music, library aspirations, where you are in the program, etc. If you are comfortable please share information about family and where you are from, etc. Your profile will help us get to know each other and begin to build a sense of class community. Please feel free to attach a digital image of yourself.

**MODULE 1**

**History of YA Literature**

**January 24**
Read one book from these four. Post your choice (all titles must be read by someone in class) on Blackboard.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Author</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Forever</em></td>
<td>Judy Blume</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>The Outsiders</em></td>
<td>S.E. Hinton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Catcher in the Rye</em></td>
<td>J.D. Salinger</td>
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</table>

We will be discussing these titles with these questions in mind and your ideas and observations:
- Does your book still have relevance today to teens?
- How dated do they feel? Why?
- Why do you think they were important titles at the time of their publication?

Please cite specific ideas, lines, characters when discussing your title(s). I don’t expect close reading in these books, but be aware of what makes you “shake your head” or what still amazes after all these years. You may comment on the books you may have read in the past, in general terms. However, the book you read for this week, should have specifics mentioned in your post.

Read the lecture on history of YA literature and look through the quick powerpoint of books.

**MODULE 2**

**Teens Today**

**January 31**

**Contemporary/Realistic/Problem Novels**
Read *The Sun is Also a Star* by Nicola Yoon. First Book Note due. (See examples in assignments.)

Read lecture on Realistic fiction; watch video of instructor booktalking favorite authors and titles. Please post your thoughts on this book, with these questions in mind:
What do contemporary novels do for the reader? If you don’t have the problem or conflict that is the core of these novels, why are they popular?

What do you feel will resonate with teens from Nicola Yoon’s story? What won’t resonate with readers? As this deals with immigrants and immigration issues, what makes this book relatable to most teens? Do you think this book will hold up for as long as the readings from last week?

February 7
Development of YA Services and Margaret Alexander Edwards
YA Programs - YALSA
Quick Reads for Teens

Read lecture on the growth of Young Adult Services. Check out the “Developmental Assets and Library Connections.” How did Edwards’ initiatives match up with today’s library connections? Look over the YALSA web site for program ideas. What ideas are you interested in? What developmental assets can you connect to that program? Funding, grant ideas, partnerships, teen input are all part of what you are thinking about for a post to Blackboard for discussion.

View video of quick reads for pleasure reading for teens, discussing where to find lists, and developing your own selection tools.
Choose a book from instructor’s video/bibliography. Or you may choose two different YA magazines (one issue from each) that you think appropriate for a “quick read.” Book Note due on Your Choice. If you choose a poetry book or short story collection, I don’t expect you to read everything. A novel-in-verse must be read in its entirety, but it won’t take long! A magazine Book Note should help you if/when you want to publicize library periodicals.

Post your thoughts on what you liked or didn’t like about the book or magazines you read. Do you think this appeals to teens - why or why not? Why do libraries need these materials? How can you display them/market them?

February 14
Sexual Orientation:
Read Beyond Magenta: Transgender Teens Speak Out by Susan Kuklin. Book Note due.
Read: I’ll Give You the Sun by Jandy Nelson. Book Note due.
Please read lecture on concerns about sexuality in Young Adult Fiction; bibliography of titles and authors included.
Questions for this week’s discussion: Nonfiction or fiction? Which do you think helps teens understand their friends and themselves? How are you going to recommend? Also, which of the two books did you prefer? Why?

February 21
Censorship and Banned Books:
Read: This One Summer by Jillian Tamaki and Mariko Tamaki. Book Note due.

Read lecture on censorship, how to respond to censors, policies to have in place, and books that make you uncomfortable. Look through ALA’s lists of banned/challenged books (most recent list: http://www.ala.org/bbooks/). From this website you can find more lists, and longer explanations for why something was challenged. Look through the most recent years and see how many you’ve read!
Post your thoughts on books read, books that make you uncomfortable (and why, please), and censorship. How do you go about protecting yourself? How do you go about building (and weeding) an LGBTQ collection? Also, the book you read for this week is a Caldecott Honor and a Printz Honor award winner. Are you going to purchase it? Where are you going to put it? Why?

**MODULE 3**
**Diversity**

**February 28**
Read: [http://www.nytimes.com/2014/03/16/opinion/sunday/where-are-the-people-of-color-in-childrens-books.html?_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2014/03/16/opinion/sunday/where-are-the-people-of-color-in-childrens-books.html?_r=0)
Read: [http://www.nytimes.com/2014/03/16/opinion/sunday/the-apartheid-of-childrens-literature.html](http://www.nytimes.com/2014/03/16/opinion/sunday/the-apartheid-of-childrens-literature.html)
Read: *The Crossover* by Kwame Alexander. **Book Note** due.
Read: *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* by Sherman Alexie. **Book Note** due.

Lecture on cultural diversity. View video of booktalking many diverse titles.

**March 7**
Read: *All American Boys* by Jason Reynolds and Brendan Kiely. **Book Note** due.
View video of Jason Reynolds.

Discussion on Blackboard of *All American Boys*, today’s teens, current events, and adding diversity to the curriculum. Also, after watching Jason Reynolds, discuss what you learned from him about his books and his writer’s life that you would share with students.

**March 14**
No class - spring break.

**MODULE 4**
**Nonfiction**

**March 21**
Read **ONE book** from the “Scientists in the Field” series published by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt (please check copyright date for a title written in the last seven years)

Read **one memoir** from choices below:

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<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Author</th>
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<tr>
<td><em>Laughing at My Nightmare</em></td>
<td>Shane Burcaw</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Enchanted Air: Two Cultures, Two Wings: A Memoir</em></td>
<td>Margarita Engle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>To Timbuktu: Nine Countries, Two People, One True Story</em></td>
<td>Words by Casey Scieszka, Art by Steven Weinberg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Popular: A Memoir: Vintage Wisdom for a Modern Geek</em></td>
<td>Maya Van Wagenen</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Brown Girl Dreaming</em></td>
<td>Jacqueline Woodson</td>
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**Book Notes** for both memoir and “Scientists in the Field.”
Lecture on Nonfiction: how to evaluate, use in curriculum; Core Curriculum assignments. View instructor’s booktalking with nonfiction. Blackboard discussion on “Scientists in the Field” and what makes a memoir universal.

March 28
Read one book by **Steve Sheinkin**  Choose from *The Notorious Benedict Arnold; Bomb: The Race to Build-and Steal-the World’s Most Dangerous Weapon; The Port Chicago 50: Disaster, Mutiny and the Fight for Civil Rights; Most Dangerous: Daniel Ellsburg and the Secret History of the Vietnam War*. (Book Note due.) Discussion on how we capture nonfiction excitement. What makes a good read? What did Sheinkin do that intrigued you in his presentation?
Also, find other books on the same subject (of the Sheinkin book) that you would recommend as other resources on the subject or larger theme of the book (Civil Rights/Integrating the Military/WWII for *The Port Chicago 50*) and bring them into your discussion post. **These are things you would come across in a library – not something I expect or WANT you to read right now.**

April 5
**Interview with a teenager.**  (Look this over in the assignment page.)
Interview a young adult (age 12-18) about his or her reading interests. The older the student, the better answers you will get. You will find helpful questions on the assignment page. If you don’t have a sibling, cousin, or know someone in that age range, visit a public library and ask a librarian to introduce you to someone in that age range. If a teen visits the library, chances are the librarian knows them - even a little. You will be handing in a paper for me, and posting your thoughts (both good and bad) to a class discussion. You are looking for teens interest in reading, etc., but the big question is what interaction do kids have with librarians. Do they ask librarians questions about school work, or pleasure reading? Why or why not?
Discussion this week: Introduce the class to your teen (background info.) What was the most surprising thing you learned? What would you do different to engage today’s teens? **AND**

**Watch a film for teens.**
There are a huge number of films produced every year that originate in YA literature. Watch something that you read (doesn’t have to be for this class) and compare it to the film. If you haven’t read the book in a while, skim it, or read the online reviews to remind yourselves. Then watch or re-watch the film. You MAY use Harry Potter for this assignment, or any film/book that you want. (Even *The Outsiders* and *Hunger Games* is fine.) I can suggest titles if you aren’t a movie buff.
Discuss your movie, too. Does the film lead to more reading, or have you lost interest from a bad film? It can be any genre, and it can be an older or newer film.

April 11
**No class – Happy Passover!**

**MODULE 5**
**Visual YA Lit**
April 18
Read: *American Born Chinese* by Gene Luen Yang
Read: *March* by John Lewis and Andrew Aydin (There are three parts to this series – read any part that you want.)
Read: *Persepolis* by Marjane Satrapi (*Book Notes* due for all three titles.)
Articles on how to read comics
Discussion of three books and comics – who reads them? Why such a fuss? Superheroes and what else? Visual Literacy – why is it important? Please feel free to bring picture books into the discussion; picture books that are relevant to teens.

**Group Project:** Collaborate with classmates for a video presentation of picture books that can be used in middle school or high school. (Full project is explained in the assignment section of syllabus.) Use instructor’s bibliography for your choices (8-10 books on a curriculum theme of science, English, art, etc.). View Powerpoint on picture books that are useful for teens.

**MODULE 6**
**Historical Fiction**

April 25
Read: *Salt to the Sea* by Ruta Sepetys. *Book Note* due.
Lecture on what makes a good historical fiction title. Important time periods to mix fiction and nonfiction - book pairs. Authors of historical fiction. Reviews and authenticity to help determine titles to recommend.
Discussion on titles read. Which is more important in historical fiction – character or history? Do you have to make a choice? Should teachers use historical fiction to help teach real history? What does one “get” out of good historical fiction?

**MODULE 7**
**Fantasy/Speculative Fiction**

May 2
Read: *Ship Breaker* by Paolo Badigalupi. *Book Note* due.
Lecture on fantasy and speculative fiction (science fiction), and dystopian literature. Video of booktalking titles.
Popularity, films, blogs, book trailers, social media seems to spread the word on fantasy and science fiction books. Series are huge in this genre. Why is that? Please discuss the environmental issues concerning *Ship Breaker* and other speculative fiction books that you may know (even from movies), while fantasy continues with the genre that is built from Harry Potter sales. (Fantasy has always been popular, but nothing compared to when Harry arrived in 1997.)

May 9
Final Project posted! Class dismissed. Thank you all for your hard work.
ASSIGNMENTS
Grades for this course will be assigned to students as follows:

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<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>94-100</td>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-93</td>
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<td>86-89</td>
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<td>C</td>
<td>73-75</td>
<td>C-</td>
<td>69-72</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>0-68</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>Incomplete</td>
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The incomplete grade is intended ONLY for students who are not able to complete the assigned course work on schedule due to serious illness or other highly unusual personal circumstances.

ASSIGNMENT INSTRUCTIONS

Book Notes = 35%
This course creates an immersion in young adult resources and literature. The book notes are a record of that plus a bibliographic tool to assist the student in future professional work.

**Book Notes for all books except Classic are due on the date that we discuss the book.**

**All Book Notes may be turned in EARLY at any time throughout the semester.**

A brief entry is to be made for each item read or examined. Begin each item with a complete citation; including author, illustrator, title, publisher, and copyright date. Include other useful information, such as appropriate age range or grade level (generally a three-year span), category or genre (along with subjects, topics, or themes), plot annotation, writing style, and assessment of quality or utility. Other titles that relate to the entry may also be mentioned. **Personal responses to the literature are important.** Entries should not be merely plot summaries. Primarily, the entry should include information that might prove useful when booktalking this title to young people; in the writing of a review; the development of a library program; or in otherwise presenting this resource to teachers and administrators with notes about specific passages for reading aloud, and/or literary elements such as plot, characterization, point of view, setting, style, and theme. Reading Notes should be kept to one page (if possible) and be single-spaced. **You must read 19 books for the course, plus five for your final project.** Of those, you will have 18 Book Notes.

**Each book note will be graded from 1 - 4 points.**

- Good plot summary - 1
- Personal Notes for booktalk - 1
- Library program or resource to teachers (where appropriate) - 1
- Read-alikes - 1

Total points possible = 72

**YA Interview Assignment = 7%**
Understanding young adults is central to the provision of services and programs developed for them. The purpose of this assignment is to begin to raise your awareness of this population, especially in the context of library and information services.

Talk with a young adult to attempt to determine the factors that influence her/his reading,
viewing, listening, and library use. In your paper, be sure to include information about your relationship with the young adult. Use the following items as an interview guide:

**Demographic Information:**
- Age/Sex
- Educational/employment aspirations

**Reading/Viewing/Listening History and Influences:**
- Childhood Experiences: home/school/library/other
- Young Adults Experiences: home/school/library/other

Questions: (These are suggestions - some of these should be asked, though.)
1. What is the title of the last book you read for pleasure?
2. What is the title of the last movie you watched and enjoyed?
3. If you have a choice between a really good novel and a really good informational book on a topic you’re interested in, which would you choose?
4. What are some topics you would like to read about?
5. What’s the title of the best book you ever read?
6. What’s the title of the best movie you ever saw?
7. Who’s your favorite author (or authors)?
8. Which magazines do you like to read?
9. What do you read on the Internet?
10. Do you prefer to read eBooks or print books?
11. Do you like to listen to audiobooks?
12. Do you talk with others about reading?
13. Do you ever seek help from librarians? Why or why not?

I DO NOT want questions and answers. This is a paper summing up your conversation, your observations, the interest level of your subject/s. It should be about 2-3 pages long (double-spaced).

Spelling, grammar, written work = 5 points
Interest and ability to follow up answers from your subject = 5 points
Conclusion and your insight into your teen subject = 5 points

**Total possible points = 15 points**

**Hot Topic! Presentation = 12%**
You will create a Hot Topic! presentation by choosing to Create a Blog Entry in that section of Blackboard.
I would like for you to choose a hot topic in Young Adult literature and then post a blog entry. Elements that you should consider required for this assignment:
- a short (3-5 minute) video of you discussing your chosen topic and why it is important to librarianship (if you have questions on how to upload video, please check the Media Tutorials section in the menu)
- at least one scholarly citation related to the topic
- other materials as needed
- all students should post comments/questions/reponses to the hot topic discussion. It is the responsibility of the Hot Topic discussion leader to answer questions and contribute as needed to the discussion.

Video = 10 points
Scholarly article & supporting material = 10 points
Discussion = 5 points
Total Points = 25

Group Project = 8%
A small group will be chosen by instructor to work together and present a group of picture books in a video presentation. You will present a group of books (8-10) under the same theme. Videos will be uploaded for all to see. All will contribute to booktalking to “the teacher” why they might want to introduce picture books into a curriculum assignment. You may discuss for “the teacher” the art that is used, the subject matter, authors/illustrators, or any ideas you feel are important for “the teacher” to know in order to see the usefulness of these picture books. You will choose, from instructor’s bibliography, books that fit your criteria and explain through the booktalk, all relevant suggestions. There is no written work for this assignment!

Video = 5 points
Topic = 3 points
Content = 8 points
Total Points = 16 for each student
At the conclusion of the assignment there will be a survey that will assure the instructor that all students participated equally.

Booktalk/Bookmark Assignment = 17%
Select a topic or theme for a booktalk to a class of students or to a gathering of teachers. It will include five books on your topic. It may include graphic novels, picture books, fiction and/or nonfiction. You will read all books in order to booktalk each one within a time limit of 10 minutes. That is 10 mins. for 5 books. You will also prepare a reproducible bookmark for the class. The Booktalk will be in a video format uploaded to Blackboard.

You will not be writing Book Notes for these five books.
(I prefer to know your books before you present. If you don’t ask, and I don’t like your choices, for whatever reason, you have no recourse. NONE. The YA books should be recently published - within the last 10 years. If you want to use an adult book, it should have won an Alex award. There are exceptions to all these rules, that is why it is best to discuss this ahead of time with instructor. If you have trouble choosing books, I will help with that aspect, too.)
Points are allocated:
Selection of books/themes/segues between titles = 10 points
Bookmark = 10 points
Booktalk = 15 points
Total Points = 35

Participation = 20%
Students are expected to complete all required reading and contribute intelligently to class discussions. If you are ill, or can not participate, please let the instructor know as soon as you are able.
There are 14 class discussions that I expect everyone to participate in.
Participating in discussion = 1 point
Using literature to make your point = 1 point
Follow-up to other discussion points = 1 point
Total possible points = 42 or 3 points per discussion.

TOTAL POSSIBLE POINTS FOR CLASS = 205 POINTS

This is supposed to be fun. YA Lit is full of surprises about young people, about ourselves, and about our communities. Bring a sense of humor, an open mind and a young heart to class. There is a lot of reading in this class! And that’s the fun part!