

IST 578 – Young Adult Literature
University at Albany
Syllabus – Fall 2011
Joyce R. Laiosa
Phone: 765-2791 (Voorheesville Public Library)
439-7839 (Home: No calls after 10:00 p.m.)
Email: jrlaios@gmail.com
jrlaios@earthlink.net

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 and practice in booktalking.

REQUIRED READING

The following books may be read in any edition, hardcover or paperback:

Bacigalupi, Paolo. *Ship Breaker*

Green, John and David Levithan. *will grayson, will grayson*

Myers, Walter Dean. *Lockdown*

Yang, Gene Luen. *American Born Chinese*

Zusak, Marcus. *The Book Thief*

Required reading **choices** are on supplemental reading list.

SUPPLEMENTAL TEXT (NOT REQUIRED)

Horning, Kathleen T. *From Cover to Cover: Evaluating and Reviewing Children's Books, Revised Edition*. Harper Collins, 2010.

- 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.

SCHEDULE

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

August 30

Introduction to course, class and instructor. Overview of assignments.

Picture Books for Young Adults.

Discussion of the form for class "Reading Notes" assignment for each book.

September 6

Magazines for Teens - Blackboard Post Due

Discussion of History of YA Literature.

Read **one** book from "classic" genre on Reading List.

September 13

Professional Journal 2-page paper due: compare VOYA with one other journal - print and/or online.

Discussion of what we want or need from professional resources.

Discussion of adolescence development and where literature fits into teen life.
Read one book from "realistic" genre on Reading List.

September 20

Read *Will Grayson, Will Grayson*.

Read one book choice from "GLBTQ" genre.

Banned Books Week will be discussed as well as challenges to library material; censorship and how to prepare for challenges.

September 27

YA Interview due - Blackboard Post - Reflections on your interview.

Continue discussion of YA Interview in class.

Sign-up for group presentations on YA literature and YA issues.

Guest speaker.

October 4

Fantasy-Science Fiction - Blackboard Post Due

Read three books this week! Read required for "fantasy/science fiction," and two from the choice list.

Presentation groups will meet.

October 11

First set of 6 Reading Notes must be turned in. [Realistic, GLBTQ (2), Fantasy (3)]

Read *American Born Chinese* and one other "Graphic Novel/Comic" from Reading List.

Presentation groups will meet.

October 18

Web scavenger hunt due. Blackboard Post about web resources.

First set of presentations

Read one book from "Poetry/Novels in Verse" genre on Reading List.

October 25

Second set of presentations.

Read *Monster* and one other book from "Urban/Multicultural" Genre on Reading List.

Booktalk/Bookmark assignment will be discussed.

Microsoft Publisher™ tutorial for anyone interested in bookmark construction.

November 1

Second set of Reading Notes are due. [Comics (2), Poetry, Urban (2)]

Read *The Book Thief* and one book from "Historical Fiction/Multicultural" genre on Reading List.

Discussion of literature with specific curriculum areas.

November 8

Read **three** nonfiction books: two from "choice" list; and a third from supplemental middle school list. **Bring books to class for a "book fair" approach to viewing and discussing your choices.**

Discussion of evaluating nonfiction.

November 15

Third set of Reading Notes are due. [Historical Fiction (2), Nonfiction (3), Adventure, etc.]

Read **one** book from "Adventure/Mystery/Sports" genre on Reading List.

Storytelling for Young Adults

November 22

NO CLASS

November 29

All Field Experience Papers are due.

Part I - Booktalks

December 6

Final set of Reading Notes due. (This means anything you were unable to hand in earlier!)

Part II - Booktalks.

ASSIGNMENTS

Reading Notes – 20%
Professional Journal Report – 5%
YA Interview – 10%
Group Assignment – 15%
Booktalk/Bookmark – 20%
Web Scavenger Hunt - 5%
Class Participation/In-class Exercises/Blackboard Posts – 10%
Field Experience Assignments (2) – 15%

Grades for this course will be assigned to students as follows:

A	94-100	A-	90-93
B+	86-89	B	83-85
B-	80-82	C+	76-79
C	73-75	C-	70-72
F	0-69	I	Incomplete

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

Reading Notes – 20% of grade; Due: October 11, November 1, November 15, December 6

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

A brief entry is to be made for each item read or examined. Entries must (if possible, please) appear in the order in which they are listed in the syllabus. For literature 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 in the writing of a review, the development of a library program, or in otherwise presenting this resource to young adults. Reading Notes should be kept to one page, and may be single-spaced. These are graded with a check, check plus or a check minus.

Professional Journal Report – 5% of grade; Due September 13

Select a professional journal and examine it carefully. Recommendations include: *School Library Journal (SLJ)*, *Hornbook*, *Library Media Connections (LMC)*, *Teacher Librarian*. The journal may also be online. If so, **include** the online version in your evaluation. Evaluate the journal for organization, content, and utility (usefulness). Compare this journal with VOYA (*The Voice of Youth Advocates*). This assignment should be approximately two pages. If the journal includes reviews, pay special attention to who writes the reviews, how they are arranged, and what sort of rating system the journal uses (stars to designate outstanding books, etc). Be prepared to discuss your selection in class. How do the two journals compare and which would you use?

YA Interview Assignment – 10% of grade; September 27

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. Analyze the data you gather and prepare a short (2-4 pages) report of your findings. Approach the young adult as the expert on her/himself and on young adults in general. Your role is to learn from the expert. 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

Resources: [what do they read/use for school-basic info]

Types of Resources: fiction, informational, reference, other

Format of Resources: print (books, magazines, newspapers, other), computer (internet, games, databases, other), movies/video/DVD, audio

Resource Selection Process & Influences: need (school assignment, personal issue, etc.), popular media (TV/cable, radio, magazines, newspapers, internet sites/chat, online bookstores, social media), personal recommendations (friends, parents, librarians, teachers, etc.), browsing (if so, where?)

Source of materials : library, bookstores, personal network

Reflections:

-What does s/he feel about reading?

-Does s/he have a favorite resource?

-Does the young adult talk with others about reading?

-Does the young adult seek help from librarians? Why or why not?

-What would the young adult suggest that you read in order to understand him/her in particular or young adults in general?

Group Assignment – 15% of grade; Due: October 18 & 25

More to follow on this assignment.

Web Scavenger Hunt – 5% of grade; Due: October 18

Assignment will be on Blackboard for you to look at different YA websites. There will be specific sites to peruse as well as open questions. Post some of your findings to the group on Blackboard.

Booktalk/Bookmark Assignment – 20% of grade; November 29 & December 6

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. You will also prepare a bookmark for every student in the class, as well as the instructor. You must have the books with you, or able to project your book covers on a screen.

You will not be writing reading notes for these five books.

Attendance, Participation – 15% of grade

Students are expected to complete all required reading and contribute intelligently to class discussions, Blackboard posts, as well as in-class exercises based on the weekly readings.

Field Experience Papers - 15% of grade; Due November 29

Each student must spend 12.5 hours in either a school media center, or a public library. You must write two papers from that experience. The first paper will assess the look of the library, the collection, and anything you notice, both good and bad, about the library. This is worth 5 points. The second paper is an interview with the librarian. You must talk about his or her job in relation to the school, administrators, collection, collection development, budget, programs, **challenges to the collection and IF there is a policy in place should there be a challenge.**

Please be sure to bring a sense of humor, an open mind, and a young heart to

every class. We have a lot of work to do, but let's have fun while we are doing it!