English 356.090: Young Adult Literature
Ferguson 376
Monday and Wednesday, 1:00-2:15
Spring, 2016

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Office Hours:
Monday: 10-12
Tuesday: 11-12, 4:30-6
Wednesday: 10-12
Thursday: 11-12, 3:00-4:00
Friday: By appointment

Course Description: The current university bulletin describes English 356 as a “[s]tudy of the major genres of literature for a young adult audience. Focus on primary texts from each genre.”

Course Introduction: In this course we will explore the field of Young Adult Literature from a cultural, historical, and theoretical perspective with the end goal of coming to a general understanding of the field. Our study will begin with our working towards an understanding of what it first means to be a young adult, then what issues/ideas are most important to young adults and, finally, we will move towards investigating how these ideas and issues are explored and problematized by a variety of authors. It is important to note that this will be a critical study and dependent on critical conversation and analysis; in other words, while I understand that many of us do read for pleasure and it is even more common for adults to turn to the field of YA literature for reasons of pleasure, when reading and discussing these texts we must do so with a critical eye that actively questions each text in terms of genre, style, character, purpose, theme, etc. It is important to remember that the greatest respect that we can give to an author is to not only recognize his/her contribution to culture, but also to question, interrogate, and dissect that contribution.
Program Learning Outcomes:
As this course can either fulfill an elective for the English major OR is a requirement for the English/Secondary Education major, the following PLOs will be achieved:

1. The student will demonstrate the ability to read complex texts, closely and accurately.
2. The student will demonstrate the ability to comprehend both traditional and contemporary schools/methods of critical theory and apply them to literary texts to generate relevant interpretations.
3. The student will demonstrate the ability to effectively conduct literary research.
4. The student will demonstrate the ability to write clear, grammatically correct prose for a variety of purposes in regard to literary analysis.

We will accomplish these goals through the reading of primary, secondary, and tertiary materials and we will be tested on our understanding of said materials; we will write several short response papers that will require us to engage primary texts through a provided critical lens; and, we will write a developed essay that will require the reading of an additional text and the use of outside research.

Required Texts:
Stephen Chbosky, *Perks of Being a Wallflower*
S.E. Hinton, *The Outsiders*
Laurie Halse Anderson, *Speak*
Walter Dean Meyers, *Monster*
Lauren Myracle, *TTYL*
Octavia Butler, *Parable of the Sower*
James Dashner, *Mazerunner*
Daniel Waters, *Generation Dead*
Libba Bray, *Going Bovine*

Course Requirements:
--A midterm and final exam (each will be worth 100 points)
--Two (short) critical essays. Each short essay will be worth 100 points.
--A process driven seminar paper. This will be worth a total of 200 points (it will be based on 100 points, but counted twice). This will be 8-10 pages in length and require outside research.

Final Grade
At the end of the semester, one will have had the opportunity to earn a total of 500 points. As everything is weighted the same in terms of overall percentage, this will be the required number of points one must have to earn a specific grade.

600-540: A  
479-420: C  
360-0: F 
539-480: B 
419-360: D 

You can figure your grade out at any point in the semester by simply adding up the total number of points that you have earned up to that point and dividing it by the total number of points possible at that point. However, at the end of the semester, your final average will have five points deducted for each missing response paper.
Course Assignments:

Reading:
It is my expectation that you will complete all of the assigned reading for the course. This will include the novel and secondary/tertiary source material. As you will see from the calendar, we will spend, about, one week on each book. First, you will be required to have **completed the novel on the first day of our discussion**. Again, looking at the calendar, you will see that, in most cases, we will begin our discussion of a particular work on a Monday, thus allowing you the weekend to complete the book. Furthermore, with most texts, I will include a secondary or tertiary source; these sources will be critical essays written about the work under consideration or essays about particular issues in YA literature and that can be tied to the book under investigation. We may use these secondary and tertiary sources as simple foundations to begin class conversations, or they may become central to our discussion. Again, you are expected to have completed these readings on the day we begin our book discussion.

If it becomes obvious that students are not completing the required readings, I reserve the right to change the syllabi and add reading tests to your overall requirements and grade.

Furthermore, the essays that you are provided with should also act as writing examples. In other words, when working on your own academic writing and interpretation, these essays should be used as examples of strong and weak critical arguments.

Exams:
As you will see from the course calendar, we will have a midterm and final exam. Each exam will consist of short answer questions (several paragraph answer will be required per question).

Short Essays:
During the course of the semester, every student will be responsible for completing two short essays. I will break the class into groups and each group will be assigned to write on a specific text/secondary source. For these short essays, you must write on the text(s) that you have been assigned. The short essay **IS NOT** to simply be a summary of the primary or secondary text; it **IS NOT** to simply be you sharing your own reaction to either the primary or secondary text; it **IS NOT** to simply be a tangent that is barely connected to an aspect of the primary or secondary text. Instead, the short essay **IS** to be an argumentative essay; as the author, you ARE to assume that I have read the same primary and secondary sources and thus you can reference those works but do not need to offer full summaries; the argument **MUST BE** supported through the analysis/discussion of textual evidence, not just your own statements.

As noted late in the syllabus, your writing is to be viewed as academic in purpose and thus follow all the “rules” and “requirements” for academic writing. Each of these shorts essays is to be 3-4 pages in length (this does not include the works cited page), and you are not allowed to go over 4 pages. The purpose in such a length requirement is that you will need (at minimum) 3 to 4 FULL pages to develop a solid argument, but you may not go over the page limit and thus you will need to be focused and concise (i.e. there will be no room for “rabbit holes”).
Seminar Paper

Every student will complete an 8-10 page seminar paper that will be turned in at our final class meeting. This essay will be process driven and require that you complete your own research to support your argument. While you will be allowed to make use of the resources that I provide you with throughout the semester, you will be required to acquire additional materials. As you can see from the conversation above, this essay will be counted double towards your final grade in the class. A handout will be provided that will describe the requirements for this substantive essay.

Course Policies:

Attendance and Late Work:
While attendance may not be mandatory in all of your classes, I do hold to an attendance policy. As much of your success will depend on the deepening of your critical thinking and writing skills and such skills will be tested daily in class, attendance is imperative. This being said, you will be allowed three absences without any penalty. However, if you miss four classes your end grade may be no higher than a C, five absences and your end grade may be no higher than a D, and 6 absences and your final grade will be no higher than a F. Remember, though, if you miss a class period that your grade may be damaged due to the fact that you may not complete specific assignments that were given during that period; in other words, any work completed during a class period will not be able to be made up.

As for late work, I do my best to return all work in a prompt manner. In order to do so, though, I must have all assignments turned in on time. This being said, any assignment that is turned in late will be dropped one half of a letter grade (5 points) for each day that it is late. Assignments will be turned in at the start of class, and any student turning in the assignment any time after the class period will incur the penalty of one day late. If a student turns in a work after the first 15 minutes of class, it will be considered one day late.

Academic Integrity (A-9.1):

Academic integrity is a responsibility of all university faculty and students. Faculty members promote academic integrity in multiple ways including instruction on the components of academic honesty, as well as abiding by university policy on penalties for cheating and plagiarism.

Stephen F. Austin State University defines academic dishonesty as:

Definition of Academic Dishonesty
Academic dishonesty includes both cheating and plagiarism. Cheating includes but is not limited to (1) using or attempting to use unauthorized materials to aid in achieving a better grade on a component of a class; (2) the falsification or invention of any information, including citations, on an assigned exercise; and/or (3) helping or attempting to help another in an act of cheating or plagiarism. Plagiarism is presenting the words or ideas of another person as if they were your own. Examples of plagiarism are (1) submitting an assignment as if it were one's own work when, in fact, it is at least partly the work of another; (2) submitting a work that has been purchased or otherwise obtained from an Internet source or another source; and (3) incorporating the words or ideas of an author into one's paper without giving the author due credit.
Please read the complete policy at:  http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic_integrity.asp

In terms of this class, any student caught blatantly and purposely plagiarizing or cheating will automatically receive 0 points for the assignment. Furthermore, the incident may be reported.

*Free Speech and Class Conduct:*
In order to help improve our critical thinking and writing skills, we will regularly engage in class discussions. The purpose of these discussions will be to recognize that while many of the students in the class may be on the same level in terms of age or year, there are different abilities in the classroom and different ways to look at an issue or piece of writing. In other words, one can always learn from his/her peers. In order for this to happen, we must respect one another. Therefore, while I will encourage students to share different opinions and will not stop individuals from disagreeing with one another, I will not allow any student to engage in the use of sexist, racist, or homophobic speech. Also, I will not allow any student to simply try to roll over or silence his/her peers.

*Acceptable Student Behavior*
Classroom behavior should not interfere with the instructor’s ability to conduct the class or the ability of other students to learn from the instructional program (see the Student Conduct Code, policy 10.4). Unacceptable or disruptive behavior will not be tolerated. Students who disrupt the learning environment may be asked to leave class and may be subject to judicial, academic or other penalties. This prohibition applies to all instructional forums, including electronic, classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. The instructor shall have full discretion over what behavior is appropriate/inappropriate in the classroom.

In the case of this course, disruptive behavior will include the following: consistent use of cell phones/texting during class, consistent participation in side discussions that are not part of classroom dialogue, referring to your teacher or peers in an inappropriate way or verbally assaulting your teacher or peers, physically threatening your teacher or peers, and completing homework assignments for another class. Students participating in such activities can be asked to leave the class and will be counted as absent.

*Withheld Grades:*
Ordinarily, at the discretion of the instructor of record and with the approval of the academic chair/director, a grade of WH will be assigned only if the student cannot complete the course work because of unavoidable circumstances. Students must complete the work within one calendar year from the end of the semester in which they receive a WH, or the grade automatically becomes an F. If students register for the same course in future terms the WH will automatically become an F and will be counted as a repeated course for the purpose of computing the grade point average.”

For the complete policy, http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/semester_grds.asp

*Students with Disabilities:*
To obtain disability related accommodations, alternate formats and/or auxiliary aids, students with disabilities must contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS), Human Services Building
Room 325, 468-3004/468-1004 (TDD) as early as possible in the semester. Once verified, ODS will notify the course instructor and outline the accommodation and/or auxiliary aids to be provided. Failure to request services in a timely manner may delay your accommodations. For additional information, go to http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices

**Homework and Written Assignments:**
During the semester, you will be expected to complete essays outside of the classroom environment. Each of these essays is to be typed, use 12 point font, and ONLY the essay should be double-spaced (DO NOT DOUBLE SPACE THE HEADER). The header of your essay must include your name, my name, the date, and the class number.

In the case of each essay, you may make use of outside resources. When writing your essay, you are to display correct citation of any and all sources that are used. This means, you are to recognize outside sources when either using direct quotes or summarizing the ideas of another. Furthermore, since you will show in-text citation, your essays must also include a Works Cited page.

Finally, each of your essays should be viewed as academic writing. As such, it should be written in the academic voice (avoid the use of the first person unless instructed otherwise, avoid contractions, colloquialisms, text speak, etc.), be clean of stigmatized errors, display a clear thesis/supporting paragraphs/conclusion, and recognize all sources. Essays that do not comply with such standards will be graded accordingly.

**Tentative Calendar**

Wednesday, January 20th: Introduction  
Homework: Read *Perks*

Monday, January 25th: *Perks*

Wednesday, January 27th: *Perks*  
Homework: Read Trites handout

Monday, February 1st: Trites  
Homework: Read assigned essay handouts

Wednesday, February 3rd: Trites  
Homework: Read *The Outsiders* and Holloway essay. Group One complete Short Essay One.

Monday, February 8th: *The Outsiders*

Wednesday, February 10th: *The Outsiders*  
Homework: Read *Speak* and McGee essay. Group Two complete Shorty Essay One
Monday, February 15\textsuperscript{th}:  

\textit{Speak}

Wednesday, February 17\textsuperscript{th}:  

\textit{Speak}

Homework: Read \textit{Monster} and Groenke/Youngquist essay. Group Three complete Short Essay One.

Monday, February 22\textsuperscript{nd}:  

\textit{Monster}

Wednesday, February 24\textsuperscript{th}:  

\textit{Monster}

Homework: Prepare for midterm.

Monday, February 29\textsuperscript{th}: Midterm Exam

Wednesday March 2\textsuperscript{nd}: Discuss Seminar Paper requirements.

Homework: Read essay by Campbell.

Monday, March 7\textsuperscript{th}: Dystopia Essay

Homework: Read essay on gothic.

Wednesday, March 9\textsuperscript{th}: “Lie to Me”

Homework: Read \textit{Generation Dead} and Tidwell essay. Group Three complete Short Essay Two.

Monday, March 14\textsuperscript{th}: Spring Break

Wednesday, March 16\textsuperscript{th}: Spring Break

Monday, March 21\textsuperscript{st}: \textit{Generation Dead}. Group Three turn in Short Essay Two.

Wednesday, March 23\textsuperscript{rd}: \textit{Generation Dead}

Monday, March 28\textsuperscript{th}: Easter Holiday (classes begin at 4:00)

Wednesday, March 30\textsuperscript{th}: Selected Essay

Homework: Read \textit{Maze Runner}. Group Two complete Short Essay 2.

Monday, April 4\textsuperscript{th}: \textit{Mazerunner}. Group Two turn in Short Essay 2.

Wednesday, April 6\textsuperscript{th}: \textit{Mazerunner}

Homework: Read \textit{Parable} and selected essay. Group One complete Short Essay 2.

Monday, April 11\textsuperscript{th}: \textit{Parable of the Sower}. Group One turn in Short Essay 2.

Wednesday, April 13\textsuperscript{th}: \textit{Parable of the Sower}

Homework: Bring seminar paper ready for peer response.

Monday, April 18\textsuperscript{th}: In class Peer Workshop (Seminar Papers)
Wednesday, April 20th: Catch up/add on day.
Homework: Complete Seminar Paper. Read Bray pages.


Wednesday, April 27th: *Going Bovine*

Monday, May 2nd: *Going Bovine*

Wednesday, May 4th: Class Wrap Up