

Department ENGL

Course Number 315

Course Name: Adolescent Literature

## **AREAS OF INQUIRY**

### **IDENTITY, INSTITUTIONS, AND SOCIETIES**

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This form must be submitted to the Faculty Council on Liberal Learning and Academic Life as part of the submission process.

Please attach a proposed syllabus for this course and the Undergraduate Curriculum Course Proposal Form.

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DEADLINE FOR PROPOSALS: **16 September 2005**

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Please answer the following questions:

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#### **Check Only One:**

☒ This course is an existing course (in the current curriculum) that we are now proposing for this Area of Inquiry.

☐ This is a new course that we are now proposing for this Area of Inquiry.

1. Name and contact information for the department chair administering this course.

Scott Pollard [spollard@cnu.edu](mailto:spollard@cnu.edu) 594-7953

2. In any given semester, how many sections of this course is your department willing to offer?

2 sections

3. Why is this course being offered/what is it designed to achieve (Course purpose/goal)?

The course is part of the language arts concentration of the English majors, designed primarily for those students who intend to become teachers or librarians. This course introduces students to literature appropriate for middle and secondary students.

4. Check the learner objectives below that the course will address. The first objective is required and every proposal must include at least two more objectives from the list below.

☒ Identify concepts, patterns, and issues that affect the organization of societies, shape individual thought, or shape social mores (**required**)

☒ Compare and contrast the effects of these concepts, patterns and issues on individuals, cultural institutions, or societies

☒ Identify an institutional or societal structure (or structures) and its (or their) influence on individuals

☐ Explain the fluid role of the individual within society (reflecting the multiple and sometimes contradictory roles of individuals within society)

◇X Recognize the influence of societal or cultural context on self and others as individuals

◇ Objectively and critically evaluate concepts of self and individuality

5. Briefly explain how this class addresses the above objectives. A course may cover more than three objectives.

a.) The course examines the concept of adolescence as a societal construct. Students engage in readings and discussion about whether adolescence is an artificial or actual developmental stage, and how it is interpreted differently in different cultures. Literature about adolescents is used as the focus of inquiry to examine how the societal patterns established for adolescents play out in the social mores and roles that today's American adolescents assume. In addition to literature, students use their own recent experiences as adolescents to question the construct of adolescence.

b.) The course addresses how American society has defined the role of the adolescent, and how that has changed over time to shape thoughts, behaviors and expectations of adolescents. Literature is examined as the vehicle to surface these thoughts, behaviors and expectations. Through reading both contemporary and historical fiction, the changes of the role of the adolescent in American society are explored.

c.) The course addresses the ways in which adolescents' thoughts and behaviors are shaped by the cultural and social context around them. The experience of being an American adolescent is sharply contrasted with the adolescent experience in other parts of the world through literature examining the two different cultures. Microcultures within American society (African American, Hispanic, or Native American) are also examined to surface the ways in which culture operates on the thoughts and actions of adolescents.

6. Course Assessment: **Identify how this course will accomplish the above objectives (choose at least one).**

◇X Participating in class discussion and debate

◇X Engaging in teamwork and other collaborative exercises

◇X Writing analytical or evaluative papers, perhaps incorporating original research

◇X Making oral presentations

◇ Creating an artistic product or a performance

◇ Participating in fieldwork

◇ Other means – please identify

7. Attach a proposed syllabus, which includes a statement of purpose, course objectives, and how these objectives will be accomplished.

Attached.

8. Please identify and explain if this course contributes to the Foundations of Liberal Learning expectations for:

◇ Oral Communication Literacy:

Allows for practice of oral communication literacy since students are required to give author presentations.

◇ Information Literacy:

Allows for practice of information literacy since students are introduced to and required to access various electronic sources for acquiring information about authors and literary criticism.

◇ Writing Literacy:

Allows for continued practice of writing literacy as students prepare at least 12 informal journal responses and write two formal papers.

8. Explain how this course connects to Vision 2010 – the CNU Strategic Plan

The course connects to Vision 2010 in the following ways:

**Priority I: A vital curriculum**

Goal A: The course provides **an intellectual and challenging** selection of reading about adolescents.

Goal B: The course requires **critical and innovative thinking** as it requires students to question assumptions about their own experiences as an adolescent, and to reconstruct how they might want adolescence to function.

Goal C: The course fosters **independent learning**, as it requires students to select works to read on their own

**Priority II: A culture of student learning and engagement**

Goal A: The course **fosters commitment to culture**, since students are exposed to plays, movies, or talks – as well as literature-- supportive of the course content.

Goal C: The course **sustains and promotes a climate of intellectual engagement** as students are required to read and discuss literature and how it relates to their lives.

Goal E: The course creates **learning opportunities that expand individual potential**, as they are invited to share their knowledge with local area adolescents.

Submission Checklist:

By the deadline, submit a packet with the following documents to the Assistant Dean for Liberal Learning. Please submit in electronic and hard copy form.

\_\_\_x\_\_\_ Area of Inquiry Course Proposal Form

\_\_\_x\_\_\_ Syllabus for the Course

\_\_\_n/a\_\_\_ Undergraduate Curriculum Committee Course Proposal Form

# ADOLESCENT LITERATURE

English 315  
Spring 2006

DR. JENNIFER MISKEC

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## Course Description:

ENGL 315: Adolescent Literature will be an exploration of the coming of age theme in adolescent literature as it is expressed in a representative sample of fiction written in various genres for young adults. We will focus on the primary genres of adolescent novels, including historical fiction, contemporary realistic fiction, fantasy, graphic novels, and adolescent life writing. Because the course is offered by the English department, we will concentrate on literary and cultural analysis of the selected texts and not pedagogical concerns or techniques.

Adolescence as a distinct state of being has a relatively short social history. By the turn of the twentieth century, industrialization had decreased a young person's value on the farm, and as a result more students were able to attend high school. G. Stanley Hall's *Adolescence*, written in 1905, offered advice to adults, especially school administrators, about what to do with these large numbers of young people, in turn drawing attention to adolescence as a social phenomenon. Once institutionalized, adolescence began to inspire products, namely books, marketed specifically to young people. While society still wrestles to answer impossible questions like who are adolescents, what do they want, what are they capable of, and why are they so hard to define, literature written for and marketed to adolescent readers remains a primary location to examine this struggle. For this class, we will work together to recognize some of the tendencies and struggles commonly portrayed in adolescent literature, at all times considering the value or danger of these adult assumptions (and anxieties) about adolescents. We will begin with a look at more classic examples of adolescent literature and move on to more contemporary texts, including a number of texts that were written by adolescents, all of which seem to be very live texts.

You are expected to read all texts critically, creatively, analytically, and resistantly, with a pen in your hand, asking questions of the text, taking notes, and drawing connections to concepts or other texts with which you are familiar, especially those that we have discussed as a class. Come to class having read the entire text, with ideas about the text that you are prepared to share, and topics you are interested in exploring with the class. This requires that you not only are present but that you are an active presence, thoughtful of the texts before, during, and after reading them. Class time will consist of discussion, small-group work, and the presentation of in-class and out-of-class research and writing assignments. I expect discussion, debate, and exchanges of ideas.

## Course Texts:

Speak (Anderson) Puffin 014131088X

Blood and Chocolate (Klause) Laurel Leaf 0440226686

Persepolis (Satrapi) Pantheon 037571457X

Feed (Anderson) Candlewick 0763622591

How I Live Now (Rosoff) Wendy Lamb Books 0385746776

Crusader (Bloor) Scholastic 0439221609

The Chocolate War (Cormier) Laurel Leaf 0440944597

Boy Meets Boy (Levithan) Knopf 0375832998

in Neutral (Trueman) Harper Tempest 0064472132

Monster (Myers) Amistad 0064407314

Teen Angst? Naaah . . . A Quasi-autobiography (Vizzini) Laurel Leaf 044023767X

The Giver (Lowry) Yearling 0440227275

### Central to our class discussions will be:

- what common narratives about adolescents are being told in American popular culture? And in literature for the young adult?
- what do these texts say about what dominant culture thinks adolescents know, want to know, need to know, etc?
- according to the common narratives of popular texts (literary, social, etc), is adolescence thought of more as a social construct or a biologically determined development stage?
- how do those narratives about adolescents change over time and from one genre to another?
- how do the popular texts about adolescents compare to your real life experiences as adolescents?
- how do the narratives adults tell on behalf of adolescents differ from the narratives adolescents tell about themselves?
- what are the major ideological functions at work within adolescent texts? Are the representations of gender, class, race, ability or other subgroups (athletes for example) ultimately productive?
- how does the historical moment the text was produced affect meaning making?
- how does the liminal nature of American adolescence construct adolescents as "other"? In what ways are ethnic and sexual identities shown to further complicate the adolescent's already existing otherness?
- what anxieties about the future are portrayed in today's adolescent speculative fiction? What role does today's adolescent play in creating these anxieties?

### Reading and Presentation Schedule:

	Tuesday	Thursday	Discussion leaders
<b>Week 1</b> <b>1/16</b> <b>History of the Field/Authentic Voice</b>	Introductions	Movie: The Outsiders	

<b>Week 2</b> <b>1/23</b> <b>Authentic Voice</b>	Teen Angst Author Chat: 1. 2.	Teen Angst	"The Teen Mystique" 1. 2.
<b>Week 3</b> <b>1/30</b> <b>The Irony of Narration</b>	The Chocolate War Author Chat: 1. 2.	The Chocolate War	The Irony of Narration 1. 2.
<b>Week 4</b> <b>2/6</b>	Stuck in Neutral Author Chat: 1. 2.	Stuck in Neutral	1. 2.
<b>Week 5</b> <b>2/13</b> <b>Other</b>	Persepolis Author Chat: 1. 2.	Persepolis	1. 2.
<b>Week 6</b> <b>2/20</b>	Crusader Author Chat: 1. 2.	Crusader	1. 2.
<b>Week 7</b> <b>2/27</b>	Monster Author Chat: 1. 2.	Monster	1. 2.
<b>Week 8</b> <b>3/6</b>	Spring Break	Spring Break	
<b>Week 9</b> <b>3/13</b> <b>The Future</b>	The Giver Author Chat: 1. 2.	The Giver	1. 2.
<b>Week 10</b> <b>3/20</b>	How I Live Now Author Chat: 1. 2.	How I Live Now	1. 2.
<b>Week 11</b> <b>3/27</b>	Feed Author Chat: 1. 2.	Feed	1. 2.

<b>Week 12</b> <b>4/3</b> <b>Sex and</b> <b>Sexuality</b>	Blood and Chocolate  Author Chat: 1. 2.	Blood and Chocolate	1.  2.
<b>Week 13</b> <b>3/10</b>	Boy Meets Boy  Author Chat: 1. 2.	Boy Meets Boy	1.  2.
<b>Week 14</b> <b>4/17</b>	Peer Response for first draft of Final Project	Conferences	
<b>Week 15</b> <b>4/24</b>	Speak  Author Chat: 1. 2.	Speak	1.  2.
<b>Week 16</b> <b>5/1</b>	Final Project Due	Final Project Due	

## Graded Work

Daily Participation, Attendance, Conference: 25%

New Concepts Reading Journals: 25%

Discussion Lead : 15%

Reading Quizzes: 5%

Group Author Presentation: 5%

Final Project: 25%

**1. Participation** Because a major part of English 315's curriculum is class participation (positing thoughtful questions, responding during large and small group discussions, having a thoughtful and well formed opinion about a text or idea, and demonstrating in other ways that you are engaged with the reading material and are willing to share your thoughts and questions with the group), attendance is necessary. Do note, though, that **simply attending class without active participation will not earn you participation credit**. Only through active and constructive participation in class activities and discussion will you be eligible to earn a passing participation grade.

Conversely, missing class will be an automatic detriment to your grade. Not only will you be missing instruction and activities pertaining to the literature at hand, you will also miss your peers' contributions to the class, and they will miss yours. Furthermore, YOU are responsible for any material covered in the class you missed. I am not responsible for getting that information to you, and will do so only when you and I have negotiated a make-up plan, which typically involves a meeting after class, not simply email exchanges.

**2. New Concepts Reading Journal** Over the course of this semester you will be required to turn in FIVE written responses to either a book read for class, a class discussion, or other themes relevant to the subject of adolescent literature. When you do these and over which books is up to you; however, at least three reading responses must be completed before mid-term (the rest before the last week of class) and you should plan on turning in your response to a text before we have discussed the book as a class. Summarizing a book or repeating a class discussion will not earn you any credit. Instead, connect concepts, class discussions, and other class texts together in your responses and show me ways in which you are reading and thinking in new ways and like a critical, culturally aware reader who can get past the obvious. Responses should be 2+ pages in length (that's two full pages plus any more that you need to do), double spaced, and size twelve Times New Roman or Ariel font. Adhere to MLA standards for headings, margins, and spacing.

**3. Discussion Lead** Typically we will have an article a week to read alongside the fiction. With your partners you will lead the discussion about the article, making sure to guide discussion in such a way that everyone in the class is participating and the connections between the article and the novel are articulated and discussed. These discussions set the tone for the second day of the class' discussion of the assigned novel.

**4. Reading Quizzes** These will cover basic plot point details, like character names and significant events, to show that you did indeed read what was assigned. Occasionally quiz questions will pertain to concepts from previous class discussions. Often questions will be class generated.

**5. Group Author Presentation** For each of the novels we read in class, one group will be responsible for the presentation of information about the author of the novel, as well as information about the author's larger body of work. The goal is to provide context for the novel, which may be useful in the understanding and discussion of the novel. However, please do not limit yourself to the typical and often ineffective speech like presentation style. Instead, endeavor to make your delivery meaningful and significant based on your author, his or her time period of production, subjects addressed, etc. Try to include the class in your presentations. A visual element to your presentation is required.

**6. Author Study** For your final project you will select an author of adolescent literature, whose oeuvre (of no fewer than three novels) you will explore. Your purpose is to articulate what seems to be the author's ideologies about adolescents, what they know, what they need, etc., as well as what themes connect the author's texts together. You must tell me which author's work you wish to explore before midterm.

### **General Policies:**

If you consider yourself disabled, please make an appointment to see me to discuss your needs. In order to receive accommodation, your disability must be on record in Disability Services located in the Academic Advising Center, Room 125, Administration Building (Telephone 594-8763).

This course will follow all academic policies of the University. Students should acquaint themselves with the policies on plagiarism and cheating.

Deadlines are final unless I have personally given you an extension. No exceptions.

Students are expected to have access to e-mail and the internet. Additional instructions and some assignments will be posted there. All changes to the class schedule or assignments will be reflected online. Students are expected to remain familiar with the class webpage throughout the semester.



Students are required to purchase or have access to all required texts, even if not immediately available. **All novels are to be read in full by the start of the first day of the book unit.** I recommend that you do purchase these texts rather than check them out from the library for a variety of reasons that I would be glad to discuss with you in person.

All writing should be typed, double-spaced, with one inch margins, and should meet the minimum page requirements. **All research must be documented using the MLA style format.**

I support a respectful classroom atmosphere, which means that all interactions (both teacher-student and student-student) should be handled with this in mind.

### **Revision Policy**

Anyone who receives a "C" or below on an assignment may revise it. In fact, in such cases I strongly recommend revision. Moreover, you must see me in conference before you attempt the revision.

### **My Office**

Please do not hesitate to visit me during my office hours or to make an appointment to meet with me, especially if you are having difficulty with the class.

### **Grading Scale**

A 4.0 B- 2.7 D+ 1.3  
A- 3.7 C+ 2.3 D 1.0  
B+ 3.3 C 2.0 D- 0.7  
B 3.0 C- 1.7 F 0.0