

## *Adolescent Literature in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*

### **Class Times:**

Tuesday evenings from 4:00 p.m. – 6:55 p.m. in the library of Reganeet <sup>1</sup> High School

### **Office Information:**

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### **Course Description and Rationale:**

**Introduction:** The National Council for Teachers of English (NCTE, 2007) offers a research brief on adolescent literacy policy and calls for the promotion of adolescent literacy through research-based teaching practices: 1) to demystify content-specific literacy practices, 2) to motivate students through meaningful choices, 3) to engage students with real-world literacy practices, 4) to affirm multiple literacies, 5) to support learner-centered classroom environments and 6) to foster social responsibilities through multicultural literacy. Teaching *Adolescent literacy in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* is to consider what it means to have meaningful reading and writing experiences with and within multiple, multicultural literacies. Such “New Literacy” (Albright & Luke, 2008; Ball, 2005; Gee, 2008; Luke, 2003, 2008; Moje & Hinchman, 2005; New London Group, 1996; Street, 1995, 2001; Willinsky, 1990) is the focus for this course.

*Adolescent Literature in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* asks students to consider approaches for being a critical English Educator (Morrell, 2002, 2005, 2007) by considering today’s diverse American schools and what students are assigned, choose to read and desire to know. *Adolescent Literature in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* introduces several adolescent texts, some traditional and some new, with the intent to expose the multiplicity of what NCTE (2007) states in their report for 21<sup>st</sup> Century classrooms.

**Purpose:** The primary purpose of *Adolescent Literature in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* is to offer class members perspectives of literature written for young adults that both challenge and support what is considered “worthy” for adolescents to read. For some students, *Adolescent Literature* will initiate a better understanding of how literature is approached by middle and high school classrooms. For some students, *Adolescent Literature* will be an additional genre to the paradigms of canonical debates, literary traditions, literary analysis, and cultural aesthetics learned through previous coursework. For some students, *Adolescent Literature* will continue a life-long passion of reading everything they can get their hands on. For some students, a variation of all the above, with unnamed realizations, will occur through *Adolescent Literature in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*.

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<sup>1</sup> Reganeet High School is a fictitious name.

A secondary purpose for this class is to “mix up” and question the traditional definitions of adolescent literature through weekly discussions of how technology changes the way we work in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Students in this class read a small sampling of adolescent literature, but also are asked to consider additional modes and genres of communication (e.g., video, art, doodling) and whether or not, they too, are literature in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

**Themes: Adolescent Literature in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century is organized the following way:**

*Setting a Context for Adolescent Literature* is offered as an introduction to the history, context, perspectives and ideologies in the field. Students begin to think about multiple literacies and how texts written for Young Adult readers might assist classroom practices and goals. A questioning of who is served and not served begins.

*Questioning the “Normalcy” of Adolescence* asks students to think about their own definitions of what adolescence and Adolescent Literature are supposed to be. Challenging traditional dichotomies of able/disabled, old/young, intelligent/stupid, us/them etc., becomes evident through course readings and helps students situate their own philosophy for teaching adolescent literature.

*Questioning the “Class”ics: Who’s allowed on the inside?* asks students to think about classic literature they may have been assigned in their own school and compares it with genres of adolescent literature, today. Definitions of who is literate in designated bodies of adolescent populations will be interrogated, as well as if, and how, schools divide reading opportunities for any one school’s demographics.

*Questioning Semiotics: Language, Hegemony & Diversity* probes students to think about how language (spoken, textual, signed, painted, and performed) is represented in Adolescent Literature. Beginning with poetry/script and moving towards graphic novels, class members begin thinking about the multiple ways for expressing and communicating in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Through considering diverse language-learning populations and genres, students gain introductory access to the multimodalities NCTE promotes.

*Questioning the “Body” of Adolescent Literature: The Personal & The Public* exposes students to the questions of public and private spaces that Adolescent Literature often provokes. Through wrestling with body image stigmas to promoting complicated conversations of international issues of bodies in the military, students are given an opportunity to take their own stance and position on how Adolescent Literature might be used in the classroom to promote critical thinking skills in their students.

*Questioning Adolescent Democracy: “Lessons Served Well”* introduces students to additional debates of multiculturalism. Through investigating minority voices in a majority country (where, globally, the majority are actually a minority), students work with Adolescent Literature as a way of thinking about American literature and its traditions in context of global realities, and to speculate about literac(ies) of tomorrow.

**Personal Narration:** (see attached)

### Course Goals and Objectives:

The following goals are central to this course:

1. Students will be exposed to multiple conversations occurring in the field of Adolescent Literature.
2. Students will begin to develop theoretical and philosophical perspectives of how using adolescent literature in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century might enhance their teaching.
3. Students will question the traditions of literacy in American schools but also see how these traditions have led to those of today.
4. Students will consider the outside-of-school reading practices of local communities.
5. Students will consider the ways adolescent literature can be used to promote comprehension, dialogue, critical thinking skills and change.
6. Students will explore 21<sup>st</sup> Century technologies and how they interplay with middle and high school classrooms.
7. Students will develop their critical English classroom teaching skills.

### Required Texts:

- Alexie, S. (2007); *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*. New York: Little, Brown and Company.
- Chbosky, S. (1999). *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*. New York: Pocket Books
- Dau, J. (2007). *God Grew Tired of Us: The Story of the Lost Boys of Sudan*. written with Michael Sweeney. Washington, D.C. National Geographic
- Hinton, S.E. (1997). *The Outsiders*. New York: Speak Publishing
- Lowry, L. (2002). *The Giver*. New Jersey: Laurel Leaf Publishers
- Mason, B.A. (1986). *In Country*. New York: Harper Perennial
- Mooney, J. (2007). *The Short Bus: A Journey Beyond Normal*. New York: Henry Holt & Company.
- Mosley, W. (2006). *Fortunate Son*. New York: Little Brown & Company
- Vaught, Susan (2007). *Big Fat Manifesto*. New York: Bloomsbury

The following texts are grouped by weeks. Choose **one** in each for literature circles

### **February 9<sup>th</sup>**

Alexie, S. (2008). *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*

or

Haddon, Mark (2003). *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night Time*. New York: Doubleday Publishing.

or

Spencer, T. (1998). *Kissing Doorknobs*. New York: Delacort Publishing.

or

Auseon, A. (2005). *Funny Little Monkey*. New York: Harcourt Press

or

Philbrick, R. (2001). *Freak the Mighty*. New York: Scholastic Press

or

Runyon, B. (2004). *The Burn Journals*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf

**for March 2nd**

Grimes, Nikki (2003). *Bronx Masquerade*. New York: Speak Publishing

or

Hesse, K. (1999). *Out of the Dust*. New York: Scholastic

or

Meyers, W.D. (2001). *Monster*. New York: Amistad Publishing

**for March 9th**

Black, Holly (2008). *The Good Neighbors; Kin, Book One*, Artist Ted Naifeh.

New York:Graphix Publishing

or

Satrapi, M. (2003). *Persepolis; The Story of a Childhood*. New York: Pantheon

or

B. David. (2005). *Epileptic*. New York: Pantheon

**for April 19<sup>th</sup>**

Villareal, J.A. (1959). *Pocho*. New York: Anchor Books

or

Viramontes, H.M.(1996). *Under the Feet of Jesus*. California: Plume Publishing

\*Supplemental readings are available online and through course distribution. With knowledge that this course is an introduction to Adolescent Literature, it is the goal for class members to begin building a library for their future reference and teaching. Networking knowledge of additional adolescent texts are a part of the intellectual community for this class.

**Assignments:**

**All-Term: (on going)** (100 pts – 10 pts each for ten entries about books read)

Students will keep a *Reader's Blog or Notebook* of the materials they read during this course and reflect on the course readings. These reflections can be textual and traditional; students are encouraged to think outside of the box with their reflection, but to be sincere with their thoughts as they arrive. Attention should be made to the supplemental readings as they apply to the sample Adolescent texts of the course.

**Letter to the Class** (100 pts)

In response to the “Personal Narration” letter (attached), write a letter to the community (us) about your adolescent reading history. Further directions are embedded in this letter.

**Quarter Term:** (50 pts)

*Meet with to discuss your question protocol for interviewing adolescent readers (bring a draft), your proposal for your independently read adolescent novel, and your initial thinking about a possible thematic unit or final project. Schedule this meeting before the assigned date.*

**Midterm:** (100 pts).

*Findings from Literacy Interviews with Five Chosen Adolescents*

The *Findings from Literacy Interviews with Five Adolescents* assists students with understanding adolescent readers in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century through an interviewing process. Whereas adolescent readers are each unique individuals, their stories of literacy will introduce members of this class to a wide range of perspectives for what it means to be a reader during the teenage years.

It is suggested that the five adolescents chosen for the interview represent a diverse population (note: even in a classroom *assumed* to have homogeneity, diversity exists).

Parameters for how long to interview each student will not be given, as individual interviewees will help you decide when the questions should end. It is suggested, however, that each interview last at least a half hour. The goal for these interviews are multifaceted: (1) students learn more about unique, adolescent identities, (2) students gain better perspectives about how they operate with literacy in their teenage years, (3) students are allowed an opportunity to balance their own history of reading with the history of other readers, and (4) students are expected to reflect on their findings in relation to their growing perspectives on adolescent literature.

**Three-Fourths Term:** (100 pts):

*Podcast Essay on one Adolescent Novel Independently Read During the Course*

The podcast essay serves the following goals: (1) it offers students the chance to write a book review of an adolescent novel not assigned in class, (2) it offers students the opportunity to choose an adolescent novel on their own to read, (3) it offers students the opportunity to think about how book reviews are a genre for publication and (4) it offers students an introduction to sonic literacy (Comstock & Hocks, 2008) and digital storytelling (e.g., Miller, 2007; Skinner & Hagood, 2008). A hand out for the podcast essay will be offered during the semester to clarify further expectations.

**Final Exam:** (100 pts, two parts)

*Adolescent Literature Philosophy Statement and Self-Evaluation*

The *Adolescent Literature Philosophy Statement and Self-Evaluation* is part one of the final examination and accompanies the student's independent, thematic unit or project on Adolescent Literature. This statement is a succinct, concise declaration of who the student is as a teacher of adolescent literature and how they feel adolescent literature should be used in the classroom. In the statement, the writer is expected to reflect on new learning and growth as a teacher, explaining their adolescent literature stance.

*Designed Thematic Unit or Project Using Adolescent Literature.*

The *Designed Thematic Unit or Project Using Adolescent Literature*, part two of the final examination, is an independent project conducted during the semester and is individually created to meet the needs of the students in the class. Although class members may choose to design a unit-plan that utilizes adolescent literature for their classrooms, the project may be self-directed to pursue a task useful towards one's education or career

goals. Ideas for alternative projects may be the creation of a website, a collection of creative writing one may choose to write for their own publishing purposes, a digital-story or a short film. The primary purpose for this final examination is to offer students an opportunity to make the course useful for personal pedagogy in their career.

**Grading:**

*Participation: (Attendance, Literature Circles, Class Discussions and Contributions) – includes feedback to peers on drafts, effort, & reliability with coursework (50 pts)*

*Assignments: (550 pts)*

*Total: 650 pts.*

*Grading Scale:*

- A 95-100
- A- 90-94
- B 85-89
- B- 80-84
- C 75-79
- C- 70-74

**Semester Calendar of Readings, Meetings and Assignments:**

DATE	ASSIGNMENTS, READINGS, PREPARATION
January 19 <sup>th</sup>	<i>Setting a Context for Adolescent Literature (part one)</i>
Introductions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Course Overview, Discussion of Syllabus</li> <li>• <a href="http://www.alan-ya.org/">http://www.alan-ya.org/</a> - ALAN Review (exposure).</li> <li>• Free write: What does it mean to be an adolescent? Where were you as an adolescent? Where were you with literacy as an adolescent? What was the literacy expected by your teachers? Did this literacy support your literate practices in later life? Why? Why not?</li> <li>• Class visit from public librarian to discuss “hot titles” for adolescent readers</li> <li>• History of Adolescent Literature and Young Adult Novels</li> </ul>
January 26 <sup>th</sup>	<i>Setting a Context for Adolescent Literature (part two)</i>
Read:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>The Giver</i> by Lois Lowry – a metaphor for what teachers do</li> </ul> Choose One of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tatum, A.W. (2008). Overserved or underserved? A focus on adolescents and texts. <i>English Journal</i>. 98.2., pp. 82 -85.</li> <li>• Bushman &amp; McNerny (2004). Moral choices: Building a bridge between YA and life. <i>The ALAN Review</i>. Vol. 32, No. 1. pp. 61 – 67.</li> <li>• Koss, M.D. &amp; Teale, W.H. (2009). What’s happening in YA literature: Trends in books for adolescents. <i>Journal of Adolescent &amp; Adult Literacy</i>. Vol. 5, No. 7, pp. 563- 572.</li> </ul>
Turn In: On-going	Letter to Members of the Class Reading Blog or Notebook
February 2 <sup>nd</sup>	<i>Questioning the “Normalcy” of Adolescence (part one)</i>

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<p>Read:</p> <p>On-going</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mooney, J. (2007). <i>The Short Bus; A Journey Beyond Normal</i>.</li> </ul> <p>Choose at least one of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prater, M.A. (2003). Learning disabilities in children’s and adolescent literature: How are characters portrayed? <i>Learning Disability Quarterly</i>. Volume 26. No. 1. Winter. pp. 47 – 62.</li> <li>• White-Kaulaity, Marlinda. “Reflections on Native American Reading: A Seed, a Tool, and a Weapon” in <i>Journal of Adolescent &amp; Adult Literacy</i> 50.7 April, 2007.</li> </ul> <p>Reader’s Blog or Notebook</p>
<p>February 9<sup>th</sup></p>	<p><b><i>Questioning the “Normalcy” of Adolescence (part two)</i></b></p>
<p>Read:</p> <p>On-going</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mooney, J. (2007). <i>The Short Bus; A Journey Beyond Normal</i>.</li> </ul> <p>Choose One:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian</i> by Sherman Alexie</li> <li>• <i>The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night Time</i> by Mark Haddon</li> <li>• <i>Kissing Doorknobs</i> by T. Spencer</li> <li>• <i>Funny Little Monkey</i> by A. Auseon</li> <li>• <i>Freak the Mighty</i> by R. Philbrick</li> </ul> <p>Reader’s Blog or Notebook</p>
<p>February 16<sup>th</sup></p>	<p><b><i>Questioning the “Class”ics: Who’s allowed on the inside (part one)</i></b></p>
<p>Read:</p> <p>Quarter Term:</p> <p>On-going</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>The Outsiders</i> – by S.E. Hinton</li> </ul> <p><u>Choose One:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Welding with Children” – Tim Gatreaux (short story)</li> <li>or</li> <li>• “The Blue Devils of Blue River Avenue” – Poe Ballantine (short story)</li> </ul> <p>Choose one of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gallo, D.R. (2001). How classics create an alliterate society. <i>The English Journal</i>. Vol. 90. No. 3., The Lure of Young Adult Literature. January. pp. 33-39</li> <li>• Foss, A. &amp; Carpenter, M. (2002). Peeling the onion: Teaching critical literacy with students of privilege. <i>Language Arts</i>. Urbana: May. Volume 79, Issue 5. pp. 393 - 404</li> <li>• Sassi, K., Thomas, E.T., &amp; Fink, L.S. (2008). Walking the talk: Examining privilege and Race in a ninth-grade classroom. <i>English Journal</i>. High School edition. Volume 97, Issue 6, pp. 25 – 32.</li> </ul> <p>Last week to meet about interview questions and projects</p> <p>Reader’s Blog or Notebook</p>
<p>February 23<sup>rd</sup></p>	<p><b><i>Questioning the “Class”ics: Are there perks to being a wallflower? (pt.2)</i></b></p>
<p>Read:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Perks of Being a Wallflower</i> by Stephan Chbosky</li> <li>• Plato’s <i>Allegory of the Cave</i></li> </ul> <p>Choose one of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wold, L. &amp; Elish-Piper (2009). Scaffolding the English canon with linked text sets. <i>English Journal</i>. 98.6, pp. 88 – 91</li> <li>• Hagemann, J. (2001). A bridge from home to school: Helping working class students acquire school literacy. <i>English Journal</i>. High School</li> </ul>

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On-going	edition: Urbana. Issue 4, pp. 74 - 82 Reader's Blog or Notebook
March 2 <sup>nd</sup>	<b><i>Questioning Semiotics: Language, Hegemony &amp; Diversity (part one)</i></b>
Read:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Bronx Masquerade</i> by Nikki Grimes or <i>Out of the Dust</i> by K. Hesse or <i>Monster</i> by Walter Dean Myers.</li> </ul> <p>Choose two of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fecho, B. (2000). Critical inquiries into language in an urban classroom. <i>Research in the Teaching of English</i>. Volume 34, February, pp. 368 – 395.</li> <li>• Morrell, E. (2005). Critical English education. <i>English Education</i>. Volume 37, Number 4, pp. 312 – 321.</li> <li>• Dyson, A.H. (2005). Crafting “The Humble Prose of Living”: Rethinking oral/written relations in the echoes of spoken word. <i>English Education</i>, Volume 37, Number 2, pp. 149 – 164.</li> <li>• Goodson, F. T. (2004). A pinch of tobacco and a drop of urine: Using YA literature to examine local culture, using local culture to enrich schools. <i>The ALAN Review</i>. Vol. 32, #1. pp. 50 - 55</li> </ul>
On-going:	Reader's Blog or Notebook
March 9 <sup>th</sup>	<b><i>Questioning Semiotics: Language, Hegemony &amp; Diversity (part two)</i></b>
Read:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>The Good Neighbors; Kin, Book One</i> by Holly Black, Artist Ted Naifeh or <i>Epileptic</i> by David B. or <i>Persepolis</i> by M. Satrapi</li> <li>• Schwarz, G.E. (2002). Graphic novels and multiple literacies. <i>Journal of Adolescent &amp; Adult Literacy</i>. November. 46, 3. Platinum Periodicals. pp. 262 – 266</li> <li>• Sinatra R., Beaudry, J.S., Stahl-Gemake and Guastello, E.F. (1990). Combining visualliteracy, text understanding, and writing for culturally diverse students. <i>Journal of Reading</i>. pp. 612 – 617.</li> </ul>
View:	selections from <i>Waking Life; The Point; The Incredibles</i> (in class)
On-going:	Reader's Blog or Notebook
MID TERM DUE:	Findings from Literacy Interviews
March 16 <sup>th</sup>	<b>SPRING BREAK – NO CLASSES</b>
March 23 <sup>rd</sup>	<b><i>Questioning the “Body” of Adolescent Literature: The Personal (part one)</i></b>
Read:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Big Fat Manifesto</i> by Susan Vaught</li> <li>• O'Reilly, P. (2001). Learning to be a girl. In P. O'Reilly, E. Penn &amp; K. deMairrais (eds) <i>Educating Young Adolescent Girls</i>. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Publishers.</li> <li>• Wissman, K.K. (2007). “Making a way”: Young women using literacy and language to resist the politics of silencing.” <i>Journal of Adolescent &amp; Adult Literacy</i>. December. Volume 51, Issue 4. pp. 340 – 349</li> </ul>
On-going:	Reader's Blog or Notebook
March 30 <sup>th</sup>	<b><i>Questioning the “Body” of Adolescent Literature: The Public (part two)</i></b>
Read:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>In Country</i> by Bobbie Anne Mason</li> <li>• “How To Tell A War Story” by Tim O'Brien from <i>The Things They</i></li> </ul>





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conflicting or unwanted data; (3) copying from another student's work; (4) actions that destroy or alter the work of another student; (5) unauthorized cooperation in completing assignments or examinations; (6) submission of the same written work in more than one course without prior written approval from both instructors.

*Additionally, the following statement on academic integrity has been adapted from one developed by Dr. Kelly Chandler-Olcott and will be upheld in this course:*

The culture of K-12 education in the United States encourages teachers to share materials with each other and to adopt and adapt commercially published materials for their particular teaching contexts. It may be quite appropriate, therefore, for you to use in your coursework or professional field experience activities, handouts, and/or lesson plans that you obtained from a mentor teacher, colleague, found on the Internet, or developed with another student teacher. At the same time, units, lesson plans, and curriculum materials are products used in many School of Education courses, including this one, to gauge your individual mastery of concepts and skills central to your success in the profession. Consequently, you are expected to cite sources, including personal communication or professional development workshops, for any material in those assignments that you did not create on your own. Please see me if you have questions about how to do this accurately.

### *Students With Disabilities/Special Needs:*

Students who are in need of disability-related academic accommodations must register with the Office of Disability Services (ODS), 804 University Avenue, Room 309, 315-443-4498. Students with authorized disability-related accommodations should provide a current Accommodation Authorization Letter from ODS to the instructor and review those accommodations with the instructor. Accommodations, such as exam administration, are not provided retroactively; therefore, planning for accommodations as early as possible is necessary. For more information, see Office of Disability Services, <http://disabilityservices.syr.edu>

Notes about the Syllabus: