

**FACULTY OF ARTS**  
**DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH**

ENGLISH 603.01 (Topic17)

WINTER 2013

COURSE TITLE: Young Adult Literature: Theory and Practice

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Office hours: Thursday 1 to 2 pm and by appointment.

**Course description:** In her 1996 article, "Young Adult Literature Evades the Theorists," Caroline Hunt notes that one result of the "peculiar development" of young adult literature is its "striking lack of theoretical criticism." Although recent scholarship challenges Hunt's observation, such scholarship continues to debate how we understand the category of young adult literature. A term primarily used in an American cultural context and rarely evoked until the 1960s, young adult literature, according to Roberta Seelinger Trites, differs from adolescent literature in that young adult literature is specifically marketed for adolescent readers. However, the two terms clearly intersect, and according to Kent Baxter, can be traced back to the early 20th century when the term adolescence was popularized as a way of answering cultural anxieties about modernity. In a similar fashion, the foundational texts of young adult literature, books such as S.E. Hinton's *The Outsiders* and Robert Cormier's *The Chocolate War*, may equally speak to cultural anxieties in the 1960s and 1970s.

Lee A. Talley has proposed that if realist "problem novels" are characteristic of the beginnings of young adult fiction, more recent young adult fiction approaches the "politics of realism" through fantasy and speculative fiction. At a time when the shelves of contemporary bookstores might support seeing young adult fiction as varieties of vampire romance, and the phenomenon of crossover writing blurs the boundaries between child and adult readers, what do we mean by young adult literature? Juxtaposing books marketed as young adult literature with recent critical texts that theorize and debate what young adult literature is, English 603 will consider whether the spaces young adult literature allows for difference (for example, of gender, sexuality, class, and race) makes it less ideologically conservative than the larger field of children's literature, or whether the popularity of vampire romance tells a different story. It will also consider what the move from realist YA fiction to speculative fiction reveals not just about a genre but also perhaps about the cultural moment we live in today.

**Texts and readings:**

Items with \* are in course pack; other scholarly readings are available through University of Calgary online resources. All novels and the course pack are available in the University of Calgary bookstore. See the separate book order for recommended editions.

**January 10:** Introduction.

\*Julia Kristeva, "The Adolescent Novel." *Abjection, Melancholia, and Love: The Work of Julia Kristeva*. Ed. John Fletcher and Andrew Benjamin. London: Routledge, 1990. 8-23.

\*Roberta Seelinger Trites, "'Do I dare disturb the universe?'" *Adolescent Literature in the Postmodern Era*. "Disturbing the Universe: Power and Repression in Adolescent Literature." Iowa City: U of Iowa P, 2000. 1-20; 153-55.

**January 17:** Presentations start. J. D. Salinger, *Catcher in the Rye*

\*Kenneth B. Kidd, "'A Case History of Us All': The Adolescent Novel before and after Salinger." *Freud in Oz: At the Intersections of Psychoanalysis and Children's Literature*. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 2011. 139-80; 232-35.

**January 24:** S.E. Hinton, *The Outsiders*

Eric L. Tribunella, "Knowing, Unknowing, and the Achievement of Young Adulthood." *Melancholia and Maturation: The Use of Trauma in American Children's Literature*. Knoxville: U of Tennessee P, 2010. 52-76; 140-42. Web.

**January 31:** Robert Cormier, *The Chocolate War*

C. Anita Tarr, "The Absence of Moral Agency in Robert Cormier's *The Chocolate War*." *Children's Literature* 30 (2002): 96-124. Web.

**February 7:** Laurie Halse Anderson, *Speak*

Barbara Tannert-Smith, "'Like Falling Up into a Storybook': Trauma and Intertextual Repetition in Laurie Halse Anderson's *Speak*." *Children's Literature Association Quarterly* 35.4 (Winter 2010): 395-414. Web.

**February 14** M. T. Anderson, *Feed*

Clare Bradford, "'Everything must go!' Consumerism and Reader Positioning in M. T. Anderson's *Feed*." *Jennessee* 2.2 (Winter 2010): 128-37. Web.

Reading Week: February 17-24

**February 28:** Terry Pratchett, *Nation*

\*Alison Waller, "New Evolutions: Fears and Pleasures of Young Adult Fantastic Realism." *Constructing Adolescence in Fantastic Realism*. New York: Routledge, 2009. 187-97; 206.

**March 7:** *Twilight* (film)

**March 14:** Anne Silver, "Twilight is Not Good for Maidens: Gender, Sexuality, and the Family in Stephenie Meyer's *Twilight* Series." *Studies in the Novel* 42.1 and 2 (Spring and Summer 2010): 121-38. Web.

\*Kathryn Kane, "A Very Queer Refusal: The Chilling Effect of the Cullens' Heteronormative Embrace." *Bitten by Twilight: Youth Culture, Media, and the Vampire Franchise*. Ed. Melissa A. Click, Jennifer Stevens Aubrey, and Elizabeth Behm-Morawitz. New York: Peter Lang, 2010. 103-18.

**March 21:** Suzanne Collins, *The Hunger Games* (vol. one)

Ellyn Lem and Holly Hassel. "'Killer' Katniss and 'Lover Boy' Peeta: Suzanne Collins's Defiance of Gender-Genred Reading." *Of Bread, Blood and "The Hunger Games"*. Ed. Mary F. Pharr and Leisa A. Clark. Jefferson, NC: McFarland and Co., 2012. 118-27. Web.

**March 28:** Markus Zusak, *The Book Thief*

Mike Cadden, "The Irony of Narration in the Young Adult Novel." *Children's Literature Association Quarterly* 25.3 (2000): 146-54. Web.

**April 4:** Sherman Alexie, *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*

\*Kent Baxter, "Every Vigorous Race: Age and Indian Reform Movements." *The Modern Age: Turn-of-the-Century American Culture and the Invention of Adolescence*. Tuscaloosa: U of Alabama P, 2008. 73-92; 164-65.

**April 11:** Patrick Ness, *The Knife of Never Letting Go* Chaos Walking Book One

Elaine Ostry. "'Is He Still Human? Are You?': Young Adult Science Fiction in the Posthuman Age." *Lion and the Unicorn* 28.2 (April 2004): 222-46. Web.

### **Assignments and Evaluation:**

**2 presentations worth 25% each = 50%.** At least 1 of the presentations must be on a scholarly article. (See sign-up sheet).

One function of the presentations is to give you practice in presenting conference papers. In your planning of the presentation, think of it as conference paper; i.e., the presentation will have a thesis and an argument that can be delivered within 20 minutes (and just as at conferences, I will give you a 2 minute warning that time is nearly up, and then ask you to stop). Just as at a conference, people will delay their questions until you have completed the presentation.

Prior to the presentation, please submit your written script to the instructor.

### **1 short essay (no more than 1000 words) due February 14: 10%**

This assignment is based on the assigned readings in the first six weeks of the course. It requires that you explain which reading you have found most productive in your thinking about the theory and practice of young adult literature.

### **1 research essay (3500 words) due April 11: 40%**

The topic must be approved by the instructor by March 14<sup>th</sup> and you should schedule an appointment in advance to discuss possible topics. If you want to write on a work that you presented on, the topic must differ from the focus of your presentation, and should also address works that you did not present on.

### **Total: 100%**

English 603 does not have a Registrar-scheduled exam. It also does not have a separate participation mark since participation in a graduate seminar is assumed.

Assignments must not be submitted electronically. Please make every effort to submit assignments directly to the instructor. If it is not possible to do so, take your assignment to SS 1152 and put it in the dropbox. Your assignment will be date-stamped and placed in the instructor's mailbox. It is your responsibility to

keep a copy of all assignments in case of loss by any cause. Assignments cannot be returned by staff in the Department office.

**Grading system:**

Grades are calculated according to the 4 point scale used in the *Graduate Calendar*:

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/grad/current/gs-e-1.html>

Grade	Grade Point Value	Graduate Description
A+	4.00	Outstanding
A	4.00	Excellent-superior performance showing comprehensive understanding of the subject matter
A-	3.70	Very good performance
B+	3.30	Good performance
B	3.00	Satisfactory performance
B-	2.70	Minimum pass for students in Faculty of Graduate Studies
C+	2.30	All grades below B- are indicative of failure at the graduate level and cannot be counted towards Faculty of Graduate Studies course requirements.
C	2.00	
C-	1.70	
D+	1.30	
D	1.00	
F	0.00	

Split grades on assignments are also calculated according to the *Graduate Calendar* grading system, e.g., an A/A- is a 3.85; a B/B- is a 2.85. Also note that the *University Calendar* states that the instructor has the "discretion to round off either upward or downward to determine a final grade when the average . . . is between two letter grades."

Although the A+ is solely an honorific that entails no additional points in the four-point system, the course instructor will employ this mark to distinguish superlative work that exceeds expectations in style, correctness, intellectual depth and breadth, sophistication, and originality.

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**Plagiarism:**

Using any source whatsoever without clearly documenting it is a serious academic offense. Consequences include failure on the assignment, failure in the course and possible suspension or expulsion from the university. Please refer to the following information and make sure you are familiar with the statement below on plagiarism.

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k-2-1.html>

**English Department Website:**

For more information about courses, programs, policies, events and contacts in the Department of English, please go to our website at <http://english.ucalgary.ca/graduate>.

**Writing support:**

The Student Success Centre offers both online and workshop writing support for U of C students.  
<http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support>

**Follow the Department of English on Facebook & Twitter:****Academic regulations and schedules:**

Consult the Department of English's graduate website for courses, departmental deadlines, and other related program information at <http://english.ucalgary.ca/node/245>. Consult the Faculty of Graduate Studies Calendar for university and faculty regulations, dates, deadline, fees, and schedules, student, faculty and university rights and responsibilities. The homepage for the Faculty of Graduate Studies Calendar is <http://grad.ucalgary.ca>.

For registration (add/drop/swap), paying fees and assistance with your Student Centre, contact Barbara Howe at 403 220 5484 or visit her in Social Sciences Tower 1148 in the first instance.

For program planning and advice, contact Barbara Howe at [howe@ucalgary.ca](mailto:howe@ucalgary.ca) to make an appointment with Dr. Jacqueline Jenkins, Graduate Program Director.

**Guidelines on e-mail Etiquette:**

<https://www.ucalgary.ca/it/help/articles/email/etiquette>

**Grade appeals:**

Consult the following University Calendar link and request advice from the English Department office, SS 1152. Please note that "mere dissatisfaction with a decision is not sufficient grounds for the appeal of a grade or other academic decision."

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/i.html>

**Deferral of term work and final examinations:**

Should you require an extension for completion of term papers or assignments beyond the deadline of five days after the end of lectures, an Application of Deferment of Term Work form must be completed. The University also has regulations governing the deferral of final examinations. See Calendar:

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/g-6.html>,

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/g-7.html>.

**Academic accommodation:**

It is a student's responsibility to request academic accommodation. If you are a student with a disability who may require academic accommodation and if you have not registered with the Disability Resource Centre, please contact their office at 220-8237. Your academic accommodation letters should be provided to your instructor no later than fourteen (14) days after the commencement of this course. Students who

have not registered with the Disability Resource Centre are not eligible for formal academic accommodation. <http://www.ucalgary.ca/drc/>

**Emergency Evacuation/Assembly Points:** <http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints;>

**Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act:** <http://www.ucalgary.ca/legalservices/foip/>

**“Safewalk” Program:**

Campus Security will escort individuals day or night: call 220-5333 for assistance. Use any campus phone, emergency phone or the yellow phone located at most parking lot pay booths.

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/safewalk/>

**Contact for the Graduate Student Association:** <http://gsa.ucalgary.ca/>

**Contact for Students Ombudsman’s Office:** <http://www.ucalgary.ca/provost/students/ombuds>

## **PLAGIARISM**

Plagiarism is an extremely serious offence. Please read the following information carefully. The penalty routinely recommended by the English Department for documented plagiarism is failure of the course in which the offence occurred; academic probation is also routinely applied at the Faculty level. Suspension or expulsion can result from severe or repeated plagiarism.

The University Calendar states:

1. Plagiarism - Essentially plagiarism involves submitting or presenting work in a course as if it were the student's own work done expressly for that particular course when, in fact, it is not. Most commonly plagiarism exists when:

- (a) the work submitted or presented was done, in whole or in part, by an individual other than the one submitting or presenting the work (this includes having another impersonate the student or otherwise substituting the work of another for one's own in an examination or test),
- (b) parts of the work are taken from another source without reference to the original author,
- (c) the whole work (e.g., an essay) is copied from another source, and/or,
- (d) a student submits or presents work in one course which has also been submitted in another course (although it may be completely original with that student) without the knowledge of or prior agreement of the instructor involved.

While it is recognized that scholarly work often involves reference to the ideas, data and conclusions of other scholars, intellectual honesty requires that such references be explicitly and clearly noted.

Plagiarism occurs when direct quotations are taken from a source without specific acknowledgement, or when original ideas or data from the source are not acknowledged. Citing your sources in a bibliography is not enough, because a bibliography does not establish which parts of a student's work are taken from other sources. MLA (Modern Language Association) documentation or other recognized forms of citation must be used for this purpose. Advice on adequate documentation can be found at the following web sites:

<http://www.dianahacker.com/resdoc/>

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>

## **DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH STATEMENT ON PRINCIPLES OF CONDUCT**

According to the University Calendar, (<http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/j.html>) "The University of Calgary community has undertaken to be guided by the following statements of purpose and values: to promote free inquiry and debate, to act as a community of scholars, ..., to respect, appreciate, and encourage diversity, [and] to display care and concern for community". The Department of English, like the university as a whole, is committed to a "positive and productive learning and working environment." This environment is characterized by appreciation and encouragement of diversity and respect for the dignity of all persons: students, support staff, and faculty. The department will not tolerate unacceptable behaviour, such as threatening gestures, threatening or abusive verbal or written communication (including e-mails), or any conduct that "seriously disrupts the lawful education and related activities of students and/or university staff". Any cases of such misconduct should be reported immediately to the department Head, who, depending on the nature and severity of the incident, may then take further appropriate action.