

**EDCI 570**  
**Teaching Young Adult Literature in a Multicultural Setting**  
**Summer 2010**

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**Office Hours:** By appointment

**Catalog Description of Course:**

Examines literary works written for and about young adults. Introduces critical issues surrounding teaching young adult literature in multiculturally diverse public schools and requires reading and reviewing young adult literature from several genres.

**Course Objectives**

This course is intended to expose you to young adult literature that (a) helps hook adolescent readers into reading and (b) provides a range of cultural representations and subjects. By the end of the course, you should be more familiar with young adult literature that is popular with adolescents, that is well-regarded among ELA educators and media specialists, and that represents a wide range of cultural experiences. You should also come away from the course with a number of principles and strategies for using multicultural young adult literature in the classroom.

**Course Guidelines**

- **Attendance:** Attendance at each class meeting is required. If you miss more than one class, you will not be eligible for an A in the course. Repeated absences will result in a grade of C in the course.
- **Conduct:** I expect professional conduct from students. Please arrive to class on time, put away cell phones and PDA's, and close laptop computers during class discussions. I expect that you will reserve laptop use for when I am presenting notes on the white board or overhead.
- **Late Work:** I do not accept work that is more than 3 weekdays late. For each of those 3 days, I deduct 5 points from the total grade.

**COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT**  
**STATEMENT OF EXPECTATIONS:**

**All students must abide by the following:**

**Students are expected to exhibit professional behavior and dispositions.**

See <http://gse.gmu.edu/facultystaffres/profdisp.htm> for a listing of these dispositions.

**Students must follow the guidelines of the University Honor Code. See <http://www.gmu.edu/catalog/apolicies/#Anchor12> for the full honor code.**

**Students must agree to abide by the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing. See <http://www.gmu.edu/facstaff/policy/newpolicy/1301gen.html>. Click on responsible Use of Computing Policy at the bottom of the screen.**

**Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with the GMU Office of Disability Services (ODS) and inform the instructor, in writing, at the beginning of the semester. See <http://www2.gmu.edu/dpt/unilife/ods/> or call 703-993-2474 to access the ODS.**

### **Reading**

The following reading is required. You will need to acquire 1-7 on your own; #8 on the list is available at the GMU bookstore:

1. *Twilight* by Stephanie Meyer (if you have read one or more of the Twilight books already, please read *A New Dawn: Your Favorite Authors on Stephenie Meyer's Twilight Saga: Completely Unauthorized* instead).
2. *The Book Thief* by Markus Zusak
3. *Speak* by Laurie Halse Anderson
4. One work by Ned Vizzini (to be assigned in class - do not choose on your own).
5. *Diary of a Wimpy Kid: A Novel in Cartoons* by Jeff Kinney (any one of the five Wimpy Kid books is permissible).
6. One manga or graphic novel popular with adolescents (or aimed at a young adult audience) - DO NOT choose this until we have visited Border's bookstore as a class.
7. ONE of the following (to be assigned in class; do not choose on your own) along with 3-4 additional works of young adult literature (also to be assigned in class):
  - *To Be a Boy, To Be a Reader: Engaging Teen and Preteen Boys in Active Literacy* by William Brozo
  - *Discovering Their Voices: Engaging Adolescent Girls with Young Adult Literature* by Marsha M. Sprague and Kara K. Keeling
  - *Teaching Reading to Black Adolescent Males: Closing the Achievement Gap* by Alfred Tatum

- V. 98 n. 4 of *The English Journal* (read the entire journal).
  - *Middle Ground: Exploring Selected Literature from and about the Middle East* by Sheryl L. Finkle and Tamara J. Lilly
8. *From Hinton to Hamlet, Second Edition* by Sarah K. Herz and Donald R Gallo

### **Class Wiki**

This class is centered on a wiki so that you can share information and experiences with your classmates. Be prepared to share your ideas on an invitation-only public space that is designed for English Education teacher candidates at George Mason University. More information to come.

### **Projects and Assignments**

- a. WEEKLY BLOG postings to class wiki. Due each Friday (5 points each, for a total of **20 points**). See Class Meeting and Assignment Schedule below for details.
- b. UNIT PLAN OUTLINE. You will choose a canonical text to use in a unit plan that will include both the canonical text and 2 works of YA literature. Post an outline to the wiki that includes the canonical text, possible YA literature to supplement the canonical texts, a concept for a unit plan that includes these texts, and some possible response activities you might have students do during the Unit. **15 points** toward your course grade.
- c. MICRO-PAPER: “What’s the Next Big Thing in Young Adult Literature?”. In this 2 page paper, you will present an author or work of literature that you predict might be the “next big thing” in YA Lit. You will use our class discussions about adolescent literacy and our trip to Border’s bookstore to inform your predictions. This paper is worth **15 points** toward your course grade.
- d. GROUP PRESENTATION/OUTLINE. At the end of the semester, you will make a group presentation aimed at informing your classmates about a significant aspect of using young adult literature in schools. You will post an outline to the class wiki based on your portion of presentation so that your classmates can have a hard copy of important and useful information. There will be both an individual and a group grade for the presentation. In total, the presentation and associated outline are worth **20 points** toward your final course grade.
- e. PARTICIPATION GRADE: In this class, you earn **30 points** for your efforts in reading a great amount in a short period of time and for participating in class. I expect that you will complete all of the assigned readings and participate in class discussions and

activities. It is possible to lose points from your Participation Grade by neglecting to participate in group or class discussions. If you are in danger of losing points, I will let you know within one day's time so that you have a chance to demonstrate improvement.

### **GRADING SCALE**

<b>A+</b>	<b>97-100</b>	<b>B+</b>	<b>87-89</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>60-69</b>
<b>A</b>	<b>93-96</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>80-86</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>below 60</b>
<b>A-</b>	<b>90-92</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>70-79</b>		

**Class Meeting and Assignment Schedule (Please use wise time management and look ahead to the readings and assignments due for each class meeting. To get them all done, you will have to be working ahead of schedule).**

#### **\*Monday May 17 (class meets)**

**Reading due:** Chapter 1 in *From Hinton to Hamlet* (HTH)

**Topic of Class Meeting:** Course Introduction: What do we mean when we talk about “culture” in multicultural Young Adult literature?

**Reading In Progress:** You should be reading (in the following order): a *Twilight* book, *Speak*, and *The Book Thief*. The *Twilight* book is due May 24. *Speak* and *The Book Thief* are due May 26.

#### **\*Wednesday May 19 (class meets) – Meet at Border’s bookstore on the corner of 50 and Lee Hwy in Fairfax.**

**Reading Due:** Chapters 6 and 8 in HTH

**Topic:** How do adolescents choose what to read?

**FRIDAY BLOG TOPIC (due Friday, May 21 by 10pm; Worth 5 points):** Write approximately 250 words on your experience at Border’s bookstore. Suggested (but not required) considerations: What was your impression of how books are marketed for young adults at this store? What assumptions does this business seem to make about adolescents? What did they do well? What could they do better? How can you use this store as a resource?

**\*Monday May 24 (class meets)**

**Reading Due:** *Twilight* book; Chapter 2 in HTH

**Topic:** (1) Young Adult Literature as pop culture (2) What is the next big thing (author or text) in YA literature?

**\*Wednesday May 26 (class meets)**

**Reading Due:** *Speak* and *The Book Thief*

**Topics:** (1) YA Lit as quality literature; (2) School district policies on book selections; (3) Teaching YA literature with controversial content.

**In Progress Reading:** Begin reading your textbook (or journal issue) and associated YA Literature for your group presentation; you should also be reading your Ned Vizzini book for the literature circle activity on June 7. Also read *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* and your manga/graphic novel selection.

**FRIDAY BLOG TOPIC (due Friday, May 28 by 10pm; Worth 5 points):** Write approximately 250 words about *Speak*, *The Book Thief*, and/or the *Twilight* series. Write in the style of a book review or op-ed piece.

**\*Wednesday June 2 (class meets)**

**Reading Due:** Chapters 4 and 5 in HTH

**Topic:** Unit Planning with YA literature. Bring in ideas for a Unit Plan that integrates a canonical work of literature (play, novel, or poetry collection) AND two Young Adult literature texts.

**FRIDAY BLOG TOPIC: (due Friday, June 4 by 10pm; Worth 5 points).** Respond, in at least 2- 3 sentences, to a classmate's blog post from May 28 or May 21. It might be that one or two threads get the most attention. That is fine. The more substantial the discussion, the better.

**\* Monday June 7 (class meets)**

**Reading Due:** Ned Vizzini book, *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* and manga or graphic novel selection.

**Topics:** (1) literature circles; (2) Ned Vizzini – what’s the appeal of his work?; (3) the role of the visual in literacy

**Assignment Due:** Post your Unit Plan outline to wiki. Due June 7 by midnight.

**\*Wednesday, June 9 (class meets)**

**Reading Due:** The textbook (or journal issue) and associated YA Literature for your group presentation.

**Assignment Due:** Paper on “What is the next big thing in Young Adult Literature?”

**FRIDAY BLOG TOPIC:** (Due Friday, June 11 by 10pm; Worth 5 points): Write approximately 250 words on your thoughts on the book (or journal issue) that you read for your group presentation. What impressed you? What questions do you still have? What about the book is most likely to influence how you teach?

**\*Monday, June 14 and Wednesday, June 16 (class meets):**

**Group Presentations. No Blog posting due this week. Instead, post your group’s outline to the wiki (Due June 18 by 10pm).**