HU2548
Adolescent Literature
T/Th 9:30-11:00 am
Cynthia L. Selfe

Contact Information
Office: Walker 307 9 am — pm
Office hours: T/Th, by appointment
Telephone: 7-2447
E-mail: cyselfe@mtu.edu

Required Texts:

Course Description
Students who enroll in this course should be interested in introducing young adults to literature within some instructional setting (e.g., as teachers in public school systems, as parents, as literacy volunteers in schools or community programs, etc.). The focus in this course will be on identifying the needs of young adult readers, identifying literature that is appropriate for such students, reviewing young adult literature, and teaching literature to young adults.

This course will involve students in reading, responding to, and reflecting on a range of young adult fiction and non-fiction—fiction written especially for ages 12-18. Class members will read five texts in common, but students will also be encouraged to select additional texts from a range of different genres, cultures and historical periods, authored by writers of different races and genders.

Students will also learn about how individuals acquire a love of literature and how culture, history, race, and material conditions shape individuals tastes in literature.

Students will also get practice in helping young people approach, appreciate, and respond to adolescent literature.

Course Goals
• Students will understand how individuals acquire and develop literacy and tastes for literature.
• Students will be able to review YA books for their usefulness in the classroom and present effective talks on these books.

• Students will be able to identify and analyze the issues and themes that characterize YA literature.

• Students will be able to design an effective lesson around a YA book that includes pre-reading questions, enrichment materials, and a discussion of the book.

• Students will be able to elicit responses to YA literature from readers and engage in a discussion of these responses.

• Students will identify ways to encourage young adults to become life-long readers.

Grading

The following criteria will be used to determine your grade in this course:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Book Talks and Reviews</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leading Class Discussion and Pre-reading Questions (Expert Team)</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-reading/Pre-viewing postings (post answers to the expert team's questions and response to another person's post)</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Technological Literacy Autobiography</td>
<td>05%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technological Literacy Biography and project</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Favorite YA Web site presentation</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekly reading assignments, class preparation</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final project</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Attendance and participation

Attendance and participation is crucial. Missing more than three classes this term will result in a lower course grade. Active, voluntary, and regular participation in discussions (both online and face-to-face) is expected of students for a passing participation grade. Students can get books from the Portage Lake District Library or Inter-Library Loan.

Book Talks and Reviews

Students will select and read 10 additional YA books in addition to the common texts assigned for the class—aiming for books from a range of different genres, cultures and historical periods, authored by writers of different races and genders.

At least twice, and possibly more, during the term, students will present a 10 minute book talk on one of these 10 books. Book talks will be evaluated by the class members. (See Book Talk Evaluation sheet.)

For each of the 10 additional books reviewed, students will hand in a one-page book review with the following section heads: Bibliographic Information (including author, title, publisher, place of publication, date of publication, ISBN number), Plot Summary, Review, and Recommendations. All reviews will be posted on the class listserv by the date scheduled on the syllabus and a hard copy will be handed in to the teacher. No more than
two reviews will be accepted during any one week of the course. (See Book Review Evaluation sheet.)

Pre-reading Questions and Post answers tos

Before class sessions in which we discuss a reading from the major textbook (Literature for Today's Young Adults or LFTYA), each class member will read the assigned text carefully, write post answers to the pre-reading questions authored by the expert team (see below), and—in designated weeks—post these post answers to the threaded discussion. (Students with last names beginning E-E will post post answers to questions in Weeks 2 and 11 of the term; students with last names beginning F-J will post post answers to questions in Weeks 3 and 7 of the term; students with last names beginning K-O will post post answers to questions in Weeks 4 and 9 of the term; students with last names beginning P-R will post post answers to questions in Weeks 5 and 10 of the term; students with last names beginning T-W will post post answers to questions in Weeks 6 and 12 of the term. All students will post answers to questions in writing every week—those students not posting their post answers online in a particular week are responsible for saving all of their written responses and bringing these to the class period during which the work is discussed. These will be checked, on occasion by the teacher.) The deadline for these post answers tos is the beginning of the class period in which they are discussed.

For extra credit, students can respond to the post answers tos that other classmates post. The goal of this response is to enter into a meaningful collaborative dialogue with a different class member each time.

Expert Team: Leading Class Discussion

At least once, and possibly several times during the term, class members will be responsible for presenting a section of Literature for Today's Young Adults or a young-adult novel as a team of experts. The expert team will read the assigned section at least two weeks before it is due on the syllabus, create a series of pre-reading questions for the class (to be posted on the threaded discussion on the dates indicated), and lead the discussion on this item—focusing on what the reading helps us understand about young adult literature.

The pre-reading questions formulated by expert teams should not focus on yes/no post answers to or the simple recall of facts. Rather, they should involve students in thinking critically about how and why young people read, how teachers can encourage their reading, what issues and themes are of concern to young adults, and how teachers can help young adults develop good habits of reading and knowing the world through language.

The expert team's class presentation should be no longer than 30 minutes and consist of 1.) a short written summary of the important points of the reading assignment (with bulleted lists when possible, all carefully proofed), 2.) a class activity designed to improve students' understanding of young adult literature (with a focus on the assigned material), and 3.) efforts to elicit contributions from—and the active involvement of—as many class members as possible.

As they lead the class, the expert team will not simply ask the pre-reading questions they posted; rather, they will use these questions as a springboard for further exploration. The expert team may focus on an area that students seemed to have trouble with when post answers toing the pre-reading questions. The expert team's presentation should demonstrate a clear familiarity with the readings assigned.

—3—
The expert teams' efforts to lead class discussion will be evaluated by peers.

As part of the expert-team effort, teams will evaluate students' responses to the pre-reading questions—filling out an Evaluation Sheet for each student in the class who posts their post answers to the class listserv in a given week. These evaluations sheets are due to the instructor two class periods after the class discussion of the reading/viewing takes place.

**Personal Literacy Autobiography**

Students will complete a personal literacy autobiography with the goal of examining their own literacy practices and values. To go with this autobiography, students will also compile a Contextual History Timeline that identifies major national and international events influencing their lives—during the time when they were growing up—and the lives of their family and friends.

The goal of this autobiography is to compile a robust set of stories about your own technological literacy. Students should not simply post answers to the questions posed; rather, they should work to develop the fullest possible sense of those factors—historical, cultural, and material—that shaped their literacy values as young adults.

**Literacy Biography**

Students will complete—either through an audiotaped (and transcribed) interview or through an online e-mail interview—a literacy biography of a person who was a young adult during the 1940s and 50s with the goal of examining their literacy practices and values in an historical context.

The goal of this autobiography is to compile a robust set of stories about the subject's literacy. Hence, students should try to get subjects to go beyond simple, short post answers to the questions posed. Students should use follow-up questions to elicit the fullest and most robust sense possible of those factors—historical, cultural, and material—that shaped the subject's literacy values as young adult. To accomplish this important goal, students should encourage their subjects to tell stories that may be related to their literacy values and practices.

To go with this autobiography, students will also compile a Contextual History Timeline that identifies major national and international events influencing the subject's life—during the time when they were growing up—and the lives of their family and friends.

Students will give a class presentation comparing and contrasting their own literacy values and practices to those of their subject. Presentations should be no longer than 20 minutes and should focus on 1.) how historical, cultural, and material conditions affect literacy values and practices, and 2.) points of contrast or similarity between their own literacy values and practices and those of their subject.

**Favorite YA Literature Web Site**

Students will do some browsing on the web and select a web site or series of sites that are outstanding resources for teachers of young adult literature.
Students will provide class members a one-page written handout that gives the site’s URL and a short annotation of the site’s features, and a brief discussion of why they think the site is such an outstanding resource. Students will also make a short (10 minute) presentation about this web site.

Final Project

For the final project, students will

- identify a young adult reader between the ages of 12-18 with whom they can correspond by e-mail and who is willing to read and discuss a piece of YA literature;
- contact the young adult’s parents, describe the project to them, and obtain written permission to correspond with the young adult on the project;
- correspond with the young adult to identify a book that he/she might be interested in reading (providing specific suggestions of books based on the young adult’s interests);
- schedule a week during with the young adult will read the book;
- provide pre-reading questions for the young adult to respond to via e-mail;
- provide an annotated set of enrichment materials on the WWW that the young adult can visit to learn more about the subjects covered in the book;
- write a prompt that encourages the young adult to talk about the book and his/her own responses to the book;
- collect all e-mail messages in a notebook to provide a record of each of the steps detailed above;
- write a reflective cover letter that details their successes and failures in choosing a book appropriate for (and interesting to) the young adult, creating an environment within which the young adult could read and enjoy literature, serving as an effective teacher of literature, relating to the needs and interests and abilities of young adults. This reflective cover letter should “make learning visible” by pointing to specific points in the project where student has acquired a broader understanding of young adults, young adult literature, and the teaching of this literature.

Computer Elements

This course will require that you use several kinds of computer applications. If any of these are unfamiliar to you, please see me as soon as possible so that you can access the course materials:

listserv: hu2548-l@mtu.edu (for course updates, assignment changes, questions of general interest to all students in the course)
e-mail: cyselfe@mtu.edu (please use this address for questions that should go directly to the teacher; you will also use e-mail for several of your class assignments)
threaded discussion: <http://skipper.hu.mtu.edu/~cyselfe> (for posting pre-reading questions, post answers to these questions, and responses to these post answers to) When you go to this site, select the correct class (I'll have at least two classes sharing this space), and login as a new user. Be sure to jot down the password you choose—only you have access to it. This discussion can only be accessed from a computer on campus.

web: You will be expected to know how to browse the web using a program like Navigator and how to create a simple web page using Composer (I will provide help with this, but see me early in the class).

Special Notes:

If you have a disability covered under the Americans with Disability Act, or any other special needs, please see me during the first week of class—or as soon as possible—so that we can arrange a reasonable accommodation.

As the instructor, I reserve the right to modify the content and syllabus of this class throughout the term to meet the needs of students.

Syllabus

WEEK 1
Aug. 28 Due: Discussion: Course requirements and structure; personal technological literacy autobiography assignment; hand out pre-reading questions for LFTYA, Chapter 1.

Aug. 30 Due: Your preferred e-mail address (sent via an e-mail message to cyselfe@mtu.edu). Read and post answers to pre-reading questions for LFTYA, Chapter 1.
Discussion: LFTYA, Chapter 1; hand out pre-reading questions for Someone Like You; hand out pre-reading questions for Chapter 2.

WEEK 2
Sept. 4 Due: Technological literacy autobiography assignment,
Discussion: What you learned from the personal technological literacy autobiography; technological literacy biography assignment.

Sept. 6 Due: Post pre-reading questions for LFTYA, Chapter 3; post answers to pre-reading questions for LFTYA, Chapter 2 and Someone Like You.
Discussion: LFTYA, Chapter 2; discussion of Someone Like You

WEEK 3
Sept. 11 Due: Post answers to pre-reading questions for LFTYA, Chapter 3
Discussion: LFTYA Chapter 3
Sept. 13  
**Due:** Book Talks 1-6, post pre-reading questions for *LFTYA*, Chapter 4.  
**Discussion:** Book Talks

---

WEEK 4  
Sept. 18  
**Due:** Post answers to pre-reading questions for *LFTYA*, Chapter 4  
**Discussion:** Discuss *LFTYA*, Chapter 4, _______________

Sept. 20  
**Due:** Book Talks 7-12, post pre-reading questions for *Dark Angel*; post pre-reading questions for *LFTYA*, Chapter 5.  
**Discussion:** Book Talks

---

WEEK 5  
Sept. 25  
**Due:** Post answers to pre-reading questions for *LFTYA*, Chapter 5 and *Dark Angel*; post pre-reading questions for *LFTYA* Chapter 6  
**Discussion:** Discuss *LFTYA* Chapter 5 ______________ and *Dark Angel* ______________

Sept. 27  
**Due:** Technological literacy biography; post answers to pre-reading questions for *LFTYA* Chapter 6; post pre-reading questions for *LFTYA*, Chapter 7  
**Discussion:** What you learned from the technological literacy biography assignment; discuss *LFTYA* Chapter 6 ______________.

WEEK 6  
Oct. 2  
**Due:** Post on what you learned from doing the technological literacy biography. Post answers to pre-reading questions for *LFTYA* Chapter 7  
**Discussion:** What you learned from the technological literacy biography assignment; discussion of final project; discuss *LFTYA* Chapter 7 ______________.

Oct. 4  
**Due:** Post pre-reading questions for *LFTYA*, Chapter 8; post pre-reading questions for *Fallen Angels*.  

**No class.**

WEEK 7  
Oct. 9  
**Due:** Book Talks 13-18  
**Discussion:** Book Talks

---7---
Oct. 11  
**Due:** Post answers to pre-reading questions for *LFITA*, Chapter 8 and *Fallen Angels*

**Discussion:** Discussion of *LFITA*, Chapter 8 and *Fallen Angels*.

---

**WEEK 8**

Oct. 16  
**Due:** Book Talks 19-24.

**Discussion:** Book Talks

---

Oct. 18  
**Due:** Progress report on Final Project (e-mail); post pre-reading questions for *LFITA*, Chapter 9, and pre-reading questions for *Stuck in Neutral*

**Discussion:** Sharing web sites, and progress reports on Final Project.

---

**WEEK 9**

Oct. 23  
**Due:** Post answers to pre-reading questions for *LFITA*, Chapter 9, and *Stuck in Neutral*.

**Discussion:** Discussion of *Stuck in Neutral*; *LFITA*, Chapter 9.

Oct. 25  
**Due:** Book Talks 25-30; post pre-reading questions for *LFITA*, Chapter 10

**Discussion:** Book Talks

---

**WEEK 10**

Oct. 30  
**Due:** Post answers to pre-reading questions for *LFITA*, Chapter 10, six completed book reviews.

**Discussion:** Discuss *LFITA*, Chapter 10.

Nov. 1  
**Due:** Book Talks 31-36.

**Discussion:** Book Talks

---

---
WEEK 11
Nov. 6  Due: Poetry assignment
Discussion: Show and read your original poem; be prepared to talk about your favorite poem from the electronic poetry collection.

Nov. 8  Due: Book Talks 37-42; post re-reading questions for LFTYA, Chapter 11 and Chapter 12.
Discussion: Book Talks

WEEK 12
Nov. 13.  Due: Post answers to pre-reading questions for LFTYA, Chapter 11 and Chapter 12.
Discussion: Discuss pre-reading questions for LFTYA, Chapter 11 and Chapter 12.

Nov. 15  Due: Book Talks 43-48.
Discussion: Book Talks

WEEK 13
Nov. 27  Due: Draft Final Project Notebooks (and all 10 book reviews) due.
Discussion: Peer Critique of Project Notebooks

Nov. 29  Due: Draft Final Project Notebooks (and all 10 book reviews) due.
Discussion: Peer Critique of Project Notebooks

WEEK 14
Dec. 4  Due: Final Project Notebooks (and all 10 book reviews) due.
Discussion: Show and tell, Final Projects

Dec. 6  Due: YA Web Site Project (online, post URL and annotation for favorite YA site).
Discussion: Show and tell, Favorite YA Web site.
WEEK 15
Dec. 11  Due: Final Projects  Discussion: Show and tell, final projects
Dec. 13  Due: Final Projects  Discussion: Show and tell, Final Projects