Course Information: Adolescent Literature
HU 2548/Fall 2006
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This course provides an introduction to a variety of quality literature written specifically for a young adult (or adolescent) audience. This course is required for students seeking state certification in teaching English, so as a group we'll make an effort to support their preparation by sharing our thoughts on the role (or non-role) of reading in young adult lives, about the issues faced by young adults in the early 21st century, about the effectiveness and appropriateness of approaches to teaching literature.

Some of the questions we'll address include the following:

- why do adolescents read (or not)?
- what can be gained from reading?
- Who decides what is appropriate for adolescents to read and how and why do they do it?
- What exactly is adolescent literature?
- What makes it "literature" as opposed to "book"? How is the quality of adolescent literature determined?
- What are some of the central identity challenges faced by adolescents?
- What might happen if schools encouraged adolescents to engage intellectually in issues that are central to their lives?
- what are effective ways to encourage adolescents to read?

The course reading includes some controversial topics, including race relations, social class, sexual orientation, and sexual development, and some of the authors use coarse language. A mature attitude and open mind are required. You will not be pressured to change your values but you will be expected to think about controversial issues, to voice and hear a range of perspectives, and to understand the values and experiences of others.

You'll also be expected to exercise your imagination, to take some risks, to engage with issues that are endemic in our culture but not often effectively addressed in school (such as bullying, terrorism, political and religious coercion, war, racism, sexism, ableism, homophobia, teenage pregnancy, abuse (including physical, sexual, emotional abuse perpetrated by others) as well as abuse inflicted on the self (anorexia, cutting, drugs and alcohol).

Reading literature allows us to occupy the lives of others who are different from us, thus it challenges and expands our moral and ethical intelligence. We will approach the challenging topics suggested in the literature by thoroughly engaging with the question: what if these topics were addressed in school? How could they be discussed and researched? Why aren't they? When they are, what are some ways of doing it effectively?

Intellectual growth is sometimes uncomfortable, particularly when we encounter ambiguity. A thoughtful engagement with all of the course material will prepare you to live and work as a member of a complex society; in particular it will prepare you to think about your relationship with young adults, whether as a parent, a sibling or other relative, a community volunteer, a coach, or a teacher. Perhaps the most important question we'll address is: what options do young people have for transforming society and changing the future?
Course Texts
We will read a total of 10 books: I have picked the first six; you will choose a book of your own to read and pitch to the class in a book talk. From the book talks, we will vote on 3 additional books to read as a class.

Haddon, Mark, Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night, 2003
Shepard, Jim, Project X, 2004
Bauer, Joan, Hope was Here. New York: Puffin, 2000.

Plus 1 book of your choice
Plus 3 books selected by the class
Plus a few readings available as pdf files on the instructor's website listed above

Grades
All assignments must be completed to pass the course.
Final grades are calculated as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading Quizzes/Reflection Questions</td>
<td>35%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Book Talk and Book Talk Binder</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Banned Books Report</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Group-led Book Discussion</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Group Extended Unit Plan</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Peer Evaluations of Group Participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
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Criteria include: Quality of preparation and reliability; quality of insight and ideas; quality of respect for individuals; quality of contribution to group process.

Course Work
1. Daily preparation, attendance, and group participation
   - More than 3 absences will lower your final grade. We need a variety of contributing perspectives for this course to work. Your final grade will include a peer evaluation of your contribution.
   - Absence policy: The limit of 3 absences includes both excused and unexcused. Excused absences must be handled through the Dean of Students Office. If unusual circumstances create a situation calling for more than three excused absences, be sure to keep me informed and be sure to have these absences handled by the Dean of Students Office. Regardless of the reason for your absences, you are expected to make up the work you missed, including missed quizzes.
   - Cell phones are distractions for yourself and others. Be sure they are turned off and put away during class.

2. Reading Quizzes
   - The reading quizzes are intended to promote timely and careful reading. If you do the reading and review it before class, you'll find it easy to do well on the quizzes, and your good quiz grades will be your reward for being prepared. The quizzes focus primarily on factual recall rather than interpretation. Because of this, they require that the novel be "fresh" in your mind. If you read the book a week or two ahead of a quiz day, be sure to review the book before the quiz. Let me know if you find that a question on a quiz can be interpreted in more than one "correct" way.
   - If you are absent on a quiz day, you must contact me before the next class to make up the quiz or you will have a zero averaged in your final grade for that portion of the course.
3. Reflection Questions
   • Bring one good discussion question for each of the first four books. A good
discussion question invites others to share perspectives, reflections, and opinions.
   It is interpretive rather than factual, thus it doesn’t have a right answer. It
benefits the group because it leads to a fuller exploration of an issue than what
one person could do alone. It satisfies your curiosity about what other people
think. It is written in an invitational way that encourages others to share their
thinking.
   • This question should be accompanied by a short paragraph explaining what in the
   reading, in your reactions to the readings, or in the context of the course triggered
   your question. In other words, include a brief explanation of where the question is
   coming from or where you are coming from or why you think it’s important to ask.
   Include page numbers so people can reread sections that apply. Good questions
   often involve rereading passages in the text.
   • Your question can focus on an issue, theme, or character from the novel itself, or it
can focus on an issue with regard to teaching the novel or recommending the novel
to young adults. It can explore the implications of addressing important issues
from the novel with young people. It can focus in on the identity challenges
negotiated by young adults in the novel.
   • Please prepare real questions, not the kind you think teachers ask! Cultivate your
curiosity about what other people think and elicit their ideas by sharing your own
thoughts.
   • Your questions should be typed. They are due at the end of the class on the day the
   book is discussed.

4. Group Unit Lesson Plan
   • In groups, you'll prepare a sequence of lessons connected to one of the books we
read for class. In a talk, you'll introduce the sequence of lessons, explain why you
made the choices you made, and engage the class in a one of the planned
activities. Each group will solicit feedback from the class about the effectiveness of
the unit and ways to improve it.
   • Alternatives to designing a sequence of lessons will be suggested, such as designing
a webpage for a novel or researching and presenting a special report on an issue.
   • Be sure to make effective use of the technology provided in the room.
   • More details on this assignment will be given later.

5. Group Panel Discussion
   • Once this term, you’ll work with a group to lead discussion of a book. Each member
of the group will post their reflection question to the class discussion list at least
24 hours before class. The discussion should begin by having members read
passages that resonated for them as individuals and passages that are significant in
the novel. Each group member will lead a discussion focused on their question. An
activity designed to extend the discussion should follow. For this part, be creative.
Try something different to demonstrate a new way of involving a class in deeper
reflection on a topic.

   • During the American Library Association’s Banned Books Week, you’ll be asked to
read information on a variety of websites, including ALA and NCTE and prepare a
short summary of what you learned to share with the rest of the class.
7. Book Talks/Book Binders
   - You'll select and read one book of adolescent literature. The book must be written by an award-winning author and must have been first published in 1990 or later. It should be about a topic, culture, race, group, social class, region, or issue that you do not have experience with. In a five-minute talk, you will pitch the book to the class. Your talk will be accompanied by a handout. More details will be given later.
   - You will collect and organize the handouts in a binder and turn them in on October 24 when all book talks have been completed.
   - As you listen to each book talk, take notes to yourself about how interested you are in the book, including the reasons for your interest or your lack of interest. Frame your interest in the context of teaching.

Important keys for successful participation
   - complete the reading before class.
   - as you read, mark passages that you like or that seem significant
   - during discussion, demonstrate respect for others and interest in their ideas
   - be open and honest about what you think.
   - remember to bring the book under discussion to class
   - speak from your experience and from the readings rather than generalize about what "people" say
   - remove distractions, including cell phones and ipods

MTU complies with all federal and state laws and regulations regarding discrimination, including the Americans with Disability Act of 1990 (ADA). If you have a disability and need a reasonable accommodation for equal access to education or services at MTU, please call Dr. Gloria Melton, Dean of Students (487-2212). For other concerns about discrimination, you may contact your advisor, department head, or the Affirmative Action Office (487-3310).
HU 2548  Adolescent Literature Syllabus Fall 2006  Dr. Nancy Grimm

Sept. 5  Course Introduction
Sept. 7  Review of Literary Terms, Guidelines for Discussion of Difficult Topics, Website Resources
Sept. 12  Haddon, Curious Incident
Sept. 14  Giving a Book Talk, Discussion of Titles/Authors (bring 2 possibilities)
Sept. 19  Bauer, Hope was Here
Sept. 21  Discussion of Banned Book Week Topics, Preparing Unit Plans/Lessons
Sept. 26  Book Talks Begin
Sept. 28  Screening of Whale Rider
Oct. 3  Book Talks
Oct. 5  Book Talks
Oct. 10  Satrapi, Persepolis and discussion of Whale Rider
Oct. 12  Preparation Day: Expanded Unit/Lesson Plans
Oct. 17  Book Talks
Oct. 19  Book Talks
Oct 24  Shepard, Project X, Group Discussion 1
        Vote for 3 books and order
        Binders Due
Oct. 26  Expanded Unit Plans 1: Curious Incident
Oct. 31  Anderson, Speak, Group Discussion 2
Nov. 2   Expanded Unit Plans 2: Hope was Here
Nov. 7   Na, A Step from Heaven, Group Discussion 3
Nov. 9   Preparation Day: Expanded Unit/Lesson Plans
Nov. 14  Book 1 (class selected), Group Discussion 4
Nov. 16  Expanded Unit Plans 2: Persepolis
Nov. 28  Book 2–(class selected) Group Discussion 5
Nov. 30  Expanded Unit Plans 3: Project X
Dec. 5   Book 3–(class selected) Group Discussion 6
Dec. 7   Expanded Unit Plans 4: Speak
Dec. 12  Expanded Unit Plans 5: A Step from Heaven
Dec. 14  Final Reflections