Course Information: Adolescent Literature
HU 2548/Fall 2007
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This course serves two functions at Michigan Tech: (1) it is a required course for students seeking state certification in teaching English; and (2) it is a general education elective course for students in all majors. As a group we'll make an effort to support the preparation of future teachers by sharing our perspectives on the role (or non-role) of reading in young adult lives. We will also approach the course as an opportunity to read quality literature written for adolescents and to think about and discuss the complicated issues faced by young adults in the early 21st century.

Some of the questions we'll address include the following:
- What is adolescence? When does it begin and end? Is adolescence necessary?
- What are some of the challenges faced by adolescents? What contributes to those challenges?
- What should teachers and parents of adolescents know?
- Why do adolescents read (or not)? What can be gained from reading? What are effective ways to encourage adolescents to read?
- 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?

Discussing controversial topics
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. Remember that you will not be pressured to change your values but you will be expected to think about controversial issues, to express and listen to a range of perspectives, and to understand the values and experiences of others.

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. Through the reading this semester, we will engage with issues that are endemic in our culture but not often effectively addressed in school (such as bullying, terrorism, political and religious coercion, racism, sexism, homophobia, teenage pregnancy, physical and emotional abuse perpetrated by others as well as abuse inflicted on the self (anorexia, cutting, drug and alcohol addiction).

A thoughtful engagement with 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 own thoughts and behaviors as an adult as well as 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.
Required Texts:
Haddon, Mark, *Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night*, 2003
Shepard, Jim, *Project X*, 2004
Plus 1 book of your choice
Plus 3 books selected by the class

Grades
All assignments must be completed to pass the course.

Final grades are calculated as follows:
- Reading Quizzes/Reflection Questions 35%
- Book Talk 25%
- Book Talk Binder 5%
- Panel Book Discussion 10%
- Group Research Presentation 15%
- Peer Evaluations of Group Participation 10%
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 participation
   - Absence policy: More than 3 absences will lower your final grade. 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 and other electronic devices are distractions for yourself and others. Be sure they are turned off and put away during class.
   - Keys for successful participation
     - Schedule your time to complete the reading.
     - As you read each book, mark passages that you like or that seem significant to you. Review these passages after you complete the book.
     - During discussion, demonstrate respect for others and interest in their ideas.
     - Be open and honest about what you think.
     - Always bring the book under discussion to class.
     - Speak from your experience and from the readings rather than generalize about what "people" think and say.

2. Reading Quizzes
   - The reading quizzes are intended to promote timely and careful reading. If you do the reading, 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 three 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 or a yes/no answer. It benefits the group because it leads to a full exploration of an issue. It satisfies your curiosity about what other people think. It is written in an invitational way that encourages others to share their thinking.
• Your question should begin with an explanation of why you are asking your question: what in the novel prompted your question, why do you think it’s an important question to ask, how would you answer the question, what in your experience connects with your question. Providing this context for your question should take at least a paragraph. You should also include page numbers so that 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 related to teaching. It can comment on how the novel illustrates a challenge faced by young people in other situations.
• Please prepare real questions, not the kind you think teachers ask.
• Your questions should be typed. They are due at the end of the class on the day the book is discussed.

4. Book Talks/Book Binders
• Explained on separate handout.

5. Panel Discussion
• Explained on separate handout

6. Group Research Presentation
• Explained on separate handout

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).
Course Introduction
Review of Literary Terms, Guidelines for Discussion of Difficult Topics, Book Talk Assignment

Sept. 11 Haddon, Curious Incident (quiz and discussion question)
Sept. 13 Bring two possibilities for Book Talks; Panel Discussion Assignment

Sept. 18 Bauer, Hope was Here (quiz and discussion question)
Sept. 20 Discussion of Banned Book Week, Group Research Presentation Assignment

Sept. 25 Book Talks begin
Sept. 27 Book Talks

Oct. 2 Book Talks: Banned Books Week
Oct. 4 Book Talks

Oct. 9 Anderson, Speak (quiz and discussion question)
Oct. 11 Screening of Speak

Oct. 16 Book Talks
Oct. 18 Book Talks

Oct. 23 Shepard, Project X, (quiz and panel discussion)
Vote for 3 books and order Binders Due

Oct. 25 Discussion of Plans for Group Research Presentations

Oct. 30 Yang, American Born Chinese, (quiz and panel discussion)

Nov. 1 Group Research Presentation

Nov. 6 Green, Looking for Alaska, (quiz and panel discussion)

Nov. 8 Group Research Presentation

Nov. 13 Book 1 (class selected), (quiz and panel discussion)

Nov. 15 Group Research Presentation

Nov. 27 Book 2—(class selected) (quiz and panel discussion)

Nov. 29 Group Research Presentation

Dec. 4 Book 3—(class selected) (quiz and panel discussion)

Dec. 6 Group Research Presentation

Dec. 11 Group Research Presentation

Dec. 13 Final Reflections