Adolescence in Literature

Books: Numbered in order of reading; bring the books and essays with you to class

Sherman Alexie, The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-time Indian (3)
M.T. Anderson, Feed (7)
Leslie Fairfield, Tyranny (2)
Neil Gaiman, Neverwhere (10)
Mark Haddon, The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time (8)
Herge, The Blue Lotus (9)
Karen Hesse, Out of the Dust (4)
Anchee Min, Red Azalea (6)
Walter Dean Myers, Fallen Angels (6)
Art Spiegelman, Maus II (4)

Movies:
Athol Fugard, Master Harold ... and the Boys (5)
Osama (6)

Hand-outs (1)

Short stories, info sheets, study questions, and essays will be handed out in class. The intent is for you to read them, write in the margins of them, and bring them to class for discussion, rather than to read them once on screen. Occasionally I will send longer material to you via Blackboard, in which case print it out, write in the margins, and bring it to class for discussion.

Description:

English 502 explores works in which key characters are adolescents as well as works that have been specifically written for adolescents, primarily the contemporary Young Adult novel. Adolescence is a time during which cognitive functions, argumentative capacity, self-identity, ego, sexual relationships and love, societal relationships, authority relationships, justice and conscience, bodily image, career, education--and of course much more--are developed, explored, challenged, outgrown. These issues are depicted in narratives that reveal the keen emotions and observations of teenagers. As we'll see, however, adolescence is as much a cultural construct as a clearly defined biological and cognitive phenomenon.
Some of the most exciting publishing being done these days is in Young Adult fiction, as represented by the booklist. Short stories and movies are part of the course as well.

**Course Outcomes:**
- Ability to analyze and evaluate adolescent literature using appropriate terminology
- Understanding characteristics of adolescence
- Appreciation of adolescence as a global phenomenon expressed through the literature of various countries and times
- Writing that is clear, substantive, and grammatically satisfactory

Specifically:
- Knowledge and understanding of adolescence around the world and as a distinct phase in cognitive and emotional development
- Implementation of criteria: style, depth, impact
- Improved editing and writing skills
- Improved close reading skills
- Familiarity with group work techniques

**Course requirements:**
- Four 2-3 pp. study question responses due as indicated on the syllabus, two objective midterms, and an objective/written final exam.

Study question responses (sqr’s): Everyone does the first study question. This and the second sqr can be revised. After that, there are no revisions, so hand in your absolutely best thinking/expression. Numbers on your papers correlate to those on the Revision/Self-Study Guide hand-out.

The midterms cover the readings and in-class material. The comprehensive final includes objective and short answer essays.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>Participation (which implies attendance)</td>
<td>10% of your grade.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The study question responses total</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Midterms</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final</td>
<td>30%</td>
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A = Fluid writing and well-presented, original thinking; effective use of grammar
B = Clear and competent prose, solid grasp of course content, few grammatical errors
C = Problems with written expression and grammar in conveying course content
D = Difficult to understand
F = No effort
In English 502, writing well is a significant part of your grade. Early in the semester, there’ll be editing, grammar, and proofreading brush-ups. Both the Rhetoric and Writing Studies and the English/CompLit depts. provide tutors who can help with specific, recurrent writing glitches like the dreaded “Comma Splice.” Improvement over the semester, if necessary, is expected on sqr’s and in-class writings.

Sample study questions are appended to this course description. Please keep them for future use. Questions for the other readings are forthcoming.

After the first required sqr is due Sept. 19, four more due dates are indicated on the syllabus. You pick the due days you want to hand in your next three sqr’s, i.e. you can skip one due date. No extra credit is available for doing extra study questions; just do the required ones well.

Please print out your papers for editing, rather than edit on screen. In the different format, you’ll see your paper differently. It helps. And don’t hand in first drafts.

Turn in assignments when they are due. Don’t cheat. Don’t plagiarize. Do your own thinking and writing.

No electronic devices during class time: This means computers are off, texting is not done in class, messages are not checked, etc. If being disconnected for 75 minutes twice a week is a problem for you, please enroll in a different class. If you need to use a device for DSS reasons, let me know.

I’m available during office hours or by appointment. Email is the other good way to contact me: allison@mail.sdsu.edu

Okay!—welcome to class, to some extraordinary reading, and to a new decade….
Adolescence in Literature

Syllabus

I reserve the right to alter the schedule and will notify you if this is necessary. Please bring the hand-outs and/or books we’re discussing with you to class.

Aug 29: Introduction to class, requirements, and books. Questionnaire and grammar assessment.

H (Homework for next class): Read Chekov’s and Joyce’s short stories (hand-outs).

Aug 31: Grammar review. The adolescent brain, emotional development, etc.; David Elkind. Characteristics of adolescence applied to Chekov’s and Joyce’s stories.


Sept. 5—Labor Day, No class

Sept 7: Close reading of the four short stories read thus far. Elkind review. Style, Depth, Impact. Study questions discussed.

H: Read Jolly’s, Boyle’s, and Oates’s short stories (hand-outs). Note that the Updike and Boyle stories have study questions included at the end.

Sept. 12: The adolescent experience. Study question group discussion.

H: Print out, and make notes on, scholarly essays sent via Blackboard for Wednesday.

Sept 14: Short stories and literary perspectives; in-class writing.

H: Read Tyranny. Study question response (SQR) due Monday.

Sept 19: SQR #1 due. Stories continued; Tyranny; Children at War. Adolescence and cultural construction.

H: First three chapters of The Absolutely True Diary …
Engl 502 syllabus

Sept 21: Sherman Alexie; *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-time Indian*

    H: Finish *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-time Indian*

Sept. 26:

    H: Read *Maus II*, first section

Sept 28: Art Spiegelman, *Maus* background

    H: Finish *Maus II*

Oct 3:   *Maus II*

Oct. 5:  first part of DVD *Master Harold… and the Boys* by Athol
        Fugard, South Africa, to be completed and discussed next class.

    H: Read Fugard hand-outs

Oct. 10: *Master Harold… and the Boys.*

    H: Study for Midterm #1, objective and short answer.

Oct. 12: Midterm #1.

    H: Read *Out of the Dust*. Choose either *Red Azalea*, *Fallen Angels*, or *Feed*.

Oct. 17: *Out of the Dust*, historical background and DVD. Literary adolescence

    H: Read “Centripetal and Centrifugal Patterns in YA Literature,” Bbd.
    Continue *Red Azalea* or *Fallen Angels*. SQR #2 due Wednesday.

Oct. 19: SQR #2 due. Guest speaker, Dr. Henry Janssen, The Dust Bowl

    H: Continue *Red Azalea*, *Fallen Angels*, or *Feed*.

Oct. 24:  In-class writing on *Red Azalea*, *Fallen Angels* or *Feed*. All things
         considered

    H: Finish your novel; ponder study questions for group discussion.

Oct. 26: In-class discussion groups & reports on *Red Azalea*, *Fallen Angels*, or *Feed*.

    H:  SQR #3 due Monday.
Oct. 31: SQR #3 due. First part of *Osama* DVD.

Nov. 2: *Osama* DVD


Nov. 7: *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time*; kinds of minds

    H: *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time*, approx. 70 pp. more

Nov. 9: *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time*

    H: Finish Haddon’s novel.

Nov. 14: *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time*

    H: SQR #4 due next class.

Nov. 16: SQR #4. Discussion and group study for Midterm.

    H: Study for Midterm #2 on Monday, objective and short answer.

Nov. 21: Midterm #2

    H: Read *The Blue Lotus*

Nov. 23—Herge and the Tintin series of 23 graphic novels

Nov. 28: Tintin, “Red Rackham’s Treasure”

    H: Read Bbd essays/info on Neil Gaiman and *Neverwhere*

Nov. 30: BBC *Neverwhere*

    H: SQR #5 Monday.

Dec. 5: SQR #5. *Neverwhere*

Dec. 7: *Neverwhere*

Dec. 14: Final exam, 1-3:00