

## **LIS 404AG: Literature and Resources for Young Adults**

Spring 2015

**Instructor:** Alaine Martaus

**Class Meetings:** Thursdays, 1:00 – 3:50pm, GSLIS Rm.131

**Office Hours:** Thursdays, 4-5pm & by appointment

### **Course Description**

Evaluation, selection and use of books and other resources for young adults (ages 12-18) in public libraries and school media centers; explores standard selection criteria for print and non-print materials in all formats and develops the ability to evaluate and promote materials according to their various uses (personal and curricular) and according to young adults' various needs (intellectual, emotional, social and physical). [2.0 or 4.0 credits]

### **Course Objectives:**

- To identify characteristics and developmental tasks of young adults
- To identify characteristics of young adult literature and materials
- To gain an understanding of the history of young adults and of young adult literature
- To develop an understanding of the processes associated with young adult and adult literacy
- To become familiar with a range of authors, works, genres, media, and forms of popular culture oriented toward young adults
- To gain experience in discussing and evaluating young adult literature and resources
- To become familiar with and gain experience in using a variety of formats to promote literature/resources to young adults
- To identify and discuss literary trends and social issues, including intellectual freedom, affecting young adult literature and work with young adults in libraries and schools

### **Communication**

I will do my best to communicate clearly all course requirements and material in a timely manner. This will include announcements at the beginning of class and via the Moodle. Please make sure to arrive in class on time and check the Moodle regularly so that you do not miss announcements.

If you have questions, concerns, problems, or conflicts, please feel free to email me. I will try to reply to any emails within 48hrs, so if you haven't heard back from me in that time, feel free to drop me a reminder. I also welcome you to schedule appointments with me to ask questions or get clarifications outside of class.

### **Class Work and Readings**

You are expected to do the readings and engage with them in a reflective and critical manner. Read the assigned texts before each class meeting, as it will make both class activities and your participation in class more meaningful.

You must complete all required assignments in order to pass this class; however, completing all required assignments does not guarantee you will receive a passing grade.

Please review and reflect on the academic integrity policy of the University of Illinois, [http://admin.illinois.edu/policy/code/article1\\_part4\\_1-401.html](http://admin.illinois.edu/policy/code/article1_part4_1-401.html) In submitting assignments for LIS506, you certify that all work presented is your own and has been done by you independently or as a member of a designated group for group assignments.

I will happily accommodate any students with disabilities, but students must be registered and assessed by the UIUC's Disability Resources and Educational Services.

### **Participation and Attendance**

You are expected to attend the course and participate in discussions and activities. Classroom discussion should be civilized and respectful to everyone. It should be relevant to the topic we are discussing. Classroom discussion is meant to allow us to hear a variety of viewpoints. This can only happen if we respect one other and our differences. ***If you need to miss a class, please email me so we can arrange for you to make up missed content.***

### **Evaluation**

Assignment grades will be based on:

- Demonstrated attention to the content/topic and to assignment requirements
- Clarity of writing (professional, grammatically correct writing is expected)
- Quality of work and demonstration of thought, effort, and attention to details of composition and presentation

Unless otherwise specified, assignments are due by or before the beginning of class (1:00 p.m.).

Extensions are available only when an agreement is made in advance with the instructor, preferably at least a day ahead of time.

### **2.0 Credit Hours**

<b>Assignment</b>	<b>Due Date</b>	<b>Percentage Value</b>
<i>Participation</i>	<i>On-going</i>	<i>30%</i>
<i>Reading/Literacy Autobiography</i>	<i>February 5</i>	<i>10%</i>
<i>In-Class Book Talk</i>	<i>Varied</i>	<i>20%</i>
<i>In-Class Book Discussion Lead</i>	<i>Varied</i>	<i>20%</i>
<i>Book Trailer/Book Talk Video</i>	<i>April 30</i>	<i>20%</i>

### **4.0 Credit Hours**

<b>Assignment</b>	<b>Due Date</b>	<b>Percentage Value</b>
<i>Participation</i>	<i>On-going</i>	<i>25%</i>
<i>Reading/Literacy Autobiography</i>	<i>February 5</i>	<i>5%</i>
<i>In-Class Book Talk</i>	<i>Varied</i>	<i>15%</i>
<i>In-Class Book Discussion Lead</i>	<i>Varied</i>	<i>20%</i>
<i>Book Trailer/Book Talk Video</i>	<i>April 30</i>	<i>15%</i>
<i>Final Assignment</i>	<i>May 7</i>	<i>20%</i>

## Course Readings

### **WEEK 1 – INTRODUCTION TO YOUNG ADULTS AND YA MATERIALS**

*The Catcher in the Rye*, by J.D. Salinger  
*King Dork*, by Frank Portman

### **WEEK 2 – HISTORY OF YAs AND YA LITERATURE**

*Seventeenth Summer*, by Maureen Daly  
*The Outsiders*, by S.E. Hinton  
*Weetzie Bat*, by Francesca Lia Block

### **WEEK 3 – INDEPENDENCE: ON THEIR OWN / THE JOURNEY**

*Bucking the Sarge*, by Christopher Paul Curtis  
*Runaways*, by Brian Vaughn

### **WEEK 4 – INTEGRITY: MAKING MORAL CHOICES**

*The Chocolate War*, by Robert Cormier  
*Pretty Little Liars*, by Sara Shepard

### **WEEK 5 – INTELLIGENCE: REACHING UNDERSTANDING**

*Ender's Game*, by Orson Scott Card  
*Yaqui Delgado Wants to Kick Your Ass*, by Meg Medina

### **WEEK 6 – IDENTITY: A SENSE OF SELF**

*Monster*, by Walter Dean Myers  
*I am J*, by Cris Beam  
*Drama*, by Raina Telgemeier

### **WEEK 7 – INTIMACY: LOVE AND RELATIONSHIPS**

*Boy Meets Boy*, by David Levithan  
*Eleanor & Park*, by Rainbow Rowell  
*The Sound of Your Voice, Only Really Far Away*, by Frances O'Roark Dowell

### **WEEK 8 – NONFICTION; COMICS & GRAPHIC NOVELS**

*Bomb: The Race to Build, and Steal, the World's Most Dangerous Weapon*, by Steve Sheinkin  
*Claudette Colvin: Twice Toward Justice*, by Phillip Hoose  
*American Born Chinese*, by Gene Luen Yang

### **WEEK 9 – CONTEMPORARY REALISTIC FICTION**

*The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*, by Sherman Alexie  
*The Fault in Our Stars*, by John Green

### **WEEK 10 – SCIENCE FICTION/CYBERPUNK/STEAMPUNK**

*Feed*, by M.T. Anderson  
*Etiquette & Espionage*, by Gail Carriger

### **WEEK 11 – FANTASY & FAIRY TALES**

*Seraphina*, by Rachel Hartman  
*Raven Boys*, by Maggie Stiefvater  
*Fables Vol. 1: Legends in Exile*, by Bill Willingham

**WEEK 12 – HORROR & SUSPENSE**

*The Walking Dead, Book 1*, by Robert Kirkman  
*I Hunt Killers*, by Barry Lyga

**WEEK 13 – WAR/SURVIVAL/ADVENTURE**

*Fallen Angels*, by Walter Dean Myers  
*Beauty Queens*, by Libba Bray

**WEEK 14 – NEW ADULT/THE YA-ADULT CONNECTION**

*Roomies*, by Sara Zarr and Tara Altebrando  
*I am the Messenger*, by Marcus Zusak

## Assignments Overview

< FOR ALL STUDENTS >

### ***Participation*** [Weekly]

Much of the learning and synthesis in LIS404 takes place in the weekly synchronous class meetings via lectures, guest speakers, presentations, and semi-structured small and large group discussions and in the weekly asynchronous electronic bulletin board forums. Therefore, participation in both class meetings and the Moodle space is expected. Participation includes:

- Reading all assigned books and other readings
- Attendance and participation in weekly class sessions
- 10 weekly Moodle forum posts

Moodle forum posts: The moodle forum post is a response to the weekly questions and/or the YA Media forums on the LIS404AG moodle space. The length varies according to the questions asked/answered, but 2-3 paragraphs (200-300 words) is usually sufficient. Moodle space posts for weekly questions must be posted by midnight the day before the corresponding class session.

### ***Reading/Literacy Autobiography*** [Due Thursday, February 5]

A literacy autobiography focused on student's experiences of reading and (print and media) literacy.

### ***In-Class Book Talk Presentations*** [Varied]

A brief promotional talk on 3-4 YA books and accompanying annotated flyer/bibliography.

### ***In-Class Book Discussion Lead*** [Varied]

Present on and lead discussion of one required reading, including discussion questions and read-a-likes handout

### ***Book Trailer/Book Talk Video*** [Due Thursday, April 30]

A brief digital video presentation intended to garner teen reader interest in one YA book

< ADDITIONAL ASSIGNMENT FOR 4.0 CREDITS>

### ***Final Project*** [Due Monday, May 11]

Option A: Book Discussion Group Portfolio: A practical project in which you will design a 6-8 week teen book discussion group, including book selection, publicity and discussion questions.

Option B: Conference Paper: A 10-12 page (4500-5200 words, excluding bibliography and abstract) research paper on young adult literature, media, and/or resources.

### ***Media Forum Posts*** [Included in Participation]

For the 4-credit option, you must complete all four of the Media Discussion Forum, PLUS 10 additional moodle forum posts as part of the participation grade.

## IN-CLASS BOOK TALK ASSIGNMENT

LENGTH: 4-5 minute presentation, plus 1 page handout

DUE: In class

### A. Oral Book Talk

Length: 4-5 minutes MAXIMUM

Coverage: 3-4 books

#### 1. ***Content requirements:***

- a. Have a thematic link [of your choice] between books
- b. Include [very brief] introduction, conclusion, segues/connections between books
- c. Include a variety of books: consider genre, setting, era, reading level, fiction/nonfiction
- d. Include a variety of methods: brief description, questions the book will answer, read-aloud
- e. NO BOOKS FROM THE SYLLABUS, but can build on one thematically
- f. Keep in mind reader appeal: reach as many different readers as you can

#### 2. ***Format/Oral presentation requirements***

- a. All the books featured in the book talk should be present [that is, the actual, physical objects - not slides, screen shots, etc.]
- b. Visual audience appeal [consider movement, props, eye contact (notes OK, but just as prompt)]
- c. Audio audience appeal [consider delivery, pace, manner]

### B. Accompanying Flyer / Handout / Bibliography

Size: one 8.5" x 11" sheet MAXIMUM [may be smaller], flat or folded, single- or double-sided

Length: 5 or more annotations/descriptions

#### 1. ***Content requirements:***

- a. Include all the books featured in the book talk + 2 or more other books (total=5 or more)
- b. Include minimal bibliographic information (author, title, publisher, date) + 1-sentence informational annotation/teaser for each book
- c. Use the same theme as your book talk

#### 2. ***Format requirements:***

- a. Visual YA appeal [or at least include nothing that would actively repel YAs--no bunnies, kitties, or other visual elements associated with younger children]
- b. Your choice of color, shape, graphics, format [book mark, single-fold flyer, handout, etc.]
- c. Provide 1 copy for instructor and 1 for each 404 class member
- d. The handout turned in to instructor should look precisely as you would wish it to look [color, type, graphics, paper]
- e. Black/white copies of handout may be distributed to class members

## IN-CLASS BOOK DISCUSSION LEAD

LENGTH: 10 minute presentation, plus discussion questions and a 1 page handout

DUE: Varied

Each student is responsible for presenting on and leading the discussion of one of our **required** YA books. You will be responsible for providing the class with information about the book, questions for promoting discussion, and a handout of read-a-likes. Books will be assigned during the first day of class.

### Book Presentation

The presentation should include:

- background information about the book
- relevant information about the author and/or illustrator
- and an overview of valuable information about the book (themes, reception & reviews, readership/popularity, etc.).
- Consider specifically how the book relates to the given week's theme or genre.

You do not need to submit the presentation ahead of time, unless you plan to use powerpoint slides, which are optional. ***You will submit a bibliography of sources used in preparing the presentation.***

### Discussion Questions

You will also facilitate class discussion of the book, including providing ***4-5 interpretive questions that keep focus on the book and promote a lively discussion.*** You will submit these questions by midnight the night before the discussion.

### Accompanying Handout

The handout should be ***an annotated list of 5-7 read-a-likes*** to the book you are presenting. This list should have a narrow focus, not simply books of the same genre. It should provide basic bibliographic information, plus a short description or teaser for each book. Like the book talk handout, it should have visual appeal for YA readers.

## **BOOK TRAILER/BOOK TALK DIGITAL VIDEO**

LENGTH: 1.5-3 minutes

DUE: Thursday, April 30

For this assignment, you will use your choice of freely available software and/or a digital camera to produce a creative, compelling book trailer or book talk that will entice teens to pick up your chosen book. You may create the video for nearly any YA novel you choose (including required readings or books read for other assignments), but you will need to get permission from the instructor first.

### **Book Trailer**

A book trailer is designed to help potential readers see what kind of book they are picking up and what it is like to read it. You may use any combination of original or copyright-free video clips, pictures, music, and/or narration to create your video. A good trailer will do the following:

- Create interest in the novel
- Use photos and videos that relate thematically and literally to the events in the book
- Incorporate sound and music that connects to the overall meaning of the book
- Include the creator's experiences, thoughts and opinions on the reading of the book
- Demonstrate creativity in construction (i.e. color correction, timing, transitions, etc.)

You can find information about creating book trailers (including recommendations for web-based and downloadable free software) at the following sites:

- [http://library.conroeisd.net/book\\_trailers](http://library.conroeisd.net/book_trailers)
- <http://www.booktrailersforreaders.com/How+to+make+a+book+trailer>
- <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLt-KmhRs9uSPvGmhKZRJrJgwy3PvbvC64>

### **Book Talk Digital Video**

You may choose instead to create a more traditional book talk in video format. This option will require you to be on-screen and will necessitate a video camera. Like a book trailer, a book talk video is designed to entice the reader into picking up a book. Rather than relying on images, music, and narration, however, you will provide a gripping description of the book's plot without giving too much away. You can find examples of digital book talks at this site:

- <http://www.scholastic.com/teacher/ab/booktalks.htm>

### **Submitting Your Video**

On your I: drive or another video hosting service (like YouTube or Vimeo), you should upload your book trailer. You should then upload your the URL where we may view your content to the assignment forum on the Moodle. All students should be able to view your content.

Ask the Tech Help Desk for assistance in uploading videos. Be sure not to wait until the last minute when asking for help.

## **READING/LITERACY AUTOBIOGRAPHY**

LENGTH: 1000-1250 words

DUE: Thursday, February 5

**Trace the history of your relationship with reading, with books, and with other print media during your teen years.** This assignment is an opportunity for you to think critically about your own reading/literacy experiences as a young adult and the ways in which they may have contributed to your current ideas about reading/literacy. Reading is the central focus here, but you may want to include other viewing/listening media (television, radio, film, etc.). All reading materials "count", not just books and not just those specifically designed for young adults.

The questions/suggestions below are intended as springboards for your consideration. Focus on the areas that you find most relevant. You should include:

- a. your own story – 800-1000 words
- b. your reflections on your story – 200-250 words

### **SUGGESTIONS FOR YOUR STORY:**

As you write, consider the following times, books, places, and people. This is an inclusive list of suggestions and possibilities that can help you think about various aspects of your story. For the purposes of this assignment, please focus on the items that are particularly relevant or meaningful to your story. ***Limit yourself to the ages when you would have been reading the kinds of books we are discussing in class (Middle school/Junior high/Grades 7-9 and/or High school/Grades 9-12).***

What was most memorable about reading for you during these periods in your life? What most attracted you to reading? Do you recall getting "lost in a book"? Do you recall specific feelings, attitudes, sensations, or actions related to reading? What was most memorable about your experiences of other viewing/listening media? Was there any relationship between these and reading?

#### ***Books/Materials:***

Favorites/least favorites, why?

Characters/authors you remember

The look/feel of a book

What sorts of reading materials were in your house?

Did you own books? Did you borrow books from others?

Did you receive them as gifts?

#### ***Places:***

Where/when did you read?

Where did you find books and/or other reading materials?

Did you buy, acquire, or check out books at school? In your community?

Did you go to the public or school library?

***People:***

Who do you think was/were particularly influential in your reading (or lack thereof)?

Were these positive or negative influences?

Did you share books with friends?

Did you go to the library with family/friends?

Did you know a librarian?

Did you talk about books/reading?

Did you stop reading? Why?

Did your reading habits or tastes change?

**SUGGESTIONS FOR REFLECTIONS ON PATTERNS OF LITERACY/READING:**

Are there overall patterns you notice in your reading history? Ways that reading has functioned in your life? Ways that it used to function that are no longer the case?

You are the protagonist of the story you have just told. What kind of story is it?

Some possibilities: A hero conquering obstacles? A detective cracking a secret code? Cinderella (a plain outward appearance but a rich inner life)? One who is seeking a hidden treasure? A solitary wanderer/explorer? A prisoner longing to be free? An ant working diligently acquiring facts? A grasshopper who revels in reading as a leisurely activity? A member of a band of bold adventurers? An orphan finding friends/family? All or none of the above?

And finally, in considering your entire story up to this point, what, if anything, do you notice about your teenage reading (or viewing or listening) compared to your reading--and its role(s) in your life--as a child and/or as an adult? What do you see that can help inform your work with young adults and young adult literature/materials?

**<4.0 CREDIT STUDENTS ONLY>**

**FINAL PROJECT**

DUE: Monday, May 11

**Option A – YA Book Discussion Group Portfolio**

LENGTH: Varied

**For this assignment, you will create all the materials needed to run a summer reading/discussion group, including a collection of books, discussion questions, and related publicity.**

Part of your work as a young adult librarian will be to design programs aimed at a young adult audience. The purpose of this assignment is to provide you with the experience of designing a book discussion group **for young adults**. In designing this program you will need to consider its scope and content which includes such concerns as audience, selection of books (appeal, “discuss-ability,” etc.), publicity (flyers, booklists, etc.) and discussion questions.

**SCENARIO:**

Your supervisor has asked you to start a six to eight week summer book discussion group for young adults. ***This means you will be creating materials for discussion of 6-8 books, one per week.***

**PORFOLIO CONTENTS:**

1. RATIONALE/BACKGROUND INFORMATION: A 3-4 page report summarizing the scope and content of your book discussion group including a discussion of audience, topic/genre/theme, and book selection process.
2. BOOK TITLES, DESCRIPTIONS, AND QUESTIONS: A short summary of each book with at least 5 questions for discussion. These may be questions focusing on particular chapters/sections of the book and/or questions about the book as a whole.
3. PROMOTION/PUBLICITY MATERIALS (handout/flyer): Sample handouts and flyers advertising the book discussion – at least one flyer and one handout are required, but more are acceptable.

**CONCEPTS TO CONSIDER:**

**AUDIENCE:**

1. Age group: the term young adult has been applied to young people in their pre-teens to their early twenties. As such you must decide which specific age group you will be targeting.
2. Other audience parameters: these might include interests (for topical discussion groups), expected gender of participants, etc.
3. Publicity ideas based on your target audience. Where can you find them? What do they like to do? How can you reach them to tell them about your book group?

**TOPIC/GENRE/THEME:**

1. Will your book group focus on a specific topic? You could explore it thorough different genres including realistic fiction, historical fiction, science fiction, biography, poetry, music, etc.
2. You could also choose to read works written in a specific genre, such as science fiction, fantasy, historical fiction, biography, etc.
3. You could also choose to have an eclectic mix of works that aims at introducing your participants to various authors, genres, topics, etc.

**BOOK SELECTION:** All books do not have to be marketed as YA books, but all should be able to be identified or justified (by you) as books with YA appeal. No more than 2 may be required books that we read as a class. You will want to consider the following criteria when selecting books to be discussed:

1. Audience: reading level (important for younger YAs), topic (does the book deal with a topic that is of interest to the age group), etc.
2. Topic: if you decide to build a book group around a specific theme, do the works represent enough variety in terms of perspective, format, genre?
3. Genre: if your group will look at one genre, how does this work fit? For instance, in Science Fiction there are numerous subcategories such as contact with aliens, intergalactic wars, dystopias, cyberpunk, etc. Is this work considered a classic SF book? Is it a new take on an old theme? And so on.
4. “Discuss-ability”: does the book lend itself to discussion? Are there issues, characters, conflicts that can be explored by a group of readers?

**PROMOTION/PUBLICITY MATERIALS:** Sample handouts and flyers advertising the book discussion. You need to consider graphics and wording: do they appeal to YAs?

1. A FLYER is designed to be put on a bulletin board or a store window, read--or at least noticed--from a distance. A flyer should attract the eye in some way and include information about the book discussion group's theme or genre, when and where it will meet, beginning and ending dates, its audience (grade or age range?), plus contact info (phone number/email address/url) that a viewer can use to obtain more detailed information. (Contact info can be fake.)
2. A HANDOUT--as you know from your booktalk--is designed to be read by one person at a time. It is likely to include more detailed information than a flyer. This could include a list of the books that will be read (plus brief annotations, perhaps); further information about the theme/genre/author/ unifying idea(s) of the books to be read; specific meetings or activities; other text and/or images that describe what this group will be reading and doing.

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### **Option B – Research Paper and Abstract**

LENGTH: 10-12 page (4500-5200 words, excluding bibliography and abstract)

Due: Monday, May 11

**For this assignment, you will write a research paper that would be suitable for presentation at an academic conference on young adult literature and/or culture.**

The paper will need to have a specific focus and draw on ***at least 6 scholarly resources***. You can choose to write about a connection between a number of different books, choose to focus entirely on one novel, or choose to place the novel(s) in the context of other forms of youth media.

***All topics must be approved by the instructor no later than Thursday, April 2.***

You will also craft an abstract of your own paper, summarizing its content and purpose in less than 350 words.