

Like Roses in Concrete: Kids on Trial

“Did you hear about the rose that grew from a crack in the concrete? Proving nature’s law is wrong, it learned to walk without having feet. Funny, it seems, but it’s keeping its dreams. It’s learned to breathe fresh air. Long live the rose that grew from concrete, when no one else ever cared.”

—Tupac Shakur



Young Adult Literature
ENGL 5/4295
3 credit hours
Thursday, 5:30-8:00
Pafford 110

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Course Description

In the third edition of his seminal work *Young Adult Literature: From Romance to Realism* (2016), scholar Michael Cart produces a “State of the Genre” report, focusing on a wide range of market and cultural forces before concentrating on texts. Since the early nineties, the appetite for Young Adult literature (YA) has increased exponentially. Then, around 250 titles made their way to adolescents’ bookshelves each year; now, publishing houses produce over 7,000 titles annually, and sales of YA spiked over 22% in 2014 alone. Interestingly, adults make up over half of the buyers of YA, and they aren’t just purchasing for their teens. They also read YA with none of the embarrassment that highbrow pundits and bloggers controversially insist they should feel. It is an understatement, then, to say that the state of YA is strong. Its reach extends from popular culture into secondary and post-secondary academic arenas, and its ability to offer age-appropriate, complex narratives to increase efferent and aesthetic reading skills endows it with power to transform reader literacy.

These qualities aside, what of the literature? Cart notes, “after a decade of obsessively focusing on speculative fiction, we are finally returning to a renaissance of realistic fiction.” Sparkly vampires and a country carved into districts where children fight to the death, while still beloved by leagues of fans, are no longer the standard fare. Our spring course will reflect this return to the genre’s origins as we examine high-quality YA representative of reality. We will encounter adolescents on trial as they fight for basic human rights, speak truth to power, suffer through physical and mental trauma, and triumph over crippling self-doubt and servitude in unimaginable cultural circumstances occurring far beyond the boundaries of our nation. Our assigned texts will comprise historical fiction, a classic multimodal text, a book-length poem, a teen memoir, the

novel, and even a graphic novel. Through our reading, we will expand our critical understanding of the economic, social, academic, and political threads connected to—and generated by—YA.

The bulk of the work you produce will allow you to showcase your collegiate-level interpretive skills and engagement with assigned course materials, while some will necessarily focus on the target demographic YA authors wish to reach: teenagers, ages 12-18, and their cognitive and moral development. I will often model reading, annotating, and analytical strategies in class, and we will spend time discussing ways to distill our advanced reading practices for adolescents. English Education majors will be required to complete at least one pedagogy project which focuses upon close reading strategies, while those in other major tracks or minors can choose literary analysis or creative projects.



Learning Outcomes (LO's)

In this class, you will learn to . . .

1. Identify basic adolescent reading processes and major adolescent cognitive and moral development schema and apply them to textual situations in YA.
2. Define the “Classics versus Moderns” debate in YA studies.
3. Read, review, and critique YA texts typically taught in grades 6-12 and demonstrate critical acumen about them in written and verbal work.
4. Identify, read, and incorporate scholarship in YA into your academic writing.
5. Employ Standard English and the tenets of sound composition in all written work.
6. Identify lower and higher-order skill sets connected to teaching Language Arts.
7. Create lesson plan activities and/or unit plans that teach close reading skills to a particular adolescent audience
8. Compose justifications for teaching YA texts that may be challenged by parents, teachers, or other stakeholders in the field of education.
9. Evaluate and create curricula that are multicultural, gender-balanced, and genre-diverse.

Required Course Texts, in Order of Study

- Various required secondary readings, all provided on Course Den—nothing to buy
- *Sold*, by Patricia McCormick
- *Between Shades of Gray*, by Ruta Sepetys
- *I Have the Right To*, by Chessy Prout, with Jenn Abelson
- *Boy Toy*, by Barry Lyga
- *The Hate U Give*, by Angie Thomas
- *Burn Baby Burn*, by Meg Medina
- *Monster*, by Walter Dean Myers
- *My Friend Dahmer*, Derf Backderf
- *Moonlight*, directed by Barry Jenkins*
- *One of Us is Lying*, by Karen M. McManus
- *This is Where it Ends*, by Marieke Nijkamp

*Note: I have a copy of our required film text, *Moonlight*, on reserve in the library for four-hour check-out.

Required Coursework, Percentage Values, and Connection to LO's*

- 1 Reading Quiz per class, 10 questions each, 25% (LO's 1, 2, and 3)
- 1 Analytical Essay, 4-6 pages, 20% (LO's 2, 3, 4, and 5)

- 1 Multimodal Project (creative, analytical, or pedagogical), 20% (LO's 5, 6, 7, and 8)
- Multimodal Final Examination, 25% (LO's 4, 5, 7, 8, and 9)
- Class and Community (10%)

*Note: enrolled Graduate students will compose an 8-10 page essay with two sources and will have extra length and research requirements for the multimodal projects.

Grading Scale*

A+	98	B+	88	C+	78	D+	68	F+	58
A	95	B	85	C	75	D	65	D+	68
A-	92	B-	82	C-	72	D-	62	F-	50

*Note: each major assignment, aside from quizzes which are based on recall, will have an assignment sheet uploaded to Course Den on the date indicated on the nightly schedule below. On each, you will find criteria for evaluation.

Nightly Course Schedule

From left to right, you can see class date, what is due on that date, what we will do in class, and what reading and/or viewing is assigned and due at the beginning of the next class period. I also list quizzes and include due dates. Items in red are clickable links which take you directly to required reading, listening, or viewing. Please study this schedule of coursework carefully and view it as essential to your preparation.

Class Date	What's Due Tonight?	What Are We Doing in Class?	What's Due Next Class?
January 10	You, on time and ready to go!	Course introduction and getting to know each other	-Read <i>Sold</i> -Read " Successful Annotation: The First Step " -Read chapters 1-6 from Michael Cart's text <i>Young Adult Literature: From Romance to Realism</i> (2016), on Course Den
January 17	<i>Sold</i> reading and articles from Course Den, along with the annotation suggestions	We will not meet face-to-face tonight. Navigate to Course Den, click on "Discussions" at the top of our class's main page, and follow the directions in the forum there.	-Discussion Post and responses (this is Quiz 1) -Read <i>Between Shades of Gray</i> , chapters 1-36 -Read Bushman and Haas, chapter 1, found on Course Den
January 24	<i>Between Shades of Gray</i> reading	-Quiz 2 -Discuss <i>Sold</i> and <i>Between Shades of Gray</i>	-Finish <i>Between Shades of Gray</i> -Navigate to the official Edvard Munch page . Read about him and his art. Examine "Ashes." -Read Cart, chapter 10, on Course Den
January 31	<i>Between Shades of Gray</i> reading	-Quiz 3 -Discuss <i>Between Shades of Gray</i> -Analytical Essay assigned—see Course Den under "Content"	-Read <i>I Have the Right To</i> -Read Cart, chapters 12 and 16, on Course Den -View Chessy Prout on <i>Today</i> here -Brainstorm your Analytical Essay -Bring a working thesis to class
February 7	- <i>I Have the Right To</i> reading -A working thesis	-Quiz 4 -Discuss <i>I Have the Right To</i> -Mini-lesson on theses	-Read <i>Boy Toy</i> , pgs. 1-14 and chapters 1-7 -Read Bushman and Haas, chapter 10, on Course Den -Read Cart, chapter 14
February 14	<i>Boy Toy</i> reading	-Quiz 5 -Discuss <i>Boy Toy</i>	-Finish <i>Boy Toy</i> -Draft Analytical Essay

February 21	<i>Boy Toy</i> reading	-Quiz 6 -Discuss <i>Boy Toy</i> -Mini-lesson on paragraphing	-Read <i>The Hate U Give</i> , chapters 1-11 -Listen to " The Hate U Give Explores Racism and Police Violence " -Turn in Analytical Essay by 11:59 p.m. on Course Den on February 23 rd !
February 28	<i>The Hate U Give</i> reading	-Quiz 7 -Discuss <i>The Hate U Give</i>	-Finish <i>The Hate U Give</i> -Read Cart, chapter 11 -Read " The Hate U Give Author Angie Thomas on YA Fiction, Being Black in America And More "
March 7	<i>The Hate U Give</i> reading	-Quiz 8 -Discuss <i>The Hate U Give</i>	-Read <i>Burn Baby Burn</i>
March 14	<i>Burn Baby Burn</i> reading	-Quiz 9 -Discuss <i>Burn Baby Burn</i>	-Read <i>Monster</i> and <i>My Friend Dahmer</i> before 4/4 -Read Cart, chapter 17 -Read " How to Read a Graphic Novel " -Before class on 4/4, Navigate to the Discussion Forum on Course Den and follow directions there. -Begin work on your Multimodal Project, assigned on 3/28
March 21	<i>Spring Break</i> —no class or regular office hours this week.		
March 28	<i>Dr. Insenga at CEA</i> —no class or regular office hours this week. Complete the reading assignments listed above.	View your Multimodal Project assignment sheet on Course Den by 11:59 p.m. tonight	
April 4	- <i>Monster</i> and <i>My Friend Dahmer</i> reading -Course Den discussion post and responses -Questions about Multimodal Project	-Quiz 10 -Discuss <i>Monster</i> and <i>My Friend Dahmer</i> -Multimodal project discussion	-Read " How to Read a Movie " and " The Grammar of Television and Film " -Read Cart, chapter 13 -Read " Director Barry Jenkins on the Music that Made Moonlight " -View <i>Moonlight</i>
April 11	<i>Moonlight</i> viewing	-Quiz 11 -Discuss <i>Moonlight</i> -Discuss Multimodal project	-Read <i>One of Us is Lying</i> -Turn in Multimodal project by April 16 th at 11:59 on Course Den!
April 18	<i>One of Us is Lying</i> reading	-Quiz 12 -Discuss <i>One of Us is Lying</i> -Final assigned	-Read <i>This is Where it Ends</i> -Work on final examination
April 25	<i>This is Where it Ends</i> reading	-Quiz 13 -Discuss <i>This is Where it Ends</i> -Multimodal final examination discussion -Course Evaluations	Prepare for your Multimodal Presentation and prepare to leave your project with me or provide a link, USB drive, etc.
May 2, 5-7	Multimodal Project presentation	Multimodal presentations and celebration of our semester together	Complete the written portion of your Multimodal; turn in on Course Den by May 5 at 11:59 p.m.

Student Support Resources:

- [Accessibility Services](#) or call 678-839-6428
- [Center for Academic Success](#) or call 678-839-6280
- [Center for Disability Services](#)
- [Course Den D2L Home Page](#)
- [Counseling](#)
- [Ingram Library Services](#)
- [Student Services](#)
- [University Bookstore](#)
- [UWG Cares](#)
- [UWG Statements of Accessibility](#)

Campus-wide Course Policies

Please read through the [Common Language for Course Syllabi](#) for official information on UWG's Academic Integrity Policy. You will also find information related to UWG Email, Credit Hour, and Honor Code policies as well as information on Academic Tutoring, Student Services, Technical Requirements, Privacy Policy, and Accessibility Statements.

Attendance Policy

Our class meets *once per week*. During each class period you can expect to discuss readings, both primary or secondary, and work together to arrive at increasingly complex conclusions because of our ongoing collaborative analysis. Because of the think tank, workshop environment I seek to set up with you, *attendance is mandatory*.

Students may miss *up to 2* class periods. Upon their third absence, students will not be able to pass our course because of the large amount of unobservable discussion and in-class practice which signals your growing ability to complete major assignments successfully.

I don't distinguish between excused and unexcused absences, so please choose the days you must miss wisely. Avoid tardiness as well, since I start class promptly and do not want you to miss a single moment of instruction or disrupt ongoing learning of others here in PAF 106.

Late Work/Make-Up Work

Missed quizzes cannot be made up under any circumstance. In-class group work cannot be made up, either, since it occurs during class time and cannot be duplicated.

A Note on Attendance and Late Work: Should you feel you have an extenuating circumstance which will cause you to miss a paper or project deadline, do see me. That way, we can discuss the challenges you are facing. Often, I have found, with swift and honest communication problems can be solved to your advantage.

Americans with Disabilities Act Statement

If you are a student who is disabled as defined under the Americans with Disabilities Act and require assistance or support services, please seek assistance through the [Center for Disability](#). UWG also provides [Accessibility Statements for Technology](#) that you may be required to use for this course.

For more information on the Americans with Disabilities Act, please see the [Common Language for Syllabus](#) document.

Electronic Device Policy

Sometimes, I will ask you to utilize your Smartphone or tablet to find a quick fact, conduct

some in-class research, or even film a short video for posting on Course Den or sharing in class. Please do not take this academic use as a license to text, scroll, answer e-mail, or, heaven save us, *answer* your phone. Instead, put it on vibrate and put it to the side or in your bag.

You are free to use your tablet or laptop in class if what we are doing connects to the technology in a purposeful way. However, if I notice you using technology at inappropriate times, I will note it in my grade book. Should you accumulate three instances of inappropriate use, you will earn a half-letter grade deduction from your *final* grade. After two instances, I will ask that you discontinue use of technology in our classroom, leaving it in your bag, car, or room.

Workload

This class meets once per week, which presents benefits and challenges. Attending once per week will save gas and time. Our in-class work, though, must be more concentrated, and you can expect to have longer assignments between class meetings. Frequently, we will read a book per week along with short secondary readings. This format therefore requires you to be autodidactic and self-motivated. In my experience, students working in this format can struggle to stay on track, and getting behind on reading sometimes creates a landslide effect. Please, then, consider the format of the course and make a commitment to its parameters.

Communication Policies

In class, we will discuss required texts, focusing often on your interpretations within the framework of your growing knowledge of realism in YA and YA's target adolescent demographic. Such discussion can be helpful, enjoyable, and even tense. I ask that you come at these discussions with an open mind and engage consistently, honestly, and even passionately. I regularly assess your progress and deepening understanding during these discussions, so your voice is imperative. Do recall that we exist in an academic environment where respect for others' ideas— even the ones we struggle to understand—is a must. So, engage but do so academically.

I will also discuss adolescent development and ways to teach close reading to folks from 12-20 and build in small lessons which concern our analytical essay and two multimodal assignments.

When working online—and you will do so once during this semester—I ask you to adhere to the same kind of engagement I mention above and to remember rules of [netiquette](#).

You may always email me at my university email address (ainsenga@westga.edu) to ask questions or request appointments using your university e-mail. Typically, I reply within 12 hours; however, as the semester heats up, I reserve the right to take as long as 36 hours to answer. I will not answer email over the weekends (from Friday at 11:59 p.m. until Monday at 9:00 a.m.).

I list my office hours at the top of this document. I welcome you into my space. You may come by to introduce yourself, to talk about classwork at any stage, to ask questions, or just to chat. You might even want to continue a discussion begun in class. Whatever the case, I encourage you to make use of office hours or, if needed, scheduled appointments. Allow me to use my expertise in reading, viewing, and writing to help you navigate this academic terrain.

I do want to say a word about confidential discussion. The Board of Regents, the governing body for the University System of Georgia, recently passed [new rules](#) regarding sexual misconduct and its reporting on our campus. As of July 1, 2016, all faculty and staff must promptly and fully report complaints of or information regarding sexual misconduct to the Title IX Coordinator on campus. Here is the UWG [Title IX website](#).

Thus, I cannot guarantee confidentiality if you tell me about an instance of sexual misconduct. I must report. However, the following locations and individuals can offer confidential support, and I encourage you to talk to them. I can help you contact these places, too, and I can accompany you, if you would like. I still encourage you to talk to me about such issues; but know that, since I am not a trained professional counselor and am most concerned with your health, I must report and will encourage you to obtain help to ensure your safety and well-being. Above all, whether you share with me or self-report, know this: *you deserve safety. You deserve wellness. You deserve a positive, professional outlet for any sexual misconduct you experience.*

<p><u>UNIVERSITY POLICE</u> 678-839-6000 (9-6000 on campus)</p>	<p><u>COUNSELING CENTER</u> Location: 123 Row Hall Office Hours: Monday-Friday, 8-5 Tel: (678) 839-6428 Call UWG Police after hours Email: counseling@westga.edu</p>
<p><u>HEALTH SERVICES</u> 678-839-6452</p>	<p><u>PATIENT /VICTIM ADVOCATES</u> 678-839-0641; 678-839-5338; or, after hours, 678-839-6000</p>

Administrivia

- The best way to contact me outside of office hours is via your university email account. Of course, you may call my office or come by during office hours. Finally, you can schedule an appointment with me outside of office hours by talking with me in class or via email. While I am incredibly interested in discussing your work with you, please note: email is not an appropriate—or legal—venue to discuss grades or to hold extended conversation related to writing, and I do not check email after around 9 p.m. or on weekends.
- I reserve the right to amend this document with future handouts.
- You must have your materials with you in order to participate fully. This means printing out or having electronic means to examine texts, bringing annotations, and/or having access to assignment materials. This means taking notes about what your peers and I say. You will, of course, be free to stay in class for the benefit of instruction and discussion when not prepared, but you are essentially not present when you do not have your materials and will be awarded an absence.



All right, let us get to work!