

ENGL 6385 01D  
**Seminar in Young Adult Literature**  
Summer Session II, 2017  
3 Credit Hours

## Fragments no Longer: the Age of Empathy and Young Adult Literature

“Running from reality has never done anyone any good. This is the world these young people are living in. This is their world to shape, their world to change.”

-Jason Reynolds

“Only connect. . .”

-E.M. Forster

### THE INSTRUCTOR

#### Contact Information

- ❖ Dr. Angela S. Insenga, department of English and Philosophy
- ❖ Office: 2248 TLC, department of English and Philosophy, Carrollton campus
- ❖ Phone Contacts: office—678-839-4864; cell—770-378-2387 from 9-7 or by appointment
- ❖ Fax: 678-839-4849
- ❖ Email: please send all electronic communication via the Course Den email tool. To use this tool, click the “Communication” link in the blue bar that remains at the top of the page while you are in our course. Then choose the “Email” option in the drop-down menu. Each email you send will be answered within 24 hours. **Please do not use my UWG email for electronic communication**, unless Course Den is down. I also regularly communicate with you via the Announcements feed on our class’s homepage in Course Den, sharing links, videos, written messages, thoughts about interpretation or postings, and reminders. Do check it often.
- ❖ Summer Office Hours, Virtual and Face-to-Face:  
I will be available online M from 1-3 p.m. I am always available for a scheduled face-to-face or phone appointment. Students may call, email via Course Den, or use technology to communicate during online office hours. To schedule an appointment outside of office hours, please call or email via Course Den.

### THE COURSE

#### Course Description

In recent years, the category of Young Adult literature has experienced a reality renaissance. As Ginia Bellafonte notes, “recent upheavals in the economy stemming from the financial crisis, the rise of racial tensions and the increased animosity toward immigrants [. . .] have arguably made this new catalog inevitable.” Glittery vampires and fantastical wizardry will never disappear, but YA artisans now recurrently mirror our historical moment, desiring to encourage introspection. In this neo-realist era, teachers and readers alike earn the opportunity to connect with the Other when they delve into reality-based YA texts. Via opening an active dialog with these cultural artifacts, we create a “culture of care” (Markham), thereby building *empathways*. Moreover, classroom practices that classify learning about empathy as a goal actively ask students to explore their own prejudices—good and bad—so that they may expand their horizons of experience or even strengthen their own developing worldviews. As ethical readers, or as teachers engaged in bettering our craft, we too must learn ways to foster understanding *of*—and *in*—others.

This summer, our graduate seminar will explore a bevy of texts written for young adults, all of which inspire empathy. During our eight weeks, we will read texts geared toward middle and high schoolers in several genres: poetry, the short story, the graphic novel, a multimodal text, and the novel. Secondary materials accompany these primary readings. Major activities include group-moderated discussion threads; two Colloquies; and two projects, one on harnessing social media to promote literacy and YA and the other a traditional 7-8 page paper, either pedagogy or literary-based. Students need web-cams and accounts on several social media platforms. Finally, students will meet face-to-face **(6/21 from 10-12:30 and 7/19 from 1-3:30 in TLC 1204 on Carrollton's campus)**, though the remainder of class is online.

### **Course Objectives**

*In this class, you will learn to. . .*

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

### **THE COURSEWORK**

#### **Required Texts, in the Module they are assigned\*:**

##### Module II

- ❖ *Dizzy in Your Eyes*, by Pat Mora
- ❖ *Jellicoe Road*, by Melina Marchetta

##### Module III

- ❖ *All American Boys*, by Brendan Kiely and Jason Reynolds
- ❖ *March*, Book I, by Congressman John Lewis

##### Module IV

- ❖ *American Girls*, by Alison Umminger
- ❖ *The House You Pass Along the Way*, by Jacqueline Woodson

##### Module V

- ❖ *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*, by Sherman Alexie
- ❖ *Wonder*, by R.J. Palacio

\*Supplemental readings/viewings for each Module are provided for students to print out or view in each of the Module checklists.

#### **Major Assignments, Percentage Breakdown**

- ❖ Two colloquies (15% and 20%)
- ❖ Two Projects (20% and 25%)
- ❖ Four Discussion Forums (20%)

#### **Required Existing Competencies**

Students in ENGL 6385 are expected to be able to use a word processing program, conduct library research, create literary analysis in both verbal and written artifacts, and utilize a web camera along with several forms of technology, for which written/verbal direction will be provided.

### **Required Technology for Success**

Students in ENGL 6385 will need a webcam with microphone for filming themselves, a YouTube account where they can upload videos, and social media accounts on Twitter, Instagram, and Pinterest. Students also need a high-speed internet connection for streaming video, downloading and uploading documents and video, or listening to audio. Finally, students should not plan on relying on a smartphone for this class, as upload times are too long and coverage is not always reliable.

### **Students with Special Needs**

If you have a need accompanied by official university paperwork, contact me during the first week of class so that we can meet face-to-face or virtually to discuss accommodations. Students in need of Accessibility links for various technologies used in this class should see this document, which links you to the help you will need. See me as well for further assistance. Additionally, take note of the “Resources” link in the blue bar at the top of any page in our course. Clicking on it takes you to several options for assistance.

### **Description of Major Assignments**

#### *Student-Led Discussion Forums, Moderating and Responding*

Each content-rich Module will have its own Discussion Forum thread, and all will be student-led. Once during the semester, you will work with an assigned work group to plan collaboratively before framing the Module’s thread content for discussion. During the Module, you and your group will moderate the discussion by responding and sustaining conversation. At the end of the Module in which your group moderates, you will submit an executive summary of the responses that the thread’s framing produced in the thread’s final post. You will always perform as a responder, even in the Module in which you are part of a moderating team.

Please see the assignment sheet and accompanying rubric for discussion forum posting, both hyperlinked in Module two. The assignment sheet expounds further on the general ideas here. I have also created a forum for general postings of questions, requests, or conversation. In this forum, you may create threads to discuss ideas or texts. Here, you could also seek a voluntary Peer Review partner or face-to-face discussion with each other.

#### *Colloquies*

A colloquy is a formal conversation. Our class will convene for two colloquies in face-to-face and/or online arenas. There will be assignment sheets and a rubric for each, which include working with your assigned Work Group to conduct a recorded podcast-style conversation that you then share and meeting in a traditional, face-to-face seminar fashion to discuss ideas that each seminarian will post online. Each colloquy’s assignment sheet and corresponding rubric is posted in the appropriate Module. Colloquy work will be uploaded to the appropriate thread in the Module.

#### *Projects*

In both projects, you will work individually to create, research, respond to, and/or write. You will submit your finished product to the appropriate Dropbox. Like colloquies, each

project has an assignment sheet and rubric for evaluation, located in the appropriate Module of study. I assign the second project during Module four even though it is not due until Module five to give you more time for research, drafting, and, should you choose, getting my response prior to submission on July 22.

### **Grading Instruments**

Each assignment is paired with a holistic rubric, wherein students earn grades in several areas. I post each alongside its assignment in the appropriate Module. Each of the earned grades in each area is averaged with the others on the rubric. That average is the grade earned for the assignment. Please examine each rubric carefully as you acquaint yourself with its companion assignment and always ask questions via e-mail, office hours, or schedule appointment, face-to-face or virtual.

Finally, in areas where there are duplications of an assignment—as there will be with forums—the rubric is used five times and then the grades are averaged together. The average then becomes the grade for that particular percentage of the overall course grade.

### **Required Format**

When formatting and citing in written portions of projects or colloquies, use MLA documentation. If you need a refresher on MLA format, please see this [MLA documentation guide](#) and/or feel free to talk with me during virtual office hours or in a scheduled face-to-face appointment. In the forums, focus on MLA documentation as you cite texts so that we can all reference page and/or scene numbers. You do not need Works Cited materials in threads unless someone requests the title of the article/text.

### **Late Work/Make-Up Work\*\***

Face-to-face course components cannot be made up. As a rule, late written work is not accepted except under dire circumstances. However, if you believe you have an extenuating circumstance, contact me via phone, during virtual office hours, or in a face-to-face conference to discuss the problem. At that time, I will determine if an assignment can be turned in late and what deduction, if any, will apply.

\*\*I realize that, occasionally, “life happens” and that some problems beyond your control occur. Never hesitate to discuss problems with assignment deadlines or virtual attendance with me if you feel that your circumstance is dire. With honest and swift communication, many issues can be resolved to your advantage!

### **Modules and Module Overview**

Modules are units of study utilized in online courses. You will click on the “Content” tab at the top of our class’s page in Course Den and then on the Module title in the left-hand sidebar so that you can view the details any given Module ahead. As aforementioned, each Module will open on the start date indicated below. This class is not a self-paced one, since our work relies on individual deep delving and then consistent interacting after our reading. The first item in each Module is a checklist divided into the categories “Read,” “View,” “Discuss,” and “Complete.” Make every effort to read through these checklists first, especially since several contain links to full-text supplementary readings or links to audio/visual files. **I also require that you manually check off items on this list as you finish them. Do not forget to do this, please.**

When possible, items in Modules are due on the last day of them, though some will have due dates staggered to ensure that you stay on track, so make certain to view them. I include all

of them on the course calendar as well. We will complete five Modules this summer, one of which is the Orientation and Introduction Module. Below, I provide an aerial view of the tasks assigned for each content-rich Module. Videos and supplemental readings are linked in each Module's checklist, so, again, make sure to look at each at the *beginning* of each Module.

**Module I (May 31, midnight -June 2, 11:59 p.m.)**

*You will:*

- ❖ Read the Welcome Letter in the Announcements tool.
- ❖ Read the syllabus twice, the second time while watching the accompanying video from me.
- ❖ Read through Resource Links in the Orientation Forum.
- ❖ Take the Syllabus Quiz.
- ❖ Read a secondary article related to one of the overarching themes of the course: empathy and identity formation.
- ❖ Introduce yourself in the Orientation Forum using a technology beyond simply typing.
- ❖ Email Dr. Insenga with any questions or concerns.

**Module II (June 2, midnight- June 15, 11:59):**

*You will:*

- ❖ Read the Module Checklist
- ❖ Read Assignment Sheets and accompanying Rubrics
- ❖ Read *Jellicoe Road*, by Melina Marchetta and *Dizzy in Your Eyes*, by Pat Mora
- ❖ Read and view assigned supplemental materials
- ❖ Participate in Discussion Forum one in either the moderating or responding role
- ❖ Complete Colloquy One

**Module III (June 15, midnight-June 26, 11:59):**

*You will:*

- ❖ Read the Module Checklist
- ❖ Read Assignment Sheets and accompanying Rubrics
- ❖ Read *All American Boys*, by Brendan Kiely and Jason Reynolds and *March*, Book I, by Congressman John Lewis
- ❖ Read assigned supplemental materials
- ❖ Participate in Discussion Forum two in either the moderating or responding role
- ❖ Complete Project One
- ❖ Attend the first face-to-face class meeting on June 21, from 10-12:30 in TLC 1204

**Module IV (June 26, midnight-July 9, 11:59):**

*You will:*

- ❖ Read the Module Checklist
- ❖ Read Assignment Sheets and accompanying Rubrics
- ❖ Read *American Girls*, by Alison Umminger and *The House You Pass Along the Way*, by Jacqueline Woodson
- ❖ Read assigned supplemental materials
- ❖ Watch instructional videos pertaining to reading and Colloquy Two
- ❖ Complete Colloquy Two
- ❖ Begin brainstorming and planning for Project Two

**Module V (July 9, midnight-July 22, 11:59):**

*You will:*

- ❖ Read the Module Checklist
- ❖ Read Assignment Sheets and accompanying Rubrics
- ❖ Read *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*, by Sherman Alexie and *Wonder*, by R. J Palacio
- ❖ Read assigned supplemental materials
- ❖ Complete Project Two
- ❖ Attend the second face-to-face class meeting on July 19, from 1-3:30 in TLC 1204

### **Words on Workload in this Course**

All summer classes present challenges because of time constraints. Eight-week summer graduate seminars must cover the same amount of work as is typically completed during a fifteen-week semester. Thus, summer online graduate classes can offer us more challenges to overcome creatively, since the bulk of your work—reading, annotating, discussing, and composing—requires you to be a self-starter. Your commitment to complete focus, responsible engagement, and striving for your own intellectual growth is vital. If you struggle, your commitment to obtaining my help is also an imperative. Luckily, the bulk of the reading for this class is for adolescents, so you will not struggle to complete these easier, sometimes shorter, works alongside a few scholarly pieces.

We have a great deal of material to read and discuss together, so staying on track should be a primary goal, as our adolescent students say, “from the get.” In short: woe betide the student who falls behind during our eight-week slog towards YA dominance!

## **THE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

### **University-Wide Policies**

Please read the information found at [this link](#), where policies governing all courses are housed. Pay attention to those related to online courses, the honor code, and getting extra help, personal or professional.

### **Netiquette**

Communication in an online environment requires special consideration, or what we call "Netiquette." Here are some guidelines for productive communication, which I adapt from San Diego Community College's Distance Learning division:

- ❖ *Show Professionalism and Courtesy.* Exhibit the same professionalism and respect in the online class as you would in the physical classroom and workplace.
- ❖ *Use Correct Spelling and Grammar.* Adhere to correct spelling and grammar convention. It is good practice to compose your message in a word processing program where you can check your spelling and grammar prior to sending. Avoid typing in all capital letters, as this is considered to be shouting (“flaming”). Avoid abbreviations and texting language (e.g. “WTF” “OMG” “LMFAO”).
- ❖ *Use a Positive Tone.* Before hitting the “Send” or “Submit” button, review your message. The ease and speed of the Internet makes it easy to say something you could regret later. Remember: you are communicating with other human beings who have feelings, sensitivities, and opinions. When composing a message, ask yourself, "Would I say this to the person face-to-face?"
- ❖ *Follow the Course Discussion Board Guidelines.* Make sure that you are posting in the correct forum topic and read all postings in that topic prior to posting your message to

avoid needless repetition. Keep in mind that each of our forums has several topics in which you will respond, so, again, keeping this suggestion in mind is a must.

- ❖ *Be Respectful of Others' Time.* Think carefully about who the recipients of your email should be. Avoid sending an e-mail to the entire class, unless you feel that everyone must read it. Please also remember that Dr. Insenga needs 24 hours to respond, so sending multiple emails is not appropriate unless it has been over 24 hours.
- ❖ *Use descriptive subject lines for email messages and discussion board postings.* Title your threads appropriately, always using your first and/or last name so that I—and others—can locate your work with ease. If you post in the general or query forum, title your threads specifically so that we can easily assess whether or not they can contribute productively.
- ❖ When in a Discussion Forum, make sure not to continuously repost the original post or entire long posts of your peers'. Instead, copy and paste portions to which you want to respond. That way, threads are more manageable, requiring less scrolling.

### **Physical and Virtual Attendance**

As announced on Banweb, via email, and in the course advertisement, we meet face-to-face twice this semester. Make every possible effort to attend these classes to avoid losing credit opportunities. Should there be a significant barrier to attending these sessions, please schedule an appointment with me to discuss it right away. In some cases, there could be a solution.

One of the benefits of an online course environment is that you can log in at virtually any time. During our eight-week semester, I cannot imagine a scenario in which you do not log in *at least* once per day to check for new discussion posts, to check email, or to read the Announcements. I make use of the statistics tool in Course Den to measure reading and responding activity. Should I note that you are not often logging into our class's page and/or that online absence correlates with missed or poor work, I will invite you to an online or face-to-face conference to discuss problems you may be having with online learning in an attempt to help you find resolutions for betterment.

### **Office Hours and Discussion**

I list my virtual office hours at the top of this document, and I welcome face-to-face appointments as well.

I do need to say a few words 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](#).

For you, this means that I cannot guarantee confidentiality if you come to me and tell me about an instance of sexual misconduct. I must report. However, the following locations and/or individuals can offer confidential support, and I strongly encourage you to talk to them. I can help you contact these places, too, and I can accompany you, if you would like. You are still welcomed to talk to me about such issues; but know that, since I am not a trained professional

counselor and I am most concerned with your health, I must report and will always encourage you to obtain help to ensure your safety and well-being. Below are various confidential places on campus to go for help. 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: <a href="mailto:counseling@westga.edu">counseling@westga.edu</a></p>
<p><u>HEALTH SERVICES</u> 678-839-6452</p>	<p><u>PATIENT /VICTIM ADVOCATES</u> 678-839-0641; 678-839-5338 (after hours 678-839-6000)</p>