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LIT 6855; R E1-3  
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& by appointment

## **Young/Adult: American Literatures of Adolescence**

This syllabus is online at: <http://www.clas.ufl.edu/users/kkidd/index.html>

### **Texts**

Louisa May Alcott, *Little Women*  
Laurie Halse Anderson, *Speak*  
M. T. Anderson, *Feed*  
Francesca Lia Block, *Weetzie Bat*  
Judy Blume, *Forever*  
Elinor Burkett, *Another Planet*  
Frank Chin, *Donald Duk*  
Robert Cormier, *I Am the Cheese*  
Maureen Daly, *Seventeenth Summer*  
Sigmund Freud, *Dora: An Analysis of a Case of Hysteria*  
Phoebe Glockner, *Diary of a Teenage Girl*  
Virginia Hamilton, *Sweet Whispers, Brother Rush*  
Karen Hesse, *Out of the Dust*  
S. E. Hinton, *The Outsiders*  
David Levithan, *Boy Meets Boy*  
William Maxwell, *The Folded Leaf*  
Carson McCullers, *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter*  
Robin McKinley, *The Hero and the Crown*  
Margaret Mead, *Coming of Age in Samoa*  
Leerom Medovoi, *Rebels*  
J. D. Salinger, *The Catcher in the Rye*  
Roberta Seelinger Trites, *Disturbing the Universe*  
Jean Webster, *Daddy Long-Legs*

Books have been ordered at Goering's.

Additional required readings are available through the e-reserves of Smathers Library, under LIT 6855/Kidd:

<http://eres.uflib.ufl.edu/eres/default.aspx>

You should be able to access these materials on and off campus, and you'll need Adobe Reader. These are scans and the quality's not great on screen, but printouts look fine. I

have posted other essays there as well, and we'll likely add more as we come across materials in our investigations -- let me know what to add to the mix.

## Overview

This seminar will track the adolescent, the teenager, and the young adult across twentieth and early twenty-first century American culture by way of what's broadly called "adolescent literature." We'll keep that term open even as we question particular histories that have been offered thus far and think about the pros and cons of particular periodizations and methodological/conceptual approaches. We'll read about fin-de-siècle European texts, but our main focus will be American literatures of adolescence, not only imaginative work but also psychoanalytic, anthropological, historical and pop-journalistic writing. We'll consider how different academic disciplines, English studies among them, study adolescence and its narrative forms. Thanks largely to post-1960s usage of the term "young adult," histories of adolescent literature typically begin with postwar work such as *Catcher in the Rye* (1951), and/or *The Outsiders* (1967); we'll seek to complicate the usual story of YA emergence and the upbeat developmental psychology that underwrites such. We'll look at a range of narrative and visual genres and watch *Blackboard Jungle* (1955). The material is fun, it's true -- but be prepared to read a lot. Our larger mission, should you choose to accept it, will be to gesture toward a comprehensive cultural account of our subject, one informed by social history and textual analysis as well as critical theory and progressive criticism.

## Assignments and Grading

This is a seminar, so careful preparation, faithful attendance and active participation are essential. More than one absence from class may result in a grade penalty.

You will turn in around 25 pp. of written work over the course of the semester. Depending on your needs and goals for the course, this may take one of three forms: 1) three short papers of around 8 pp.; 2) Two "medium length" papers of around 10-12 pp. each; or 3) one long seminar paper of about 25 pp. If you are a PhD student, I would advise you against option 1, but we can negotiate. If you do choose to write the long paper, you may include the earlier work, as long as you develop that work further. Essays do not have to be connected, as long as they all deal with American literatures of adolescence. Anyone can upgrade to the longer paper if the short or medium papers have potential for greater development. If you plan from the start to write the long paper, you are not required to write the shorter papers, but you must submit a paper prospectus of 2-3 pp. to me by the end of October, along with a bibliography.

My expectation is that the short and medium-length papers will offer analysis of relevant texts and will be informed by criticism and/or theory (that is, by scholarship). All essays need a clear and compelling argument and need to be conceptually and stylistically sharp.

A final requirement is that you serve as discussion leader one day. I do not expect you to direct discussion for the entire three hours, but you must do the following: 1) give an oral response to and analysis of the assigned reading for at least fifteen minutes -- this time may include questions and you may also bring in related material; and 2) take an active role in the subsequent discussion.

Leading discussion and participation: 25%  
Seminar essay(s): 75%

## Reading Schedule

### August

- 24     **Introduction(s).** Neubauer; Spacks, Ch. 1; Hine; Trites, Ch. 1.  
31     **Then and Now.** Yampbell; Alcott, *Little Women*; Anderson, *Speak*.

### September

- 7       **Psychic Life.** Hall excerpts; Kristeva; Spacks, Ch. 9. Begin *Dora*.  
14     Freud, *Dora*; Webster, *Daddy Long-Legs*.  
21     **The Ethnographic Imaginary.** Mead, *Coming of Age in Samoa*; Burkett, *Another Planet* or Hersch's *A Tribe Apart*.  
28     **The "Junior Novel" and Beyond.** McCullers, *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter*; Daly, *Seventeenth Summer*; Maxwell, *The Folded Leaf*; Thompson. First short paper due.

### October

- 5       **Identity/Politics.** *The Catcher in the Rye*; Medovoi, Ch. 1-2; Trites, Ch. 2.  
12     Medovoi, *Rebels*, Ch. 3-4; Doherty; screening and discussion of *Blackboard Jungle*.  
19     Hinton, *The Outsiders*; Cormier, *I Am the Cheese*; Trites, Ch. 3.  
26     **Experiments in Form.** Hesse, *Out of the Dust*; Myers, *Monster*. Second short paper due. First "medium" paper due. Long essay prospectus due.

### November

- 2       **Sex and Roses.** Blume, *Forever*; Levithan, *Boy Meets Boy*; Sedgwick; Trites, Ch. 4.; Medovoi, Ch. 7.  
9       **Memory Work.** Chin, *Donald Duk*; Hamilton, *Sweet Whispers, Brother Rush*; Chiu.

- 16     **Fantasy.** McKinley, *The Hero and the Crown*; Block, *Weetzie Bat*; Crews;  
          Trites, Ch. 5 and conclusion.
- 23     Thanksgiving; no class.
- 30     **The Cyber Age.** Gloeckner, *Diary of a Teenage Girl*; Anderson, *Feed*; Latham.

Final essay(s) due December 12. No extensions.