

Dr. Kenneth Kidd  
LIT 4333  
T/R 7/7-8  
Fall 2010

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Office: TUR 4103  
Hours: T 8-9, R9  
& by appointment

## *Literature for the Adolescent*

This syllabus also posted here: <http://grove.ufl.edu/~kbkidd/> and on the eLearning portal.

### **Texts**

Sherman Alexie, *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*  
Laurie Halse Anderson, *Speak*  
M.T. Anderson, *Feed*  
Christopher Barzak, *One for Sorrow*  
Judy Blume, *Forever*  
Suzanne Collins, *The Hunger Games*  
Maureen Daly, *Seventeenth Summer*  
Virginia Hamilton, *Sweet Whispers, Brother Rush*  
S. E. Hinton, *The Outsiders*  
Pete Hautman, *Godless*  
Carson McCullers, *The Member of the Wedding*  
Walter Dean Myers, *Monster*  
Ariel Schrag, *Potential*  
Sean Stewart and Jordan Weisman, *Cathy's Book*

All books have been ordered by the university bookstore (Follett) in the Union. You may of course purchase them elsewhere.

There are also readings on e-reserves, under LIT 4333/Kidd. Go to <https://ares.uflib.ufl.edu/> and follow the prompts. \*\*Please bring these readings to class on the day we're discussing them (paper or electronic form), or be able to recall in detail.

We will be experimenting with eLearning in Sakai for essay/project submission (optional) and grade reporting. Go to <https://elearning2courses.ufl.edu/>

### **Overview**

This section of LIT 4333 will concentrate on contemporary young adult (YA) literature, with reference to the history of adolescence and of adolescent/young adult literature as well as to twentieth-century American culture more broadly. The course will pay attention to YA texts as individual works but also as part of the contemporary scene of young adult publishing, prize-giving, and reviewing, and so forth -- that is, we'll look at the cultural machinery through which "young adult" literature has been invented, sustained, and transformed through the current moment. We'll consider the entanglement of literary and cultural understandings of adolescence, and make use of relevant scholarship in history, social science, and literary criticism

Although I will sometimes provide you with background information, for which you are responsible, we will conduct class as a seminar, which means that participation is vital. Please

come to class every day on time having read the assigned material. Be ready to share your responses. On occasion I may ask you to work in small groups.

Unless otherwise noted, complete the literary reading the FIRST day it's listed on the reading schedule.

### **Attendance Policy**

Your participation is vital, and attendance is mandatory. You are allowed to miss two class sessions without explanation. For each subsequent missed class without a doctor's note I reserve the right to reduce your final course grade one-half of a letter grade. If you are not here when I take attendance -- usually at the beginning of class, but sometimes at the end -- you will be counted absent. If you are late, you will be marked absent. If you have attendance challenges, or are often late, please do not sign up for this class.

### **Academic Honesty**

All students are required to abide by the Academic Honesty Guidelines which have been accepted by the University. The academic community of students and faculty at the University of Florida strives to develop, sustain and protect an environment of honesty, trust and respect. Students are expected to pursue knowledge with integrity. Exhibiting honesty in academic pursuits and reporting violations of the Academic Honesty Guidelines will encourage others to act with integrity. Violations of the Academic Honesty Guidelines shall result in judicial action and a student being subject to the sanctions in paragraph XIV of the Student Conduct Code. The conduct set forth hereinafter constitutes a violation of the Academic Honesty Guidelines (University of Florida Rule 6C1\_4.017). For more information about academic honesty, including definitions of plagiarism and collusion, see: <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/judicial/academic.php>.

### **Students with Disabilities**

The Disability Resource Center in the Dean of Students Office provides students and faculty with information and support regarding accommodations for students with disabilities in the classroom. Staff at the Disability Resource Center will assist any student who registers as having a disability. Official documentation of a disability is required to determine eligibility for appropriate classroom accommodations. The professional employees at the Disability Resource Program serve as full-time advocates for students with disabilities ensuring students have physical and programmatic access to all college programs. For more information about Student Disability Services, see: <http://www.ufl.edu/disability/>

### **Harassment**

It is the policy of The University of Florida to provide an educational and working environment for its students, faculty and staff that is free from sex discrimination and sexual harassment. In accordance with federal and state law, the University prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex, including sexual harassment. Sex discrimination and sexual harassment will not be tolerated, and individuals who engage in such conduct will be subject to disciplinary action. The University encourages students, faculty, staff and visitors to promptly report sex discrimination and sexual harassment. For more, see: <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/> and <http://www.hr.ufl.edu/eo/harassment.htm>

## Electronic Media

You may bring a laptop, ebook reader, or tablet to class for the purpose of note-taking and reviewing assigned articles. Please do not surf the web, check email, check Facebook, etc. If I discover such activity happening you will be forced back into the dark ages of traditional print. Please put your cell phones on silent. NO TEXTING during class. Refraining from such will build character.

## Assignments and Grading

No late work accepted.

Memos. You will write 10 reading responses of 1-2 s-s., typed pages each. Out of some thwarted business urge I call such a response a "memo." The memo is simply a short meditation on the assigned reading. Your memo should offer a response to the book as a whole; don't turn in a memo if you haven't finished the assignment. You may address a number of issues or focus more in-depth on one or two; just be as specific as you can, and support your responses with examples and details from the text.

I do not expect you to have a thorough interpretation, but your memo should offer some kind of evaluation or analysis of the book. In other words, it should be more than simply random or unconnected thoughts about the work. Focus on the text as a text, and on the author's writing or plot strategies – in other words, get beyond your response to characters in the text. If you like, you may make use of outside readings (biographical sketches, scholarly articles, websites, etc.). This assignment is designed to stimulate class discussion, and to help you remember the texts and generate paper ideas.

You may choose which texts to write about, but you must turn in your memo in class on the first day we discuss the novel about which you are writing. No exceptions. If there is also an article assigned that day, I expect you to address it as well, preferably in connection with the literary text.

I will grade each memo and average the grades with any quizzes that might be given.

Quizzes. There may be unannounced quizzes which you may not make up unless you can provide documentation of illness or emergency. These quizzes will usually consist of 3-4 short questions about the reading that you can answer in several sentences or less.

Essay 1. Write a short analysis of any work of young adult literature. You may develop the essay any way you like, as long as you have an argument and draw from supporting evidence. Part of the challenge is to identify a worthwhile subject and approach. No biographical criticism, although you may use some biographical data. I'd be happy to discuss possibilities. One option might be to select one of the many book awards for adolescent literature, and do an analysis of how a particular title does or does not meet the award criteria. But the topic is open.

\*\*You may write on one of the books we're reading in class. But if you do, you must go beyond the class discussion, or take a different line of interpretation than the ones we followed in class.

Minimum 5 d-s pp.

You may give this to me in class, OR you may submit it to eLearning by the beginning of class in the form of a Word Document. I will use track changes to make comments and return to you. Either method of submission is fine.

Essay 2/Project. Write a longer analysis of a young adult genre or topic or text, using at least literary text that we have NOT read in class, and at least two secondary, scholarly sources

(these may be taken from critical essays or chapters we've read for class). Please ask me if you're not sure if your source is scholarly. If you like, you may instead use a particular critical methodology to illuminate and connect two texts. You may also revisit the topic of your short essay, provided you develop it considerably and get my approval beforehand. Whatever you choose to do, advance specific argument and support your claims. Some biographical information may be appropriate, but this paper should not be a biographical essay.

7-10 d-s pp.

**or**

In lieu of the critical essay, you may plan and begin work on a young adult writing project of some kind, probably a novel but perhaps a work of poetry or nonfiction, even a play. If you would like to work on such a project, you must let me know of your plans by mid-October, even though of course the piece will continue to evolve as you work on it. I will evaluate your project according to both its quality and the energy you put into it, with the understanding that a good faith effort with relatively few writing errors can earn you an "A." In other words, I do not expect literary genius -- though that would be nice for everyone, you especially -- but I do expect you to put in some real time and effort. Your mission, should you choose to accept it, is to produce at least the following:

1. A chapter-by-chapter outline, or possibly a detailed section outline;
2. A complete first chapter;
3. Another fairly complete section, preferably a later one, which might include important scenes and dialogue; and
4. A short explanation of how you got your ideas and how they changed (if they changed) in the process of brainstorming, writing, and revising.

If you model your work on other writings, you might want to photocopy relevant sections and attach them as well. Probably it would be best to assemble a portfolio or folder so that these individual items don't get separated.

Be forewarned: this is the fun option, but also the more difficult one in terms of time and energy commitment.

You may give this to me in class, OR you may submit it to eLearning by the beginning of class in the form of a Word Document. I will use track changes to make comments and return to you. Either method of submission is fine.

Active Participation. You will receive a grade for active participation, which means coming to class regularly and on time, paying attention, asking questions, and contributing to in-class discussion. You must do all of these things in order to receive an A for participation. If you are habitually late, you will NOT receive an A for participation. If you have a habit of paying more attention to your laptop or cellphone than to class discussion, your participation grade will suffer.

Essay 1	25%
Essay 2/Project	40%
Memos and quizzes	25%
Active participation	10%

Grade Scale. I give A's to essays using an original and spirited argument to illuminate complexities of language and theme. I give B's to well-organized, well-developed, relatively error-free essays with sparks of originality or daring, and B-'s to competent essays needing more

complex development and/or clearer focus. Lower grades mean greater problems with development, structure, and grammar. Recurrent grammatical errors lower the grade; occasional spelling errors and typos don't. Proof your essays! The best essays sustain complex and or audacious arguments; a good B essay capably summarizes and compares themes.

I give all assignments letter grades, but will calculate grades numerically.

To determine your grade, I use the following point equivalences:

A+	100
A	95
A-	90
B+	87
B	85
B-	80
C+	77
C	75
C-	70
D+	67
D	65
D-	60
E	0

Because UF recently instituted minus grades, final letter grades now have these point equivalencies:

A	4.0
A-	3.67
B+	3.33
B	3.0
B-	2.67
C+	2.33
C	2.0
C-	1.67
D+	1.33
D	1.0
D-	0.67
E	0.00

For details, see <http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/regulationgrades.html>

You can access grades on eLearning as assignments are graded, except for individual memos and quizzes. At semester's end, you will see grades for Essay 1, Essay 2/Project, memos and quizzes (total), and participation, as well as your final course grade.

### Reading Schedule

#### *August*

T 8/24	Introductions
R 8/26	Kristeva, Hunt; begin Baxter, Neubauer, Griffin

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 T 8/31 Baxter, Neubauer, Griffin. Read at least half of *Seventeenth Summer*

*September*

R 9/2 *Seventeenth Summer*

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 T 9/7 *The Member of the Wedding*  
 R 9/9 Sedgwick; *The Member of the Wedding*

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 T 9/14 *The Outsiders*  
 R 9/16 Tribunella, *The Outsiders*

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 T 9/21 Trites, Cadden  
 R 9/23 No class. Read *Sweet Whispers, Brother Rush*

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 T 9/28 *Sweet Whispers, Brother Rush*  
 R 9/30 *One for Sorrow*

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*October*

T 10/5 *Forever*; Miskec & McGee  
 R 10/7 *Speak*

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 T 10/12 *Speak*  
 R 10/14 In-class documentary, *American Teen*

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 T 10/19 Discuss *American Teen*.  
 R 10/21 *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*. Essay 1 due.

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 T 10/26 *Diary continued; Godless*  
 R 10/28 *Godless*

*November*

T 11/2 *Monster*  
 R 11/4 *Monster*

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 T 11/9 *Potential*  
 R 11/11 No class (Veteran's Day). Finish *Potential* and begin *Feed*

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 T 11/16 *Potential*  
 R 11/18 *Feed*

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 T 11/23 *Cathy's Book; Feed*.  
 R 11/25 No class (Thanksgiving). Begin *The Hunger Games*. Perfect for Thanksgiving.

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 T 11/30 *The Hunger Games*

*December*

R 12/2 Evaluations; *The Hunger Games*

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T 12/7 Conclusions, reports on final papers/projects.

Essay 2/Projects due **Monday, December 13**. No exceptions.