

The University of Arizona
College of Education, Department of Teaching, Learning and Sociocultural Studies
Program of Language, Reading and Culture

LRC 285: Learning about Adolescence Through Literature

In this course we will explore and critique adolescent literature to make connections between literature and youth identity development.

Instructor: Desiree W. Cueto

Required Texts:

1. Sherman Alexi, *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-time Indian*
2. Laurie Halse Anderson, *Speak* (optional)
3. Stephen Chbosky, *Perks of Being a Wallflower*
4. Sandra Cisneros, *The House on Mango Street*
5. Alex Sanchez, *So Hard to Say*
6. Rita William-Garcia, *Jumped*
7. Gene Yang, *American Born Chinese*
8. Choose three additional theme-related books (we will discuss in class)

Sources of adolescent literature

- Room 455 paperback collection from which books will be assigned
- Pima County Public Library or school libraries
- University of Arizona Main Library
- International Collection of Children's and Adolescent Literature (Room 453), during open reading hours (non-circulating collection)

Course Description

This course explores the social and psychological needs and attitudes of adolescents primarily through literature. We will read and evaluate books and non-print materials for young people between the ages of 12 and 18. Responses to materials will be personal, aesthetic, and intellectual in order to increase our understanding of the issues that surround this age group.

Course Objectives

Students will construct the many dimensions of youth culture through reading key topics in adolescent literature broadly and deeply.

Students will identify, select, and discuss a broad range of adolescent literature representing a variety of time periods, diverse cultures, and types of authors.

Students will respond critically, analytically and aesthetically to young adult literature.

Students will be aware of and use new literacies (digital adolescent resources, such as blogs and discussion boards/webs) and media (movies, You Tube, etc.) in conjunction with adolescent literature.

Students will apply current critical theory, discussion strategies, and reading strategies to the use of adolescent literature.

Our class experiences are based on the following beliefs about learning (taken from work by Dr. Kathy Short):

1. Learning is an active process.
We will immerse ourselves into reading and responding in various ways to many children's books.
2. Learning is a social process of collaborating with others.
We will explore our thinking about our reading through dialogue in small groups. There will be many opportunities for informal interaction and sharing about literature in small group and whole class experiences.
3. Learning occurs when we make connections to our own experiences.
We will respond to literature through making personal connections to our reading and then exploring and critically examining those responses in literature circles with other readers. Our focus will not be on a specific literary interpretation. We will make decisions about the books we read and the resources we develop based on our needs and experiences as individuals and as teachers and librarians.
4. Choice allows learners to connect to their experiences and feel ownership in the curriculum.
We will have choices in what we read, how we respond, and the specific focus of projects and small group activities.
5. Learning is reflective as well as active.
We will have many opportunities to reflect on what we are learning through writing, talking, and self-evaluations.
6. We live in a culturally diverse world.
We will explore literature from a multicultural and international orientation to expand our understanding of the cultural pluralism in children's lives and world.
7. Learning is a process of inquiry.
We will search out the questions that matter in our lives and develop strategies for exploring those questions and sharing our understandings with others.

STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES ON MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION (LRC)

The term "multicultural education" expresses the essential mission of the department and the university. Multicultural education is not just "about" certain subjects; it does not merely offer "perspectives" on education. It is an orientation to our purposes in education--and ultimately an orientation to life, one that values diversity of viewpoints and experiences and sees people as

valuable contributors to the experience of school and society. Life in universities is a self-consciously multicultural. Learners bring a variety of linguistic and cognitive strengths from their families, communities and nations into the classroom; these strengths are resources to be appreciated. Education must expand on the linguistic and cognitive strengths that learners already possess and bring with them to the classroom, rather than ignore or try to replace them with others. Respect and appreciation for cultural and community knowledge means that universities serve the interest of education when they allow for an exchange of views, rather than rely exclusively on a transmission model of instruction. We recognize the existence of a variety of communities--each with its own voice and interests--both within and outside the university; a broad education offers the opportunity to hear and study as many of these voices as possible. Such an accommodation must include those communities, which have traditionally been excluded or under-represented in the university. Recognition of the validity of these general principles is reflected in our courses, our relations with students, staff and other faculty members, and in the community life of LRC.

ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION

Class attendance and participation are essential to this course. This course has been designed as a highly experiential course involving literature discussion groups, and class discussions. You cannot make up for absences by getting class notes or reading the text. It is essential that you actively participate in class sharing times, literature circles, project groups, and responses. Active participation includes reading books for each week's literature circles and preparing for these discussions. In addition, each class member will participate in short engagements for class sessions. ***More than one absence and/or chronic tardiness and leaving early will lower your grade for the class.*** If you must miss a class session, please provide a note explaining your absence. Make arrangements to talk with me after our regular class session about your reasons for the absence and your plans for **making up the work of the class you missed**. Also immediately contact a class member to find out what you need to prepare for the next class session. ***Late assignments will affect your final grade.***

Holidays - Absences or special events observed by organized religions will be honored for those students who show affiliation with that particular religion. Absences pre-approved by the UA Dean of Students (Dean's designee) will be honored.

Disabilities: If you anticipate issues related to the format or requirements of this course, please meet with me during office hours or by appointment. I would like us to discuss ways to ensure your full participation in the course. If you determine that formal, disability-related accommodations are necessary, it is very important that you be registered with Disability Resources (621-3268; drc.arizona.edu) and notify me of your eligibility for reasonable accommodations. We can then plan how best to coordinate your accommodations.

EVALUATION:

Your course grade will be based, holistically, on both your self-evaluations and my evaluations of your growth and learning related to the course objectives, the quality of your work and projects, and your attendance, participation, and preparation for class. The course requirements and experiences discussed in this syllabus are minimum standards for the course. ***Working hard and meeting course requirements qualifies as a B. Exceeding those requirements in a significant way qualifies as an A. Not meeting the requirements qualifies as a grade lower than a B.*** Absences, tardiness, leaving early, incomplete and/or late work will lower your final grade. Incompletes will not be given for the course except in extreme situations and only with prior approval by the instructor.

The breakdown of grading in this course will be as indicated below

Assignment	Max Points
Bio Box Introduction	10
Personal Goals and Syllabus Review	10
Revisiting and Event from Adolescence	10
Weekly Reader Responses	50
Theme Presentation	25
Mini Inquiry 1	25
Mini Inquiry 2	25
Mid-term Examination	25
Final Inquiry Project	50
Final Examination	50

280 - 252 = A

251 – 224 = B

223 – 196 = C

195 – 168 = D

Below 168 = F

Learning Experiences

Weekly Readings and Research:

In this course, we will discuss themes related to youth culture in two-week blocks. We will read one or two books related to each theme. We will further research the theme being covered in class by conducting interviews and observations and by locating secondary sources such as videos, blogs, online chats and professional articles that support your understanding of the theme. Come to class prepared to present and discuss these secondary sources along with the book you have selected for that week.

In Class Activities and Literature Discussion:

Activities to enhance connections to adolescent literature will be introduced throughout the semester. See Appendix A for examples of these activities (engagements), which are drawn from

Creating Classrooms for Authors and Inquirers, Kathy G. Short & Jerome Harste, Heinemann, 1996.

Course Requirements

1. Bio Boxes

Many of the texts of teen years are not in books. On the first two days of classes we will share our bio boxes (no size requirement, small bags, boxes, handmade or decorated shoe boxes are fine) filled with items that were special and meaningful to each of us during our adolescent years. Sharing pictures of friends and family is always relevant, but I'm also looking for artifacts that show the class who **you** were as an adolescent.

2. Personal Goals

The purpose of the statement of goals is to provide you with decision-making related to what and how you learn within the course and with the evaluation of your learning. Read through the syllabus and think about:

What do you particularly want to accomplish during this course?

How will you go about reaching these goals?

Which of these learning experiences will be new for you?

What support will you need in reaching these goals?

3. Revisiting a Significant Event from your Adolescence

Reflect on your past experiences and choose something that was particularly significant for you as an adolescent. Write a narrative about that particular event—tell the story about the context in which you came to experience this, who was involved, and how you thought about that particular moment. Also reflect on how that experience connects to your own history as a teen. Revisit that time and write a second narrative in which you tell the story about your current response to this experience. What is the experience of revisiting this time like for you? What kinds of connections, ideas, issues, and thoughts come to your mind during this revisit? When you finish the second narrative, reread both of your narratives and add a reflection on how and why the two responses compare. How and why are they similar and different? **Bring the responses with you to class.**

4. Mini- Inquiries

After completing certain books, we will identify questions, issues, or ideas that have developed through reading and discussion. Each class member will choose a focus for a mini-inquiry during the following week and will hand in a reflection on that mini-inquiry. The reflection will consist of a description of the question, issue, or idea and why it was important to you, what you did, and what you found through your data. The mini-inquiries might involve conducting field research, interviews, or surveys with adolescents, school or community settings or trying out response engagements with readers to name a few.

5. Weekly Responses

Reflection is an important element in learning and in this class. The function of these weekly exercises is to provide you with an opportunity to reflect, respond, question, or comment about what you are reading. These exercises will vary from book to book. However, the focus will always be your personal responses to readings. The responses should not be a summary of the readings, but rather thinking about how what you are reading connects with you personally. The work should help you prepare to contribute to discussions.

6. Presentation of Themes:

With two or three partners, you will take a theme and present it to the class on a date you will sign up for. Each member of the group will be responsible for finding outside sources on the theme. You are encouraged to talk to your group members and to me about your presentation outside of class. Be prepared to present for approximately fifteen to twenty minutes on your scheduled day and each group member will bring in an annotated bibliography (citation plus a small paragraph on the relevance of the information to your theme). In addition to your theme presentation, you will also complete the statement, "You'll love these books if you like ..." with a list of other books that connect to theme you have presented.

7. Final Inquiry Project

This is an opportunity to explore a topic of your own interest and to dig deeply into a facet of adolescent literature that intrigues you. Choose a topic, issue, or question related to adolescent literature that interests you and examine how that idea is portrayed in adolescent literature and how adolescent and professional literature can inform you. We can negotiate what form this project will take.

Write and copy an annotated bibliography to give to everyone in the class that includes your "review" of each book.

8. Mid-Term and Final Exam

The mid-term consists of a number of questions that allow you to reflect on your learning in class and the structure of the class itself. The final exam consists of written questions and will take place **Monday, December 10 from 6-8**. Plan to be there for the entire two hours.

THEME	IN CLASS	AT HOME (due the following class)
Week 1, Aug 20 <i>Self and identity</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Introductions, policy, syllabus - Course overview - Books - Significant Event - Bio-Boxes - Photos 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Personal Goals/Syllabus Review - Revisit a significant event from your adolescence. - Bio-Boxes (if not completed)
Week 2, Aug 27 <i>Self and identity</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sign up for theme presentations - Finish Bio-Boxes - Film Clip - Inside/Outside perception activity - Share significant event - Turn in Personal Goals, Syllabus Review and Significant Event 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Read: <i>Perks of Being a Wallflower</i> - Read: Teen Depression on D2L - Print: Song Lyrics to go with the book - Write: 3 quotes from the book on index cards. On the flip side, your thoughts about these quotes.
Week 3, Sept 10 <i>Self and Peers</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Theme presentation - Film Clip - Literature Circle Discussion (Perks) Save the Last Word discussion strategy - Song Lyrics - Turn in all work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Read: <i>American Born Chinese</i> - Mark: Use post-its to mark your connections and tensions in this book - Write: An letter to one character in the book...
Week 4, Sept 17 <i>Self and Peers</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Introduce <i>American Born Chinese</i> - Literature Circle discussion (<i>ABC</i>)—cultural insider/outsider - Share letters - Turn in all work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Read: Literature Circle book - Draft: A teen interest inventory - Draft: Interview Questions
Week 5, Sept 24 <i>Preoccupations</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Theme presentation - Literature Circle discussion (free choice) - Share drafts - Brainstorm - Final Draft 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Read: Essay 1 on Adolescence - Mini Inquiry 1—Interview: a local teen & transcribe interview - Bring: an artifact from this generation
Week 6, Oct 1 <i>Preoccupations</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Theme presentation - Film: <i>Thirteen</i> - Literature Circle discussion (essay 1) - Share and analyze interviews - Today's Teen Museum browse 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Read: <i>The House on Mango Street</i> - Read: <i>Where I Am From</i> - Write: Where I am from poem Or, write a reflection or create a visual on what home is to you
Week 7, Oct 8 <i>Self and Family</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Theme presentation - Literature Circle discussion (<i>HMS</i>) - Share poems or representations of home - Mid-term 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Read: <i>Jumped</i> - Mini Inquiry 2—Observe: a teen scene - Write: Notes on your observation - Collage images & words from observation

Week 8, Oct 15 <i>Self and School</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Theme presentation - Literature Circle discussion (<i>Jumped</i>) - Share observations - Share collages - Turn in all work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Read: <i>So Hard to Say</i> - Read: LGBTQ article on D2L - Design: a Story Ray - Create: A character sketch - Add: Dialogue
Week 9, Oct 22 <i>Self and Community</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Theme presentation - Guest Speaker (Wingspan) - Share Story Rays - Literature Circle discussion (<i>SHS</i>) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Read: Essay 2 on Adolescence - Write: A reflection based on your connections and tensions with the essay.
Week 10, Oct 29 <i>Self and Community</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Theme presentation - Film: <i>Pariah</i> - Web connections between book/movie/article - Turn in all work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Read: <i>Absolutely True Diary...</i> - Read: Sherman Alexi article on D2L - Answer: Questions about Natives in America - Track: One character's life - Reflect on the effects of racism on teens.
Week 11, Nov 5 <i>Relating across Cultures</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Theme presentation - Literature Circle discussion (<i>ATDPI</i>) - Film Clip - Turn in all work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Read: Literature Circle Book - Read: Racism Article on D2L - Create: A Wanted Poster - Write: Final Inquiry Proposal
Week 12, Nov 19 <i>Relating across Cultures</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Theme presentation - Literature Circle discussion (free choice) - Share Wanted Posters - Share final inquiry proposals - Turn in all work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Read: <i>Speak</i> or Literature Circle Book - Read: Essay 3 on Adolescents - Create: Text-to-Text/Text-to-World chart
Week 13, Nov 26 <i>Difficult Life Situations</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Theme presentation - Literature Circle discussion (essay) - Film: <i>Speak</i> - Final Inquiry project work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Finish Final Inquiries
Week 14, Dec 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Final Inquiry Presentations - Course Evaluations 	Almost there....
Week 15 Dec 10	Final Exam 6:00-8:00pm	Have a wonderful break!!!!

