

**George Mason University**  
**College of Education & Human Development**  
**Division of Elementary, Literacy and Secondary Education**

EDPD502.632 Young Adult Literature (3 credits)  
Wednesdays, 4:30-7:30 PM  
Forest Park High School Library

**KEY INFORMATION**

PROFESSOR: Lisa Manikas

Office hours: Wednesdays, 3:00-4:00PM or by appointment

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**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

LAA 690, “Young Adult Literature” examines the historical development of literary works written for and about adolescents. It introduces critical issues surrounding the use and teaching of young adult literature in today’s culturally diverse public schools; and requires the reading and review of young adult literature in a variety of genres. It also focuses on the study of respected authors in depth and using young adult literature to teach the Virginia Standards of Learning successfully.

**LEARNER OUTCOMES or OBJECTIVES:**

**This course is designed to enable students to:**

- Gain knowledge of the emergence of the genre known as young adult literature (researchbased practice; innovation)
- Read and review a wide range of young adult literature, including literature that is popular with adolescents, that is well regarded among ELA educators and media specialists, and that represents a wide range of cultural experiences (research-based practice; innovation; social justice)
- Become familiar with some of the most well-known authors of young adult literature (research-based practice; innovation)
- Develop awareness of issues associated with the use of young adult literature in today’s public schools (e.g., censorship) (collaboration; research-based practice; innovation; ethical leadership; social justice)
- Consider instructional purposes and strategies for incorporating young adult literature into the middle and high school curricula (research-based practice; innovation; collaboration)
- Explore research, theory, and practice associated with young adult literature (research-based practice; innovation; collaboration)

## REQUIRED TEXTS

Beers, Kylene, Robert E. Probst, and Linda Reif. *Adolescent Literacy: Turning Promise into*

*Practice*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2007. (Textbook)

Green, John. *The Fault in Our Stars*. New York: Dutton Books, 2012.

Meyers, Walter Dean. *Monster*. New York: Harper Collins, 1999.

Levin, Kristin. *Lions of Little Rock*. New York: G. P. Putnam Sons, 2012.

Levithan, David. *Every Day*. New York: Random House, 2012.

Sepeyts, Rupta. *Between Shades of Grey*. New York: Philomel Books, 2011.

In addition, each student will read at least ten young adult books that include a variety of genres including classics, adolescents lives/adventures, nonfiction/memoir, science fiction/fantasy, verse novel, and or graphic novel. Additional required readings will be assigned during the course of our class and provided electronically.

## COURSE ASSIGNMENTS AND EXPECTATIONS:

During this course, we will complete a number of projects. All written work must be typed, double-spaced, in 12 point font, with 1-inch margins and must be submitted electronically, unless otherwise noted. All projects are due by midnight (eastern time) on Tuesday of the given course week. Projects that are late due to unsatisfactory tardies or absences will be accepted at my discretion. In recognition that we are all human, you will be allowed one late assignment without penalty; after this initial allowance, no late work will be accepted. You will also be assessed on your writing proficiency (grammar, spelling, coherence, etc.) in addition to the requirements of each assignment.

*Please note: All rubrics for each assignment will be given to students on the first day of class.*

### 1. Attendance, participation, and discussion (maximum 25 points)

By virtue of agreeing to work together in this course we instantly formed a new community. This community will be rooted in mutual respect and shared responsibility; these foundations translate into consistent and punctual attendance and active participation in all class activities. Attendance in this class is *critical*. You must be in class in person on designated Wednesdays . Our face-to-face time will provide opportunities for (1) participation in activities, (2) presentations and demonstrations of effective teaching strategies, and (3) discussions and reflection on course readings, class activities, and assignments. Students are expected to be on time and well prepared to participate in class as active, thoughtful participants.

All students are expected to contribute by attending each class meeting and participating in classroom discussions and activities based on assigned readings and presentations. Absences that exceed 10% of class time will lower the overall grade by one letter. Absences and tardies will impact your grade. Two tardies or early departures are equal to one absence. If you must be late or miss a class, you must contact the instructor ahead of time. Please note that this policy makes no distinction between excused

or unexcused absences or tardies. My goal is to develop a comfortable, classroom community where risk-taking is encouraged. **Inclement Weather: If schools are closed or night time activities are cancelled by Prince William County Public Schools, we will not have class, and assignments that are due, they will be due next class. Snow makeup day will be decided on as a group and on an as needed basis.**

## **2. Teacher-Student Survey Results (10 points)**

One of the simplest challenges we face as teachers is to stay committed to our own growth and to the growth of our profession. While it's easy to argue that young adult literature is experiencing its heyday—with more and a higher quality of books published almost every year over the past decade—this literature still fails to find a place in the curricula of many teachers. You will undoubtedly wonder about the place of literature in your own classroom. Let's begin this class with a survey of teachers and students in our subject areas, grade levels, and classes, looking to the “best” of the teachers we know and to the students with whom we are working. Your goal is to identify teachers who you know use or are open to using young adult literature in their teaching, and to survey and at least one student in your class. Your first task is to identify this teacher and student. The second step is to draft four survey questions—two for a teacher survey and two for students—that we can use as a foundation for tools we will create as a class. These surveys must help us gather information about these teachers' efforts to use young adult literature, the standards they address with these texts, and the literature they use, as well as about young adults' perspectives on literature and reading in and out of school. Finally, you will administer these surveys to the teachers and students you've identified, then type a summary of their responses. The responses will become the foundation for discussions and the article critique topics.

## **3. Current Issues in Young Adult Literature/Group discussion (15 points)**

Based on the results of our teacher and student surveys, we will identify four current issues in young adult literature—issues and challenges that teachers and youth face when teaching and reading young adult books. We will then form four groups—one per issue—and each group will be responsible for identifying three professional journal articles (something accessible and published within the past five years) that describes this issue and offers teachers solutions to dealing with it. Each group will provide our class with electronic access to their articles, lead the class in a discussion of what you learned about young adult literature and the implications to the field and classroom practice.

## **4. Application in the Classroom (25 points)**

**The purpose of this assignment is to provide the teacher with the opportunity to design a reading lesson that would be motivating for adolescents and apply what the teacher has learned in the class. The lesson must center on a self-selected young adult book and focus on an essential question or key understanding that the book addresses. Teachers will be asked to show a 3-5 minute clip or pictures of the lesson as well as a written reflection. The written reflection will include how this lesson will fit into a larger unit, what are the connections between stated objectives and planned assessments, and how this lesson reflects current research and best practices in the teaching of English/language arts.**

## 5. Text Set (30 points)

A text set is a collection of books you have read on a selected theme representing the diverse population in your classroom so that all students are able to find appropriate material. Your text set should include ten YA books that you have read. Feel free to include fiction, nonfiction, and articles. The topic for your text set should be appropriate for your grade level and interest. Your presentation (ten minute limit) must include a display of materials, brief book talks on 3-4 representative samples, ideas for the classroom, and a bibliography of materials for class members.

## 6. Small Group Assignment (15 points)

Students will read all five books under “Required Texts”. Each student will complete a personal reaction paper to the novels prior to class in preparation for a group discussion. There will be five groups created to represent each novel and discuss the following questions:

1. Each person shares a personal opinion, feelings, or reactions to the book. (Allow 1-2 minutes per person.)
2. The group creates a short summary of the book—no more than 4-5 sentences.
3. Discuss whether the book is appropriate for middle or high school. Include support for opinions.
4. Choose three (or more, or all) questions from the list below to discuss, not necessarily to reach one conclusion.
  - What would this story be like if the main character were of the opposite sex?
  - Why is this story set where it is?
  - If you were to film this story, would you use black and white or color? Why?
  - If you could not use all the characters in the film, which could you eliminate?
  - How is the main character different from you?
  - Would this story make a good television series? Why?
  - What one thing in the story has happened to you?
  - Reread the first paragraph. What is in it to make you want to read on? If nothing, why did you continue?
  - If you had to design a new cover for this book, what would it look like?
  - What does the title tell you about the book? Does it tell the truth?

(Questions from *Peck's Ten Questions* by Richard Peck)

## 7. Small Group Assignment II, Nonfiction (10 points)

Each student will read a YA non-fiction book to share in a small group assignment. After each group member has reported, the group will discuss what these books have in common (e.g. themes, author, issues of focus, messages, symbols, etc.). Group members then, while in the group, fill out a chart about the books that were discussed (titles, authors, etc.), the similarities, the differences, impressions, anything learned through talking about their own book or the books of other group members. Each group will then present their conclusions to the class. Each member of the group does the following:

- a. Give a brief synopsis of book.
- b. Make an objective and evaluative comment about the book.

- c. Make a recommendation based on such questions as: Who might enjoy reading this book? Should the book be used as an individualized or group reading? What is the weakness of the book?
  - d. Give a subjective response/reaction to the book. Explore the basis of that reaction.
  - e. Answer questions from other group members about the book.
  - f. Fill out group chart.
3. After each group member has reported, the group will discuss what the books have in common (e.g., themes, author, character development, setting, issues of focus, messages, symbols, etc.)
  4. Groups will share out to whole group on what was learned through talking about their own book or the books of other group members.

### **8. Personal presentation analyzing interview with adolescent (20 points)**

Each student will interview an adolescent (grades 6-12) about the following: reasons for reading and/or not reading; experiences in literature classes; reading habits; likes and dislikes; and suggestions to help teachers make reading more pleasurable. You should gather enough information to write a three-page essay about what you learned from the interview and how you will implement what they have learned from the interview into their teaching. You will also present your findings in a presentation no longer than 10 minutes in a professional but authentic manner. Essay is due the day the student does the presentation.

### **Course Assessment: Assignment (Points)**

Class/Attendance/Participation (25 points)  
 Teacher-Student Survey Results (10 points)  
 Current Issues in Young Adult Literature/Group discussion (15 points)  
 Application in the Classroom (25 points)  
 Text Set (30 points)  
 Small Group Assignment (15 points)  
 Small Group Assignment II, Nonfiction (10 points)  
 Personal presentation analyzing interview with adolescent (20 points)

Total = 150 points

#### **Grading Scale**

A = 95-100%	142-150 points
A- = 90-94%	135-141 points
B+ = 89-88%	131-134 points
B = 87-84%	126-130 points
B- = 83-80%	120 -125 points
C = 79-70%	105-119 points
F = Below 70	104 points and below

#### **GMU POLICIES AND RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS**

a. Students must adhere to the guidelines of the George Mason University Honor Code [See <http://oai.gmu.edu/honor-code/>].

b. Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing [See <http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/policies/responsible-use-of-computing/>].

c. Students are responsible for the content of university communications sent to their George Mason University email account and are required to activate their account and check it regularly. All communication from the university, college, school, and program will be sent to students solely through their Mason email account.

d. The George Mason University Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) staff consists of professional counseling and clinical psychologists, social workers, and counselors who offer a wide range of services (e.g., individual and group counseling, workshops and outreach programs) to enhance students' personal experience and academic performance [See <http://caps.gmu.edu/>].

e. Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with the George Mason University Office of Disability Services (ODS) and inform their instructor, in writing, at the beginning of the semester [See <http://ods.gmu.edu/>].

f. Students must follow the university policy stating that all sound emitting devices shall be turned off during class unless otherwise authorized by the instructor.

g. The George Mason University Writing Center staff provides a variety of resources.

#### **COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT PROFESSIONAL DISPOSITIONS**

Students are expected to exhibit professional behaviors and dispositions at all times.

#### **CORE VALUES COMMITMENT**

The College of Education & Human Development is committed to collaboration, ethical leadership, innovation, research-based practice, and social justice. Students are expected to adhere to these principles. <http://cehd.gmu.edu/values/>

### Proposed Class Schedule

(Note: This schedule and all of its contents are subject to change, as we attempt to construct the most responsive, worthwhile learning experience.)

Dates	Topics/Experiences	Homework Assignments
Week One August 21, 2013	Carousel Activity/Introductions Book Talk by Instructor Website of the week Course Overview and Explanations of Assignments Lecture: Banned Books/Censorship Exit slip	Read pages 1-41 from <i>Adolescent Literacy</i> Create and conduct survey Bring NF book to share
Week Two August 28, 2013	Book Talk by Instructor Website of the week Lecture: Adolescents and their habits Discussion/activity on reading p. 1-41. Small Group II Create survey topics and formulate groups Sign up for text sets and other presentations dates If I were a teen in 2013? Exit slip	Read p. 43-80 from <i>Adolescent Literacy</i>  Find articles for Current Issues assignment—share with group members
Week Three September 11, 2013	Book Talk by Instructor Website of the week	Research Text Set Topics-have three possibilities  Read 5 common novels
Week Four September 18, 2013	Book Talk by Instructor Website of the week Lecture: Independent Reading Penny Kittle Discussion/activity on reading p. 43-80. Book Awards for Teens Current issues activity Exit Slip	Read p. 81-86, 105-125 from <i>Adolescent Literacy</i>  Read 5 common novels  Work presentation assignments (due dates will vary for application in classroom, text set, and adolescent interview)
Week Five September 25, 2013	Book Talk by Instructor Website of the week Lecture: Diversity and the reader Who is John Green? Discussion/Activity on p. 81-86, 105-125	Finish 5 common novels and write reaction paper  Work presentation assignments (due dates will vary for application in classroom, text set, and adolescent interview)

	Exit Slip	
Week Six October 2, 2013	Book Talk by Instructor Website of the week Lecture: What do you think? Homosexuality in YA Literature Small Group I Application in Classroom Presentations (5) Exit Slip	Work presentation assignments (due dates will vary for application in classroom, text set, and adolescent interview)  Read p. 127-147 from <i>Adolescent Literacy</i>
Week Seven October 9, 2013	Book Talk by Instructor Website of the week Lecture: What is VRC? How do you use it in your classroom? Discussion/Activity on p. 127-147 Application in Classroom Presentations (5)  Exit Slip	Work presentation assignments (due dates will vary for application in classroom, text set, and adolescent interview)  Bring a strategy to share that you use to help students select books
Week Eight October 16, 2013	Book Talk by Instructor Website of the week Lecture: Book Selection—where do I get new titles? Sharing of book selection Application in Classroom Presentations (5) Exit Slip	Work presentation assignments (due dates will vary for application in classroom, text set, and adolescent interview)
Week Nine October 25, 2013	Book Talk by Instructor Website of the week Application in Classroom Presentations (5) Lecture: Teens and Social Media—how do I keep up? Exit Slip	Work presentation assignments (due dates will vary for application in classroom, text set, and adolescent interview)
Week Ten October 30, 2013	Book Talk by Instructor Website of the week Lecture: Packaged Reading Programs/Struggling Readers Application in Classroom Presentations (5) Exit Slip	Work presentation assignments (due dates will vary for application in classroom, text set, and adolescent interview)
Week Eleven November 6, 2013	Book Talk by Instructor Website of the week Text Set Fair (5) Exit Slip	Work presentation assignments (due dates will vary for application in classroom, text set, and adolescent interview)
Week Twelve November 13, 2013	Book Talk by Instructor Website of the week	Work presentation assignments (due dates will vary for

	Book Pass Activity Text Set Fair (5) Exit Slip	application in classroom, text set, and adolescent interview)
Week Thirteen November 20, 2013	Book Talk by Instructor Website of the week Text Set Fair (5) Exit Slip	Work presentation assignments (due dates will vary for application in classroom, text set, and adolescent interview)
Week Fourteen December 4, 2013	Book Talk by Instructor Website of the week Text Set Fair (5) Exit Slip	Work presentation assignments (due dates will vary for application in classroom, text set, and adolescent interview)
Week Fifteen December 11, 2013	Book Talk by Instructor Website of the week Text Set Fair (5) Final Reflection/ Exit Slip	Take your knowledge and spread the word that YA Literature is the best!