

English 392: YA Lit

Prof. Derek Pacheco

Description:

This course surveys contemporary books written for, read by, or marketed to young people between the ages of 12 and 20. YA lit is often called “crossover” writing because so many adults read it too!

Along the way, we will read a range of bestselling YA genres including gothic, fantasy, neo-Victorian, climate fiction, magical realism, and the graphic novel. We will discuss how literary genre conventions enable or constrain our understanding of important adolescent concerns (including mortality, gender, ethnic or racial prejudice, environmental justice, disability) and, also, will consider the benefits of reading YA Lit.

Learning Outcomes:

By the end of the semester, students should be able to:

- Identify important genres and conventions of young adult literature.
- Distinguish between theoretical approaches to young adult literature, as well as debates about writing for adolescents.
- Apply close-reading skills to textual complexities in YA books.
- Produce well-reasoned written arguments interpreting these complexities using carefully selected, appropriately presented textual evidence.
- Remediate a chapter of novelistic fiction into graphic novel format.

Required Texts:

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| • Paulo Bacigalupi, <i>Shipbreaker</i> (2010) | ISBN: 0316056197 |
| • Justina Ireland, <i>Dread Nation</i> (2018) | ISBN: 0062570617 |
| • Patrick Ness, <i>A Monster Calls</i> (2013) | ISBN: 0763660655 |
| • Naomi Novik, <i>Spinning Silver</i> (2018) | ISBN: 0399180990 |
| • Laura Ruby, <i>Bone Gap</i> (2015) | ISBN: 0062317628 |
| • Noelle Stevenson, <i>Nimona</i> (2015) | ISBN: 0062278223 |
| • Wilson and Alphona, <i>Ms. Marvel</i> (2014) | ISBN: 078519021X |

Our books are at **Von's bookshop**. Additional readings will be available via *Brightspace* (as indicated on our reading schedule).

Graded Requirements:

We'll be using the *Brightspace* learning management system (LMS) for distributing, submitting, and marking all assignments. Be sure to check the site regularly.

- *Explication Essays* (45%): You will write 2 typed, double-spaced 5-pg. essays, and upload them to Bright Space by their respective due dates.

Each of these essays require you to select a passage and explicate it as a microcosm for the text while also linking it up with at least one other passage in the same text. You will select your books based on sign-ups, and the essays will be due by noon on Mondays of weeks 4, 6, 9, 11, and 13, shortly after we complete the respective novels. See Brightspace for the sign-up sheets.

Please Note: I will gladly provide extensions for this assignment, if requested in a timely fashion (prior to the deadline). Otherwise, late papers will be marked down 1/3 grade per day. Weekends count as two days.

- *Remediation project* (25%): This final project asks you to turn a scene or chapter from one of our novels into a 1-2 pp. comic. You will also write a 5-pg., argument-driven reflection discussing the scene's significance in the text and your choices in adapting it, using carefully selected textual evidence to justify both. You must select a different text than the ones you had chosen for the explication essays. This project will be due in finals week.
- *Participation* (15%): This category includes doing our assigned readings on-time, showing up, asking questions during class, participating in groupwork, etc. For each unit, we'll also do a short, in-class "exit ticket" reflection that asks you to think about something you've learned from the text and apply it to your own life. Please bring your laptop or portable device on these days so that you can submit the reflection at the end of the class period.

Please Note: All students may miss one class free of charge. Exit tickets, however, can't be skipped. They must be completed even if you are not able to attend that day. Students who miss additional classes beyond the one freebee may make up participation credit



for each absence by writing a 1-page response essay on the assigned reading, due within one week of the missed class.

- *Reading Quizzes (15%)*: I will administer quizzes for each text via **Replay**. These quizzes will occur on Fridays at the end of each unit, and will cover key terms, character details, plot, etc. Replay is an app that uses gameification (tallying scores on an anonymous leaderboard, allowing players to level up via experience points, and earning different badges) to give learners a sense of achievement. The top leaderboard scorers will win prizes at the end of the semester!

Please Note: Late Replay quiz submissions will receive ½ credit.

Final grades will be recorded in +/- format:

A = 93.6-100	A- = 90-93.5	
B+ = 87-89.9	B = 83.6-86.9	B- = 80-83.5
C+ = 77-79.9	C = 73.6-76.9	C- = 70-73.5
D+ = 67-69.9	D = 63.6-66.9	D- = 60-63.5

Academic Integrity:

Plagiarism is an attempt to rephrase someone else's words or ideas without attribution. Please familiarize yourself with Purdue's rules about cheating.

Emergency Preparedness:

Given the extraordinary circumstances we've all experienced, course requirements, deadlines, and grading percentages are subject to change, as needed. Let's try to be flexible, remember to take care of ourselves, and, of course, reach out if we have problems.

COVID-Related:

If you begin to experience symptoms of COVID-19 or otherwise fall ill, you should contact the Protect Purdue Health Center. Please refrain from attending class and instead notify me via email; we can make specific arrangements based on your situation.

Resources:

You'll find information on, and links to, a variety of university policies and support services (including academic integrity, accessibility, nondiscrimination, mental health and wellness, Office of the Dean of Students contact information, etc.) on our class Brightspace page. Please check the "Table of Contents" there for more.

Words of advice...

- ❖ **Read actively.** Take notes in the text as you read. Underline sentences, circle words or images, etc. Just don't assume you'll remember your observations and questions later.
- ❖ **Don't fall behind!** Keep the work manageable by reading the texts on time and by beginning graded assignments early.
- ❖ **Make use of the professor.** I'm here as a resource for you. Please ask questions in class or attend my office hours if you need help.

Schedule

What is YA Lit?

Week 1

Tuesday 8.24 Introduction

Thursday 8.26 Michael Cadden, *etc.*, "Introduction" to *Teaching YA Lit* (**Brightspace**)

Gothic

Week 2

Tuesday 8.31 *A Monster Calls*

Thursday 9.2 *A Monster Calls*

Week 3

Tuesday 9.7 *A Monster Calls*

Interstitial: Why Teaching Literature Matters 1

Thursday 9.9 Martha Nussbaum, "The Narrative Imagination" (**Brightspace**)

Fairy Tales

Week 4

Tuesday 9.14 *Spinning Silver*, 3-116

Thursday 9.16 *Spinning Silver*, 117-243

Week 5

Tuesday 9.21 *Spinning Silver*, 244-358

Thursday 9.23 *Spinning Silver*, 359-end

Interstitial: Why Teaching Literature Matters 2

Week 6

Tuesday 9.28 Maryanne Wolf, “Deep Reading” & “Reader, Come Home”
(Brightspace)

Neo-Victorian

Thursday 9.30 *Dread Nation*, 1-105

Week 7

Tuesday 10.5 *Dread Nation*, 106-226

Thursday 10.7 *Dread Nation*, 227-349

Week 8

Tuesday 10.12 **No class (October Break)**

Thursday 10.14 *Dread Nation*, 350-end

Climate Fiction

Week 9

Tuesday 10.19 *Shipbreaker*, 1-107

Thursday 10.21 *Shipbreaker*,
108-216

Week 10

Tuesday 10.26 *Shipbreaker*,
217-end

Interstitial: Why Teaching Literature Matters 3

Thursday 10.28 Toni Morrison, “Nobel Lecture” (Brightspace)

Magical Realism

Week 11

Tuesday 11.2 *Bone Gap*, 1-96

Thursday 11.4 *Bone Gap*, 97-183

Week 12

Tuesday 11.9 *Bone Gap*, 184-298

Thursday 11.11 *Bone Gap*, 299-end

Graphic Novel

Week 13

Tuesday 11.16 Excerpts from McCloud, *Understanding Comics* & Barry, *Making Comics (Brightspace)* & *Ms. Marvel*

Thursday 11.18 *Ms. Marvel*

Week 14

T 11.23 *Nimona*

R 11.25 **No class (Thanksgiving)**

Weeks 15

T 11.30 *Nimona*

R 12.2 **No class (work on final projects)**

Week 16

T 12. 7 – R 12. 9 **No class (work on final projects)**

Final projects are due on Monday, 12.13 at noon