

ENG 271
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Welcome to Class



Adolescence and Cultural Diversity

Official Course Description

This course provides a study of universal and diverse themes and ideas expressed through adolescent literature. It features protagonists and authors from a variety of cultures with within and outside the United States and emphasizes the relationship between culture and the lives of young people.

Readings

Elva Trevino Hart, *Barefoot Heart*
Ron Koertge, *Stoner and Spaz*
An Na, *A Step From Heaven*
Yoko Mori, *Shizuko's Daughter*
Sanyika Shakur, *Monster: The Autobiography of an L.A. Gang Member*
Sherman Alexie, *The Absolutely True Autobiography of a Part-time Indian*
Virginia Wolff, *True Believer*

Articles from Internet journals and websites:

<http://www.uab.edu/english/undergrad/litweb/index.html>

http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/research/r_mla.html

http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/general/gl_fiction.html

http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/general/gl_lit.html

Prerequisites and technical needs

Completion of Eng 111 and 112 is recommended

<http://www.nmc.edu/flo/> Use the technical analysis link to determine if your computer is a reliable option.

Transfer Options

<http://www.nmc.edu/counseling/transfer.htm>

Course Outcomes

Students will:

- Read and respond to a variety of texts featuring adolescent protagonists
- Demonstrate an awareness of how culture affects adolescents
- Demonstrate their awareness of universal issues affecting young people
- Use critical thinking to support ideas
- Communicate with an understanding of audience, purpose, and good writing strategies
- Use technology to discuss ideas and retrieve information

Course Requirements

1. Questionnaire – Please fill this out as soon as possible. The information from this document will be confidential, so feel free to let me know about any personal problems that might interfere with your success in the course. I also will ask you to pick a day for your synchronous chats. The questionnaire will be found in Assignments.

2. Syllabus Quiz – This is my way of assuring that you understand the requirements for the course. **You will not be allowed to enter any of the discussion boards until you receive a perfect score on this quiz, but you may take it as many times as necessary.** You can print out the quiz if you like and use it like a worksheet before posting your answers online. The syllabus quiz can be accessed through the "Assignments" button of Blackboard.

3. Reading and Critical Thinking – You are required to read 7 books as well as some short stories for this course! Some of the novels are more complex than others, but they should all encourage good critical thinking. Try to set aside some time each day to read; this will prevent you from falling behind. When you look at the schedule, you will notice that you should be reading one book or a part of a book while you are discussing a different book or portion of a book. **Do not wait to read a novel until the week when the discussion for that book starts. Be prepared.**

3. Weekly Blackboard Notes – Each week, you will be provided with detailed notes to help you with the course. **Read the notes before you do anything else for the week.** Although you will not receive any points for reading the notes, they are important for your success in the course. Go to the "Course Documents" button on your Blackboard to find these notes. I will try to offer these notes in both Word Format and PDF, so you can use the feature that works best for you. The notes will offer more specific directions about assignments, passwords for quizzes, previews of questions that will be on the discussion forums, information about any changes in due dates, information about the cultures we are focusing on, as well as resources for writing about literature. **You are responsible for the information in these notes. They will also assist you in preparing for tests and quizzes.**

4. Writing Quiz – There are several websites that can provide you with information for writing about literature. Weekly Blackboard notes will direct you to relevant portions of these websites and will also offer additional information. After reading this material, you will be required to take an "open book," online quiz to show your familiarity with these rules for writing about literature. The quiz will need to be completed in one sitting and by a specific date, but it is not timed. The quiz will be found in Assignments and password for the quiz will be found in the Notes for the week.

5. Homepage – As a way of getting to know each other, each member of class will be required to create his or her own Homepage on Blackboard. The process is relatively simple. After accessing the Blackboard Courseware, select the "Tools" button on the left side and then choose "Homepage." You should see two sections of the Homepage. First, offer an "Intro Message" with general information about yourself (goals, favorite music, pets, weird habits etc). Then in the "Personal Information" section, offer information about the culture that surrounded you during your adolescence. This section should be approximately 200 words. Your culture should include the attitudes, values, prejudices and beliefs of the community. (Ex: What were the attitudes about education, religion, sports, alcohol, gender, other ethnic groups etc.?) **You should compose your ideas for these sections in your word processing program and then "cut" and "paste" it into the Homepage.** This will eliminate the possibility of losing your work if you lose your Internet connection or if Blackboard malfunctions. You can view the Homepages of other members in the class by selecting the Communications button and then searching the

“Roster.” **More information about this assignment will be found in the notes for the first week.** You can also look at the instructor’s homepage (Staff Information) to see a sample.

6. Asynchronous Discussion (Everyone enters the discussion at a different time) – You will be required to contribute to online discussion on a regular basis. **In fact a large percentage of your grade is based on your participation.** The discussion sessions are listed on your schedule, and each session should involve **interaction** with 5-10 classmates over a period of one week. Obviously, you cannot **interact** with others unless you read what others have written and then return to the discussion to see how others have responded to your own comments. Discussion sessions are found by selecting the Small Groups button, then your highlighted group name (i.e. Green Group) and finally “Discussion Board.” You may respond directly to the questions by “Adding a new thread” or you may reply to someone else’s comments.

You will receive **up to 50 points** for each week’s discussion. In order to receive all 50 points, you will need to offer **at least 4 responses** (a solid paragraph or more for each) during the designated time period. Try to contribute in a substantial way through questioning or commenting on the ideas of others, and providing your original insights. (See the grading scale for discussions in “Good Discussion Tactics” in Course Documents.) Your ideas in discussion should indicate that you have been a careful reader of the text. I also expect you to use textual references with page numbers to support your interpretations whenever that is appropriate or possible. Although discussion forums are not formal writing assignments, you are still expected to write intelligently. **You will not receive the maximum number of points if you wait until the last moment to respond or if you only respond on a single day. No credit will be received for late entries.** Although 4 substantial responses are required, you are encouraged to offer more than these 4 responses.

The questions will be available to you ahead of time, so that you can be thinking about possible responses to the questions as you read the texts.

You may find it helpful to minimize a word processing document while you are answering the questions. Then you can write your answer in the word processing document, use the spell/grammar check, and finally cut and paste your answer into the discussion forum. This also can eliminate frustration, since sometimes connections are lost while individuals are responding. **Did I mention that a large percentage of your grade is based on your participation in discussion? If you do not participate in discussions, you will not be able to pass this course.**

7. Essays-You will be required to write two essays that analyze the literature and the issues facing adolescents. The essays will focus on a single literary piece and should be at least 1000 words. Detailed descriptions for these assignments can be found by selecting the "Assignment" Button on Blackboard. Each of the essays should use textual references (direct quotes when appropriate) to support the ideas that they present. You should use MLA rules for documentation. Essays must be submitted to the **Blackboard Drop Box** by the last day of the week they are due. (In other words, a paper that is due during the week of February 4-10 will be due by midnight on the 10th.) After midnight on the due date, papers will be considered late. (Okay, 2 a.m. of the next day is probably acceptable, but you should be in bed by then. 😊)

To find the Digital Drop Box, go to "Tools" and **be sure to select the button that says "Send File to Instructor."** Otherwise, the paper will just be stored for your own use. The drop box will provide you with a receipt to show that you have been successful. This can be very helpful if there is any question about the submission of your paper.

8. Reading Quizzes – There will be eight short reading quizzes. Each one is worth 50 points. These will consist of a single essay question which will allow you to show your knowledge of the texts. You will have one hour to complete each quiz although you will

probably finish the quizzes in a much shorter time period. **You will not be presented with the question before you open the quiz, so you must be prepared.** You may always use your novel to assist you. If you lose your connection while taking the quiz, please contact me as soon as possible. You must hit the button that says "submit" at the bottom of the quiz page; otherwise, you will not receive a score. Quizzes will only be offered during the week they are assigned. **There will be no make up quizzes except in very unusual circumstances.**

9. Final Project/Paper – The final project offers you a choice between three creative options that are all intended to connect several pieces of literature in a unique way. You should choose the option that allows you to showcase your individual talents. A description of this assignment will be posted in Assignments.

10. Preliminary work for papers - Before you write your two formal essays, you will be required to turn in a plan. The plan will consist of three things:

- A thesis statement written as a complete sentence
- Several main points that will form the framework for your thesis. In most cases, these will become the topic sentences for the body of your paper.
- Evidence in the form of quotes, or references to specific events to support each of your main points (topic sentences).

You are also required to submit a plan for your final project, but the format of this plan will be described at the bottom of the assignment page.

The plans should be submitted to the Blackboard Drop Box on the date designated on the course schedule, but you may submit the plan earlier to give yourself more time to work on the actual paper. (I know that all of you hate to procrastinate.) I will return your plan with comments as quickly as possible. **Please read my comments before you turn in your first draft.**

Conferences - Conferences are optional, but welcomed. I like to get to know my students!! You may schedule a conference to discuss a paper or any other aspect of the course. We can meet by phone or I can arrange to meet you at my office at the college. I do not have any specific office hours, so we can select any mutually agreeable time. **In addition, correspondence by email is always a good option, especially since I can still be contacted even when I am not in the office.**

Blackboard and Email Announcements - Since we will not have face-to-face meetings, you should check your email and the Blackboard announcements frequently. I suggest checking it every day. I generally check my email several times a day, so if you need to reach me, this is a good option. **Please use the free NMC email for your blackboard correspondence, even if you have another email account.** Sometimes other email accounts (especially Hotmail, AOL, and Yahoo) can create problems for communication between instructor and students.

The Bubbler - In Wisconsin, another name for a drinking fountain is a bubbler. Since there is usually chatter around the drinking fountain, I decided to use this name for our general question and answer area on Blackboard. Anytime you have an idea or a question that you would like to share with the rest of the class, go to The Bubbler. This is located by clicking on the Discussion Board button on your main Blackboard page. I will check in on The Bubbler each day . . . or at least most days. Some of my past students have used The Bubbler to alert other class members about helpful websites or special events/speakers.

Revisions and Support - You may revise the first two formal papers. The grade that you receive for the revised paper will **replace** your original grade. If you would like assistance with

your revision, I would be happy to meet with you. Please call or email me to set up a time for a conference. Revisions are not simply corrections of mechanical errors; they are re-workings of the basic framework of your paper. Revisions are due no later than two weeks after your paper is returned.

Late Papers

Papers will not be considered late if they are turned in before midnight on the day they are due. Papers may still be turned in up to one week after the due date, but the score will be lowered by 10%. I will consider extenuating circumstances on a case-by-case basis. **Contact me before the paper is due if you are asking for an extension for personal reasons**; however, if you have emergency surgery, deliver a baby or get run over by a llama on the day it is due, I may accept an after-the-fact excuse.

Computer Breakdowns - I can almost guarantee that someone in the class will have a computer crash at some point during the semester. Although this will drive you crazy for a little while, you can avoid major problems by saving your work frequently either to a floppy, CD, or in the Drop Box storage area. You can also save yourself some grief if you do not wait until the last minute to write your paper. Allow extra time for problems. If your computer does crash, you are not excused from doing the work. **Find another computer!!** There are open computer labs at the college and at many libraries, or you can borrow a friend's computer.

Tentative Evaluation Criteria

Asynchronous Discussion.....	600 (50 pts per discussion)
Homepage	50
Writing Quiz	100
Reading Quizzes (8).....	400 (50 points each)
Paper #1	200
Paper #2	200
Paper #3	300
Preliminary work for papers	150 (50 pts each)
Questionnaire	5
Survey (Course evaluation).....	5

Grading Scale

100-95%	4.0
94-90%	3.5
89-85%	3.0
84-80%	2.5
79-75%	2.0
74-70%	1.5
69-65%	1.0
less than 64%	0