

Literature for Young Adults

ENGL 112B

Fall 2025 Section 01 Hybrid 4 Unit(s) 08/20/2025 to 12/08/2025 Modified 08/30/2025

Course Information

English 112B: Literature for Young Adults

In this course, we'll read and discuss young adult literature, both canonical and contemporary, that represents the diverse experiences of adolescents in the U.S. Together, we'll explore both how literature represents young adulthood and how young adult readers engage with literature to construct their identity and understand the world around them. There will be a particular emphasis on stories that have been marginalized within the canon and the classroom. We will discuss strategies for creating inclusive ELA curriculums and classrooms; teaching a diverse range of literature to young readers; and developing lesson plans, assignments, and units around young adult literature.

Course Description and Requisites

Study of selected literary material, representing a variety of cultures, chosen to motivate secondary school readers.

Prerequisite: Upper division standing.

Letter Graded

Classroom Protocols

Attendance

Regular attendance is vital to your learning and success in the course. We don't want to miss out on the opportunity to learn from/with you! If you are sick, or are unable to make it to class for whatever reason, you can catch up on the material you missed on our course Canvas page, via a friend/peer, and/or in my office hours or by appointment.

Preparation & Participation

We all have a responsibility and an opportunity to be an active participant in our own learning and to contribute to the knowledge that we'll create together in this class! Please come prepared to do so. This means that you've completed the assigned reading for the day in advance of class; you have access to those readings during our class discussion; and you have basic materials like pen/pencil, paper, and a device if you would like or are requested.

Devices

You are welcome to use larger devices like an tablet or laptop for class-specific activities, but please refrain from using your cell phone. Please be present and help create a respectful and distraction-free class by using your devices for class work only during our time together.

Engaging in Class Discussion & Building Community

Our class will require participation and collaboration and will take up complex issues, such as race and ethnicity, national identity, gender, sexuality, sexual violence, and citizenship status. I recognize that it can be challenging to discuss some of these topics in a public space like the classroom and that we all approach these topics and the texts we read from our own unique perspectives and experiences. I encourage you to engage in these discussions to the degree you feel comfortable, to connect what we read to your own life and to the world around you, and to listen to and learn from your peers with respect and care. We will continue to discuss our collective goals around engaging in class discussion and building community throughout the semester.

Course Communication & Emails

All course materials can be found on Canvas. Please check both our course Canvas and your email regularly to stay up to date. For help with using Canvas see [Canvas Student Resources page](#).

Please be aware that I do not respond to emails outside of traditional business hours, M-F 9-5. I encourage you to also maintain professional boundaries around email and step away from it when you can/need. Unless it is a weekend or I am sick or away for travel, I should respond to your message within 48 hours. If you worry that I haven't seen or responded to your email, please do not hesitate to send me a follow up.

When you email me, I'd appreciate it if you included a specific subject that states the purpose of your email as well as a greeting, message, and your name.

Academic Originality, Honesty, and AI

The literature we will be reading and discussing is so, so good, and it explores narratives and experiences that are often ignored, distorted, or marginalized. I want you to do justice to that literature by seriously engaging with it and developing your own original analysis of it. While you are welcome to collaborate with resources like Grammarly to edit your work, you should also ensure that you do your own round of editing to not only catch what those virtual tools might have missed but also to develop your own editorial eye. You should not at any stage of your process use generative AI (ChatGPT, Google Gemini, Claude, Meta AI, etc.) to generate ideas, outlines/writing structures, or language/sentences. If for whatever reason you decide to ignore this and use AI, you must properly cite and credit the information, ideas, and language that you pulled. The model that AI like ChatGPT uses to generate material is fundamentally derivative and is also

known to be inaccurate/incomplete and to reproduce misinformation, biases, and stereotypes. I want to hear your original ideas, arguments, and writing that can only be achieved by engaging with the texts we're reading and the writing process! Additionally, we want to make sure that the scholars and authors whose ideas we engage with are properly cited and credited to not only credit their labor/talents/insights but also to build our own credibility as a writer.

It is your responsibility to know what plagiarism is, how to avoid it, and how to properly cite all sources. You should also be aware of SJSU's [Academic Integrity Policy](https://www.sjsu.edu/studentconduct/conduct-processes/academic-integrity.php), (<https://www.sjsu.edu/studentconduct/conduct-processes/academic-integrity.php>), and know that, as a faculty member, I am required to report all violations of this policy to the Office of Student Conduct and Ethical Development. If I suspect that you have plagiarized material or generated content with AI, I will not grade your work and will contact both you and the Office of Student Conduct and Ethical Development regarding future steps.

Program Information

The following statement has been adopted by the Department of English for inclusion in all syllabi: In English Department Courses, instructors will comment on and grade the quality of student writing as well as the quality of ideas being conveyed. All student writing should be distinguished by correct grammar and punctuation, appropriate diction and syntax, and well-organized paragraphs. The Department of English reaffirms its commitment to the differential grading scale as defined in the SJSU Catalog ("The Grading System").

Grades issued must represent a full range of student performance:

- A = excellent;
- B = above average;
- C = average;
- D = below average;
- F = failure.

Within any of the letter grade ranges (e.g. B+/B/B-), the assignment of a +(plus) or -(minus) grade will reflect stronger (+) or weaker (-) completion of the goals of the assignment.

Program Learning Outcomes (PLO)

Upon successful completion of an undergraduate degree program in the Department of English and Comparative Literature, students will be able to:

1. Read closely in a variety of forms, styles, structures, and modes, and articulate the value of close reading in the study of literature, creative writing, or rhetoric.
 2. Show familiarity with major literary works, genres, periods, and critical approaches to British, American, and World Literature.
 3. Write clearly, effectively, and creatively, and adjust writing style appropriately to the content, the context, and nature of the subject.
 4. Develop and carry out research projects, and locate, evaluate, organize, and incorporate information effectively.
 5. Articulate the relations among culture, history, and texts, including structures of power.
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Department Information:

Department Name: English and Comparative Literature

Department Office: FO 102

Department Website: www.sjsu.edu/english (<https://www.sjsu.edu/english>)

Department email: english@sjsu.edu (<mailto:english@sjsu.edu>)

Department phone number: 408-924-4425

Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs)

This course is designed to help students:

1. Define "young adult" literature and describe some of the history, theory, and criticism that shapes it.
2. Analyze some of the salient themes within young adult literature and discuss how they represent and respond to the diverse experiences of teens, both historically and today.
3. Use young adult literature to support teen literacy and to create diverse and equitable learning communities.
4. Teach the fundamentals of English Language Arts (ELA)--especially close reading, critical thinking, and creative and scholarly writing--through young adult literature.

Course Materials

You are responsible for getting access to these required course materials. I would prefer that you use print copies if you are able. All of these books are available to rent or purchase at the SJSU bookstore.

All other course readings will be available on Canvas.

The Outsiders

Author: S. E. Hinton

ISBN: 9780143039853

Speak

Author: Laurie Halse Anderson

ISBN: 9780312674397

The Circuit: Stories from the Life of a Migrant Child

Author: Francisco Jiménez

ISBN: 9780395979020

The Circuit (Graphic Novel)

Author: Francisco Jiménez, Andrew J. Rostan, and Celia Jacobs

ISBN: 9780358348221

Last Night at the Telegraph Club

Author: Malinda Lo

ISBN: 9780525555278

The Poet X

Author: Elizabeth Acevedo

ISBN: 9780062662811

Library Liaison

Peggy Cabrera is our English Department library liaison and is available for support if you have questions about library resources or need help with research.

Please email: peggy.cabrera@sjsu.edu

Course Requirements and Assignments

Participation 10%

While I encourage you to actively participate in our classroom discussions, our participation will not be based on how much or how often you speak. Instead, you will earn participation points each week by completing a short, informal, low-stakes activity. *Participation assignments will not be excused unless there is an emergency or extenuating circumstance that you communicate with me. However, your lowest two participation grades will automatically be dropped.*

Reading Quizzes 10%

Reading quizzes will be an opportunity for me to check-in on your reading progress and comprehension. Reading quizzes will take place on the first and last days we discuss an assigned work of literature.

Banned Books Week Discussion Post & Response 10%

During the week of October 5-11 the SJSU library will be offering a variety of programming (both in-person and virtual) for Banned Books Week. You will attend an event of your choice and complete a reflection and participate in a virtual discussion about what you learned.

Group Teaching Facilitation 20%

The group teaching facilitation is an opportunity for you to become the teachers! Your goal is to kickstart class discussion by exploring a central theme/idea in your assigned text, illustrating it with a few close readings, and leading the class in some discussion/activities that let us explore that theme together. Presentations will be collaborative, and groups must meet with me in office hours prior to presenting.

Close Reading Practice + Paper 25%

One of our course learning objectives (CLOs) is to analyze salient themes within young adult literature and another is to teach the foundations of ELA (close reading, critical thinking, and persuasive writing) through young adult literature. Thus, this assignment asks you to showcase those skills by developing a close reading paper on a work of your choice that uses textual evidence and analysis to build and support an argument.

Final Project 25%

In your final project, you will select one of several options to reflect on the pedagogy and practice of teaching young adult literature to adolescent readers. Your project will draw on our class readings and discussions as well as your own research to construct your own ELA library, syllabus, unit, or assignment alongside a philosophical statement that supports the decisions you've made.

✓ Grading Information

Participation 10%

Reading Quizzes 10%

BBW Discussion Post & Response 10%

Group Teaching Presentation 20%

Close Reading Paper 25%

Final Project 25%

University Policies

Per [University Policy S16-9 \(PDF\)](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf) (<http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf>), relevant university policy concerning all courses, such as student responsibilities, academic integrity, accommodations, dropping and adding, consent for recording of class, etc. and available student services (e.g. learning assistance, counseling, and other resources) are listed on the [Syllabus Information](https://www.sjsu.edu/curriculum/courses/syllabus-info.php) (<https://www.sjsu.edu/curriculum/courses/syllabus-info.php>) web page. Make sure to visit this page to review and be aware of these university policies and resources.

Course Schedule

Note that I may adjust readings, assignments, and deadlines in the best interest of the class and our learning together. I will never add more work to this schedule, and all changes will be announced with advance notice.

When	Topic	Notes
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When	Topic	Notes
Week 1	Course Introductions: What is YA Literature?	<p>Monday, August 25</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introductions • Review of Syllabus • Chris Crowe's "Young Adult Literature"
Week 2		<p>Monday, September 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No class labor day! • Begin reading S. E. Hinton's <i>The Outsiders</i> and enjoy some rest.
Week 3	The Beginning of YAL?	<p>Monday, September 8</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read all of S.E. Hinton's <i>The Outsiders</i> • In-class film screening
Week 4	Class & Gender in YAL	<p>Monday, September 15</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue discussing S.E. Hinton's <i>The Outsiders</i> • Read selections from Ann M. Ciasullo's <i>The Outsiders: Adolescent Tenderness and Staying Gold</i> • Virtual guest lecture from Dr. Ann M. Ciasullo
Week 5	Race, Migration, & Belonging in YAL	<p>Monday, September 29</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read all of Francisco Jiménez's <i>The Circuit: Stories from the Life of a Migrant Child</i>
Week 6	Comics & Graphic Novels in/as YAL	<p>Monday, September 29</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read all of <i>The Circuit</i> graphic novel adaptation by Francisco Jiménez, Andrew J. Rostan, and Celia Jacobs • Shelly Shaffer's "Comics in the ELA Classroom"
Week 7	Reading & Teaching Narratives of Sexual Violence in YAL	<p>Monday, October 6</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Laurie Halse Anderson's <i>Speak</i> pp. TBD • Read selections from <i>#Me Too and Literary Studies: Reading, Writing, and Teaching about Sexual Violence and Rape Culture</i> <p>Banned Books Week at SJSU Library (https://library.sjsu.edu/bannedbooks/bbw25)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend 1 event of your choice and complete discussion board reflection & response.

When	Topic	Notes
Week 8		<p>Monday, October 13</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finish Laurie Halse Anderson's <i>Speak</i> • In-class film screening of <i>Speak</i> • Banned Books Week Discussion Post & Response Due
Week 9		<p>Monday, October 20</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No in-class meeting! At-home work day on close reading practice. • Submit close reading practice by 11:59 p.m.
Week 10	Queer Historical Fiction YAL	<p>Monday, October 27</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Malinda Lo's <i>Last Night at the Telegraph Club</i> pp. TBD
Week 11		<p>Monday, November 3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Malinda Lo's <i>Last Night at the Telegraph Club</i> pp. TBD • Nadia Behizadeh and Caroline B. Rabalais's "Celebrating Queer Voices in ELA Education" <p>Friday, November 7</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Close Reading Paper due by 11:59 p.m.
Week 12		<p>Monday, November 10</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finish Malinda Lo's <i>Last Night at the Telegraph Club</i>
Week 13	Intersectional Identities in YAL & the Classroom	<p>Monday, November 17</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parts I & II of Elizabeth Acevedo's <i>The Poet X</i> pp. 3-220
Week 14		<p>Monday, November 24</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Part III of Elizabeth Acevedo's <i>The Poet X</i> pp. 221-357
Week 15	Pedagogy & Practice	<p>Monday, Dec. 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kristie W. Smith and Erica Adela Warren "Curating Socially Just Classroom Libraries for Middle Grade Readers" • The Young Adult Library Services Association's (YALSA's) <i>Teen Literacies Toolkit</i>
Week 16	Final Preparation & Reflection	<p>Monday, December 8</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final project workshop • Reflections & evaluations

When	Topic	Notes
Finals Week		<p>Wednesday, December 10, 3:15 - 5:15 p.m.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Note that we will be meeting in person during our final examination time.• Submit & present final project