Coming of Age: 20th Century American Adolescent Literature
AML 2410 Syllabus

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Class Time:
Location:

COURSE DESCRIPTION
AML2410 is broadly described as “Issues in American Literature and Culture.” In this course, we will explore American literature through coming-of-age texts with adolescent protagonists. These texts will allow us to explore American rites of passage, relationships between individuals and collectives, and the complexities of identity creation and performance. Throughout the semester we will work to define, redefine, and refine our definition of what it means to “come of age” and how we categorize these adolescent texts. Does the protagonist have to reach a certain age to be considered an adult? Does coming of age imply a change in consciousness and/or overcoming a specific trauma? What do we do with texts that do not follow a linear path of development? What are the boundaries between child and adult? How are adolescents defined by these texts and how do these texts create and resist relationships to social institutions? Through careful attention to these questions, we will construct an understanding of how the coming of age story reacts to changes in culture and medium over time. In doing so, we will explore issues of gender, age, race, sexuality, and identity in American literature.

Throughout this course we will be improving our in critical thinking and literary analysis skills and gathering an understanding of how coming of age texts fit within the larger contexts of American literature and American history. Finally, one of the goals of this course is to improve your writing abilities, and you should strive to produce cohesive, polished, and clear arguments about literary texts. This course description also satisfies UF’s General Education requirement for the Humanities content area, as detailed in the Undergraduate Catalog at http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/advisinggened.html#requirements.

COURSE OUTCOMES

AML 2410 satisfies the General Education Composition Requirement and counts 6000 words towards the University Writing Requirement. After completing this course you will be able to:

- Identify multiple definitions, trends, and rituals of coming of age across periods of American literature and articulate how those patterns perpetuate/influence/change how later texts are written
- Articulate the ways coming of age texts negotiate gender, race, identity, and sexuality
- Identify and articulate the role, presentation and connection of adolescence to social institutions throughout American literature
- Discuss the effect medium has on coming of age stories
- Identify and utilize common literary and formal terms
- Closely read and critically analyze texts
- Find textual evidence to support interpretations of literary works
- Form well-argued and supported written analyses of literary works
TEXTS REQUIRED


ASSIGNMENTS

Detailed assignment sheets will be handed out no later than 3 weeks before each assignment is due.

**Close Reading: 3 pages, 10%**
- Draft due
- Final draft due

**Comparative Paper: 5 Pages, 20%**
- Draft due
- Final draft due

**Research Paper: 6 pages, 25%**
- Draft due
- Final draft due

**6 Response Papers: 1 page each, 20%**
- Students will write 6 response papers throughout the semester on texts of their choice; sample response to be given in class

**Oral Presentation: 2 pages, 10%**
- Students will present a brief report on the history, reception, and/or debate about one of texts we will be reading
Class Participation: 10%  
Active and prepared participation in all class discussions

Group Presentations 5%  
Final group presentation on a coming of age text of their choice, situating the text within the history of the genre.

Total= 22 pages, 6000 words

COURSE SCHEDULE

Unit: Coming of Age Traditions

Week One: What is a Coming of Age Story?

- *Catcher in the Rye*
- *Writing Topic:* writing about literature

Week Two:

- *Catcher in the Rye* (con’t)

Unit: Articulations—Transforming the Form

- *Daddy Long Legs*
- Writing Topic: focused writing — elaborating on small passages (drafting a close reading)

Week Three:

- *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*
- Writing Topic: developing writing topics
- Close Reading Due

Week Four:

- *TTYL*
- Writing Topic: using and analyzing different formats

Week Five:

- *Cathy’s Book: If Found Call 650-266-8233*
- Writing Topic: writing for an audience

Unit: Traumatic Passages

Week Six:

- *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn*
- Writing Topic: compare and contrast
Week Seven:

- *Speak*
- Writing Topic: personal narrative

Week Eight:

- *Tangerine*
- Writing Task: drafting the comparison paper

**Unit: Dystopian Futures**

Week Nine:

- *Go Ask Alice*
- **Comparison Paper Due**
- Writing Topic: symbolism

Week Ten:

- *The Chocolate War*
- Writing Topic: argumentation

Week Eleven:

- *The Giver*
- Writing Topic: finding and using sources

Week Twelve:

- *Feed*
- Writing Topic: citing sources

**Unit: Returning to the Past—Recalling Catcher in the Rye**

Week Thirteen:

- *King Dork*
- Writing Task: drafting the research paper

Week Fourteen: Other Possibilities

- Group Presentations
- **Research Paper Due**

Week Fifteen: Group Presentations

- Group Presentations