



SCHOOL OF LIBRARY AND  
INFORMATION STUDIES  
University of Alberta  
LIS 403: Survey of Young Adult Materials  
(Second term, 3-0-0)



Instructor: Gail de Vos ( [gail.devos@gmail.com](mailto:gail.devos@gmail.com) )

Calendar Description:

A survey of fiction in all media forms for upper elementary and secondary school-aged readers. Adolescents' reading and media needs and interests, and current issues and trends will be examined.

Objectives:

Upon completion of this course a student should:

1. Appreciate the significance of literature in the lives of young people.
2. Apply criteria for the evaluation of literature in terms of literary merit, media format, and the developmental needs of young adults.
3. Have an increased understanding of the challenges facing the authors and illustrators, the publishers and booksellers, and the reading public today.

Content:

General Introduction to the Field

Criteria for evaluation and selection of materials.

Reading needs and interests of adolescents.

The diverse body of material with appeal to young adults.

Current trends, issues and problems.

Methods:

Course instruction will include lectures, assigned readings, and evaluation of texts for young adults in various media. Opportunities will be given for participation in oral and written presentations as well as activities online.

Assignments:

I. Book Discussions 25%

II. Read and Reacts 20%

III. Media Literacy project - 20%

IV. Picture books for Young Adults - 20%

Class contribution 15%

Note: Students can access their course grades via the web using Bear Tracks (go to 'For Students', then 'Registration', then 'Your Class Timetable'). Students will need to use their GPU accounts and know their GPU login IDs and passwords in order to access this service.

## ASSIGNMENTS:

### I. Book Discussions (25%) DUE ON DESIGNATED DATES

Your instructor will randomly divide the class into four discussion groups (Groups 1, 2, 3 and 4) for the required texts that we will be reading this term. Each student within the groups will be responsible for leading the discussion on one of the titles - a sign up sheet will be available online and at the first meeting with your instructor). This means that there will be **four simultaneous** discussions on the books each week but you will only have access to the discussion conducted by your group. This is not the case with the other discussion topics on the course site where you are expected to have active discussions with the entire class on a wide variety of topics. Summaries of each group's discussion will be posted by each of the group leaders for all students in the "Book Discussion Summaries" forum. Marks for this assignment will not be distributed until all of the discussions have been completed.

The person responsible for the week's book discussion:

- Will establish the discussion format (based on the critical blueprint in "Week One" of your lecture notes.) The discussion forum will be available by the Sunday of each week of classes but the official discussion will run from Monday through Friday each week.
- Will monitor the discussion, leading his or her classmates in the discussion and responding to their comments and encouraging them to contribute further. (Marks: 20)
- Will post additional material found on the Internet about the book, author or topic which the student finds pertinent. (Marks: 15)
- Will post a summary (of at least 500 words) of the discussion to the discussion board in the appropriate forum for the rest of the class by the Monday following their book discussion completion). (Marks: 5)
- Students will be marked on all of the above aspects of the assignment as indicated and are expected to contribute in a meaningful manner to all of the book discussions as part of their overall class contribution mark.

There will be several titles in your required reading list that will not be part of this discussion assignment but will be covered by your instructor in other ways.

### II. Read and React (20%) DUE ON DESIGNATED DATES

In addition to the required reading of fiction and the class lecture notes, you are expected to read **5** additional articles from those offered by your instructor and write a read and reaction to them. A selection of five articles will be made available a week prior to each due date.

Write at least a 250 word summary and a 250 word reaction for each article you select. In your reaction use phrases like, "I think" or "I feel," etc. Try to personalize your reaction. It should not be a rehash of your summary, but it should address points covered in the article. Please be as ardent as possible with your answer.

The submissions will be due by midnight Monday beginning January 18. Please check the course calendar to verify the dates since some weeks, for one reason or another, will not be included in the schedule. Please include the title and author for each of the articles on your submission and attachment. Send these, before or by midnight on the designated dates, to your instructor by mail on the course website. Late submissions will not be marked.

Each one will be worth 4 marks for a total of 20. They will be marked on clarity of expression and demonstration of thought and critical thinking. Do not worry about the instructor's own thoughts, just be sure that you understand your own position and express your thoughts well and provide substantiation for your opinions (i.e. Avoid generalizations.) A marking schema is available on the home page of the course site under "Course Outline."

### III. Picture Books for Young Adults (20%) March 1, 2010

Please select a partner for this assignment and then select and analyze a picture book that is not on our syllabus, evaluating how effectively its text and illustrations work together to present middle-school readers with a satisfying reading experience. There will be no duplication of titles so please register your selection with me by mail (on the course site) as soon as possible. You may present this in any form you wish as long as it can be posted on the course site to share with your classmates. In your visual presentation/paper/submission, please include your rationale for selection of the title, relevant background information about the illustrator and or author, and information regarding the artistic style and media used to create the illustrations.

### IV. Media Literacy Project (20%) March 29, 2010

Choose a topic from the list below or clear a relevant topic with your instructor and investigate it thoroughly to ascertain what the media is saying to the intended audience about images and stories. Look carefully at implied values, attitudes and so on. What about accessibility (understanding as well as being able to obtain it) for middle school students? What about the gender of the intended audience? Is this a "respected" media or something that offers a chance to "defy" authority?

The format of the project is flexible: it can be in the form of a paper, a movie, a blog, a CD-Rom, a website, a zine, a combination of formats that can be uploaded on the course site to be shared with your classmates. ...be inventive and creative. Remember, however, that content is a very important part of the exercise. **Please remember that middle school students should be the focus of the examples under discussion.**

You may work independently or in a group. Please let your instructor know at your earliest convenience about the topic as well as the number of individuals involved. There will be no duplication of topics and a maximum of four students per group.

Suggested topics include: (You are free to suggest a different topic to your instructor for consideration for this assignment.)

- \* Book Trailers intended for young teens
- \* Websites intended for young teens
- \* Teen magazines aimed at males
  
- \* Teen magazines aimed at females
- \* Music videos
- \* Computer games
- \* Social networks (i.e. Facebook etc.)
  
- \* Recent Interactive media
  - Blogs
  - Fanfiction
  - Youtube

### CLASS CONTRIBUTION (15%)

There are two keys to gaining a good mark for class contribution. The first step is to arrive in class (both virtually and physically) having read the book(s) assigned for the day. Discussion of these books is a crucial part of the course and depends on the participation of everyone. The heart of this course is the books read, together and separately, and regular, thoughtful, and informed participation in the discussions both in the classroom and online.

The second step is to contribute to discussion in a way that is productive and interesting, while making room for your classmates to contribute as well. You do not have to like every book or agree with every classmate, but you do need to be able to support your own views. This includes the use of bulletin board discussions on the course content readings, demonstrating knowledge of those readings and thoughtful consideration of the content of this course.

These marks are not distributed.

Yours in stories,  
Gail de Vos