

Readings in Young Adult Lit

ENG 308 | Professor: Emery
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Photo by Aaron Burden

Relevant hashtags: #YA308
#NCTEvillage #DisruptTexts #Literacies

On names and naming

Names are important to who we are. This includes the pronunciation of names, the preferred pronouns we use to describe ourselves, and the relationships our names have to family, heritage, ancestors, land, experiences, and more. We show consideration and care for each other by learning and speaking one another's names. In this course, please feel free to specify how you should be addressed by other members of the class. This includes name, pronunciation, pronouns, etc.

Course focus

This class focuses on reading and teaching young adult literature through **anti-racist and anti-oppressive** approaches. Since

many contemporary applications of these approaches are made by current teachers, the course also connects your learning to the efforts current teacher activists are taking toward more liberating classrooms and curricula.

Course objectives

- Know and be able to use accurate critical race concepts while analyzing and discussing literature
- Design and facilitate critical race discussions about literature
- Gain comfort/affective stamina analyzing and discussing anti-Blackness, racism, whiteness, etc. in literature
- Analyze characteristics of young adult literature and reimagine what counts in the genre
- Evaluate young adult literature as an effective and creative tool capturing contemporary moments/realities.
- Connect with English teachers who are teaching and developing anti-oppressive curriculum around young adult literature

Essential questions

- What does it look like to teach literature through anti-racist and anti-oppressive approaches?
- How do we read and discuss literature with an eye toward disrupting whiteness, white supremacy, and white savior tropes, and more?
- How do English teachers design anti-racist and anti-oppressive educative and responsible ways -- and without doing "extra"?
- How might we advance anti-racist

YA lit teaching in the broader English teacher community?

However, this word won't keep us from discussing and teaching the text. Instead, you can say "N" or "Ns" if the word is plural when we discuss the book in class. [Here](#) is an instructive blog post on this topic if you'd like to read more right now.

Required texts & materials

Each of the following:

- *Letting go of Literary Whiteness: Antiracist Literature Instruction for White Students* by Carlin Borsheim-Black and Sophia Sarigiandies
- *Long Division* by Kiese Laymon
- *Gabi, A Girl in Pieces* by Isabel Quintero
- *All American Boys* by Jason Reynolds and Brendan Kiely
- *Ghost Boys* by Jewell Parker Rhodes
- *Darkroom: A Memoir in Black and White* by Lila Quintero Weaver

TWO from the following list. Your choice. Read a bit about each of them online before making your choice.

- *Darius The Great is Not Okay* by Adib Khorram
- *At the Mountain's Base* by Traci Sorell and Weshoyot Alvitre
- *Frankly in Love* by David Yoon
- *What Lane?* by Torrey Maldonado
- *Before the Ever After* by Jacqueline Woodson
- *Patron Saints of Nothing* by Randy Ribay
- *Juliet Takes a Breath* by Gabby Rivera

On language & speech norms

Some of the books we will read in this class contain the N-word. This word won't be used in this class by anyone of any race.

Course Assignments

Major assignments -- see assignment sheets for full details	Due	Percentage of Final Grade
Assignment 1: Critical race discussion design, facilitation, and analysis: For this assignment you will design, facilitate, and analyze a class discussion about a scene, set of characters, or something, etc. from the first 3 novel we read. The discussion will be rooted in the critical race ideas from <i>Letting Go of Literary Whiteness</i> .	Weeks 6 & 7	30%
Assignment 2: #DisruptTexts "slow chat" and analysis: #DisruptTexts is grassroots effort by English teachers that advocates for teaching books that decenter whiteness; center characters of color in their full humanity, and other anti-racist and anti-oppressive approaches. For this assignment, you will engage with the #DisruptText educator community and the recent controversy surrounding the movement. You will do this through the two disrupt text "choice" books and some other parameters we'll give you in class.	Ongoing weeks 8-10	30%
Assignment 3: Creative project design: It might be a podcast episode, it might be a prototype test of a curriculum guide, it might be something else. But you'll use your creative skills to design a product that advances anti-racist YA lit teaching in the broader English teacher community. Depending on the scope of your project, you might end up working with a group to pool your skills.	Week 15/finals week	30%
Self-evaluations: 3 throughout the semester	Weeks 5, 10, 15	10%

MSU Grading Scale

94% - 100% = 4.0	75% - 79% = 2.5	60% - 64% = 1.0
86% - 93% = 3.5	70% - 74% = 2.0	Under 60% = 0.0
80% - 85% = 3.0	65% - 69% = 1.5	

COURSE SCHEDULE (subject to change)		
	Readings & Classwork Due	Major assignments and other items due
Module 1 Essential Questions: How do we read and discuss literature with an eye toward disrupting whiteness, white supremacy, white savior tropes, and more?		
Week 1: Jan 11 & 13	<p><i>No meeting in person. Reading and reflection activities to complete on your own:</i></p> <p>Read: <i>Letting go of Literary Whiteness: Antiracist Literature Instruction for White Students</i></p> <p>Complete: this grid (doubled sided journal) as you read</p> <p>Make: A jamboard that represents your ideas of young adult literature right now. What are the conventions of the genre? What kinds of books fall into the classification? Is it even a real thing? Did you read these works as a “young adult”? If so, which ones?</p> <p>Listen: The N-word in the classroom: Just say no</p> <p>Fill out: this pre-course survey.</p>	
Week 2: Jan 18 & 20	MLK Day of Service -- no class	
	<p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Permission to be confused: Toward a second wave of critical whiteness pedagogy” (17 pgs) 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “How re-thinking adolescence helps re-imagine the teaching of English” (6 pgs). 	
Week 3: Jan 25 & 27	Read in full: <i>Darkroom</i>	
	Optional: Interview with <i>Darkroom</i> author Lila Quintero Weaver	By end of Friday: Transcribe a 5 min portion of your pod discussion from Monday. Place in your CLASSWORK folder.
Week 4: Feb 1 & 3	Read in full: <i>All American Boys</i>	
		By end of Friday: Transcribe a 5 min portion of your pod discussion. Place in your CLASSWORK folder.
Optional event: The power of YA romance: What does the genre offer teen readers?		
Week 5: Feb 8 & 10	Read in full: <i>Ghost Boys</i>	
		By end of Friday: Transcribe a 5 min portion of your pod discussion. Place in your CLASSWORK folder. Self-evaluation #1 due in SELF-EVAL folder

Week 6: Feb 15 & 17	<p>Reread: <i>Letting Go of Literary Whiteness</i> chapter 1 & 6</p> <p>Assignment 1 work in class</p>	
	<p>Optional viewing: Panel discussion with Bree Newsome and James Tyson talking about the Confederate flag takedown in Charleston, SC. (This discussion took place at a faith-based event, so that is why they situate this activism within their faith traditions at times.)</p> <p>Assignment 1 work in class</p>	
Week 7: Feb 22 & 24	<p>Reread: <i>Letting Go of Literary Whiteness</i> chapter 5</p> <p>Assignment 1 work in class</p>	
	<p>Assignment 1 work in class</p>	<p>Due by end of Friday: Critical race discussion design, facilitation, and analysis (Assignment #1)</p>
Optional event: "Good Trouble"		
Week 8: March 1 & 3	Flex week	
<p>Module 2 Essential Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do English teachers design anti-racist and anti-oppressive educative and responsible ways -- and without doing "extra"? • What does it look like to teach literature through anti-racist and anti-oppressive approaches? 		
Week 9: March 8 & 10	<p>Read in full: <i>Patron Saints of Nothing, Juliet Takes a Breath, or At the Mountain's Base.</i></p>	

	<p>Before reading: Read the section about your book in the Disrupt Text guide. Read the introduction on the guide too (p. 1-3)</p>	
<p>Week 10: March 15 & 17</p>	<p>Read in full: <i>What Lane?</i>, <i>Darius the Great is Not Okay</i>, <i>Before the Ever After</i>, or <i>Frankly in Love</i> (Luke, Sam, Julie, & Kylee don't read <i>Frankly in Love</i> this week)</p> <p>Before reading: Read the section about your book in the Disrupt Text guide</p>	<p>Self-evaluation #2 due in SELF-EVAL folder</p>
<p>Week 11: March 22 & 24</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Watch NCTE member gathering with Lorena Germán and Julia Torres from #DisruptTexts (60 min). Link here. • Complete #DisruptTexts quick dive 4: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Read: January 2021 Statement. <p>Assignment 2 work in class</p>	<p>Due by end of Friday#DisruptTexts slow chat and analysis (Assignment #2)</p>
<p>Module 3 Essential Question: How might we advance anti-racist YA lit teaching in the broader English teacher community?</p>		
<p>Week 12: March 29 & 31</p>	<p>Read in full: <i>Gabi, A Girl in Pieces</i></p>	

Week 13: April 5 & 7	Read in full: <i>Long Division</i>	
Week 14: April 12 & 14	Creative project design work week in class	
Week 15: April 19 & 21	Creative project design work week in class	Self-evaluation #3 due in SELF-EVAL folder
Final: April 28	Watch: LGLW webinar Final (5:45-7:45pm)	Creative project due (Assignment #3)

