

**ENGL 4610.001/301 – Young Adult Literature**

Spring 2026 – T/Th 12:30-1:50 / LANG 202

Inst: J. Foertsch

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Office Hours: W 1:30-4:30 (via Zoom or in person) and by appointment

**Course Goals:** In this course, we'll explore classics and new favorites from the worlds of Young Adult literature. As a booming field in popular fiction, YA lit belongs to sci-fi, fantasy, realist, romance, humor, and dystopian genres – a recent report found that “74% of YA readers are adults, with 28% being over 28 years old.” How do these stories create worlds so captivating and meaningful to their target high school/early college audience, and how do they continue to include readers well beyond the YA demographic in their circles of fandom and belonging? Students may be required to read up to 30 pages per night when preparing the longer works on the syllabus and will write two 4- to 6-page essays (one with a research component), as well as an essay-format final exam.

**Required Texts:** As listed below.

**Papers/Requirements:**

Essay #1 (4-6 pages) - 30%

Essay #2 (4-6 pages) - 30% (25% source-free / 5% source material)

Final Exam (take-home / essay format) - 20%

Class Participation - 20%

Please note how heavily weighted class participation will be in this course. By this I mean frequent, on-topic, spontaneous contribution to class discussion (either in the form of comment or questions); regular class attendance; and compliance with all course requirements. I give big points to students who take their roles as members of this class seriously, regardless of ability to speak or write at the “A” level. Be prepared, follow directions, pay attention in class, and you'll earn much credit. Office conferencing - especially over drafts of the essay assignments - is another way to maximize your class participation grade. E-conferencing is also an option for both earning participation points and improving one's essay drafts. A word, however, re: e-mail etiquette: please use courteous forms of address and signature, and correct spelling, grammar, and punctuation when writing.

**Attendance/Technology Policy:** Excessive absences (more than *two*) will lead to reduction in the final grade as follows:

3 classes (3 wks. of class): 10%

4-5 classes (4-5 wks. of class): 20%

6-7 classes (5-7 wks. of class): 40%

8-10 classes (8-10 wks. of class): 60%

11-13 classes (11-13 wks. of class): 80%

14-15 classes (14-15 wks. of class): 100%

UNT recognizes absences only for certain religious observances and authorized school activities; thus for other reasons (illness, job conflict) please do not approach me before or after class or via e-mail regarding your upcoming or recent absences, as these are your own business, your own decision, and your own funeral when they become excessive. Please also note: **mental as well as physical presence** is required. Lack of preparation (e.g., no book brought to class, repeated late arrival, late assignments, internet use/texting in class, getting up during class to take or make phone calls) will count as absences with reductions in final grade. **No laptops open in class** – pls. take notes, as need be, with paper and pencil. (Students with

special needs requiring laptops, pls. see me.) **No AI for essay-writing.**

**Students with Disabilities:** I am happy to accommodate students with physical or learning disabilities with respect to room scheduling, seating arrangements, test time, tape recording, etc., once necessary documentation from the Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA) is produced. If you need to obtain these documents, or would like to be tested or counseled for a disability, please contact the ODA at Sage Hall, Ste. 167, 565-4323.

**POLICIES RELATED TO COVI/FLU/RSV:**

**Face coverings: Face coverings – mouth and nose – are recommended in all UNT facilities** whenever experiencing COVID or flu-related symptoms. Please consider using one of your four automatic absences if experiencing respiratory or GI distress.

**Absences:** While attendance is expected as outlined above, it is important for all of us to be mindful of the health and safety of everyone in our community, especially given concerns about COVID-19.

If you are experiencing cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fever, or any of the other possible symptoms of COVID-19 (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>) please seek medical attention from the Student Health and Wellness Center (940-565-2333 or [askSHWC@unt.edu](mailto:askSHWC@unt.edu)) or your health care provider. While attendance is an important part of succeeding in this class, your own health, and those of others in the community, is more important.

**Live Recordings:** Synchronous (live) sessions in this course will be streamed and recorded for students to refer to throughout the semester. Class recordings are reserved for use only by students in this class for educational purposes. The recordings should not be shared outside the class, or outside the Canvas LMS, in any form. Failing to follow this restriction is a violation of the UNT Code of Student Conduct and could lead to disciplinary action.

**Final Examination:** Due 7 May 1:50 p.m.

**Weekly Schedule of Readings:**

- Jan. 13: Genres of Young Adult Lit / Angelou, *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* (1969)  
20: finish Angelou  
27: Salinger, *Catcher in the Rye* (1951)
- Feb. 3: Lowry, *The Giver* (1993)  
10: Burgess, *Junk* (1996)  
17: Film, *Thirteen* (2003)  
**Essay #1 Due**  
24: Duyvis, *On the Edge of Gone* (2016)
- Mar. 3: Pon, *Want* (2017)  
10: **Spring break, no class**  
17: Sánchez, *I Am Not Your Perfect Mexican Daughter* (2017)  
24: Stone, *Dear Justyce* (2020)  
31: Reynolds, *Twenty-Four Seconds from Now* (2024)
- Apr. 7: Elhillo, *Bright Red Fruit* (2024)  
14: Cobell, *Looking for Smoke* (2024)  
21: Short fiction by [Castellucci](#), [Wiswell](#), and [Strutskie](#)  
**Essay #2 (source-free) due**  
28: Short fiction by [Elliott](#), [Ji](#), [Jones](#), and [Shen](#)  
**Essay #2 (source-enhanced) due**