English 108 M
Youth and Adolescence
Department of English
University of Waterloo
Spring 1998

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Office Hours: Tuesday 2:30 - 4:30 or by appointment

Class meets: Tuesdays and Thursdays 11:30-1:00
Classroom: Hagey Hall 139

Course Description and Goals:
In this course we will consider representations of youth and adolescence in different genres – film, poetry, drama, short stories, and novels – from different periods and different places. Our study will range from the diary of a young Dutch girl in hiding from the Nazis during World War 2 to a play about forbidden adolescent love in Renaissance Italy to a novel about a young Native woman who observes the disintegration of her community during the ‘50s on the West Coast of Canada. As well, we will consider texts that you bring into the course and present as part of a group project. These may or may not be “literature”; they might include, for example, an excerpt from “Beverly Hills 90210,” a website put up by teen environmentalists or a guide to young ladies’ etiquette from the last century. But, importantly, they will be part of our ways of speaking and thinking about youth and adolescence and we will consider them as such, as part of the culturally and historically situated ways of conceptualizing youth and adolescence. Critical and communication skills, including speaking, working in groups, writing and thinking will be emphasized. We will also review and develop our vocabularies for discussing literary texts and we will use these vocabularies to begin to consider the roles these various texts play in forming our taken-for-granted notions of youth and adolescence.

Required Texts:
(these will be read in the following order, with the exception of the Poetry Reader. Excerpts from the Poetry Reader will be read throughout. See Class Schedule for details).
course notes. English 108M *Poetry Reader*. (available in the bookstore)

**Recommended Text:**
If you need an English handbook, consider purchasing
All royalties derived from the sale of this text will be donated to the Department of English Scholarship Fund

**Assignments:**
Quizzes 10% (6 quizzes worth 2% each. Your top five marks will be counted)
Group Project 15%
First draft of essay 10%
Final draft of essay 25%
Final exam 40%

**Explanation of Assignments:**
Quizzes: there will be six in-class quizzes, one on each of the major texts that we will study. These quizzes will ask a single question, based on previous lectures and class discussions on the text. You will be asked to write on the topic for 20 minutes, demonstrating knowledge of the text, class discussions and lectures, and relevant connections between the different works that we study. I will assign the quizzes a grade of 2, 1 or 0. Missed quizzes cannot be re-scheduled. For your final grade, I will count your best five marks out of six.

Group Project: students will be assigned groups at the beginning of the course. Eventually, these groups will teach the rest of the class about a text on youth or adolescence which is not on the course reading list. Note: this text MUST be approved by the instructor. Such texts may range from song lyrics, to a book of poetry to a *People Magazine* article on “teen killers”. In your presentation to the class, all members of the group will present some aspect of the overall
assignment. You will be graded on how well parts of your presentation fit together, and how well you are able to integrate ideas and concepts from the course into a consideration of your chosen text. In evaluating your presentation I will also consider the level of care, thought and creativity in your work. On the date of your presentation, you must also hand in a written copy of the presentation which includes a bibliography of your sources.

First and final drafts of essay: All students must see me for an individual consultation on a draft of your final essay. I will schedule appointments starting from the middle of July. Any student who fails to meet with me to discuss a substantial (at least 3 pages) draft of their essay will lose 10% of their total grade for the course. Students are, of course, welcome to discuss their work with me at other stages of writing as well. I will assign essay topics but you may, if you wish, also generate your own topic. All independent topics must be approved by the instructor. Final essays should be 5-6 pages long. They must make an academic argument about a text or texts on the course. In class we will discuss in some detail what constitutes an “academic argument.” If you miss this discussion, make sure that you speak to me or consult with a classmate. Write your final essay using the MLA format which is explained in most handbooks, including the Little Brown Handbook.

Final Exam: The final exam will test your knowledge of the texts we study in the classroom, and of the shared topics and vocabulary that we develop throughout the course.

Class Schedule (subject to revision):

May 5: introduction
May 7: introduction, William Shakespeare, Romeo and Juliet
May 12, 14: William Shakespeare, Romeo and Juliet; Robert Herrick, “To the Virgins, To Make Much of Time”; William Shakespeare “Sonnet 18”
May 19: quiz on Romeo and Juliet; partial viewing of Zeffirelli’s Romeo and Juliet
May 21, 26, 28: Louisa M. Alcott, Little Women; Thomas Hardy, “The Ruined Maid”; Christina Rossetti, “Goblin Market”
June 2: quiz on Little Women
June 11: quiz The Definitive Edition: Anne Frank: Diary of a Young Girl
June 23: CBC production of *Lives of Girls and Women*

**June 25:** quiz on *Lives of Girls and Women*

**June 30, July 2, 7:** Lee Maracle, *Ravensong*; Gregory Scofield, “Kiddy Psych Ward”, “Wrong Image”, “Another Street Kid Just Died”

**July 9:** quiz on *Ravensong*


**July 28:** quiz on *The Secret Diary of Adrian Mole, Aged 13 3/4*

**July 30:** class review, final **papers due**

Due dates for group projects and final paper drafts will be established as the term progresses. They will vary from student to student.

**Course Policies:**
Late papers will have 2% per day deducted, excluding weekends. This policy will be strictly enforced. If you anticipate a problem meeting class deadlines, speak to me as soon as possible. I will consider extensions only for extenuating circumstances, usually medical.

Group presentations are often difficult, and speaking in class is easier for some than others. I urge you all to treat each other with respect. Those who aren’t ready to do this will be asked to leave the class.

Finally, a note regarding Plagiarism: Essays must be entirely your own work. Plagiarism is “the act of presenting the ideas, works, or other intellectual property of another as one’s own”. While in its extreme form this means copying a whole essay or part of an essay, it also means failure to document your sources in general. We will discuss issues of documentation and plagiarism in class, however I encourage you to ask me for an explanation if you are confused about any aspect of documenting or using other people’s work. Remember, plagiarism is a serious academic offence and will be dealt with according to the University of Waterloo’s disciplinary code. Don’t do it.