Course Description:

ENGL 108M focuses on the portrayal of young protagonists as they respond to the mores of adult society; their own physical, mental, and psychological development; and the expectations placed upon them by others.

In varying degrees, and as many of the course's required texts confirm, the portrayed "development" of young protagonists is a fascinating yet complicated area of investigation. On one level, a text's most conspicuous (or perhaps rebellious and/or alienated) adolescent is frequently cast as admirable or heroic; very often, a text's most pivotal adolescent character will expose, in an arguably glamorous fashion, the shortcomings and failings of the communities and social orders--both dominant and peripheral--tendered in the novel. On another level, though, the depicted "physical, mental, and psychological development" of adolescent protagonists is mediated by significant experiences and observations gleaned from adulthood; many accounts of youth and adolescence are conceived by writers removed (literally and metaphorically) from the loosely-defined period known as "Adolescence."

With such considerations firmly in mind, then, we will examine in 108M an array of young protagonists, the communities/social orders which they inhabit, and the moral implications of their individual and collective development.

Required Texts: (to be studied in the following order)

Salinger, J.D.  The Catcher in the Rye.
Plath, Sylvia.  The Bell Jar.
Joyce, James.  Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man.
Munro, Alice.  The Lives of Girls and Women.
Burgess, Anthony.  Clockwork Orange.
Kogawa, Joy.  Obasan.
Coupland, Douglas.  Shampoo Planet.

Course Requirements: (Essay topics/questions will be provided)

Essay #1: 20% -- 1000 word essay (approx. 4-5 pages, typed and double-spaced)  Due: October 22, 1996

Essay #2: 40% -- 2000 word essay (approx. 8-10 pages, typed and double-spaced)  Due: Last day of class

Final Exam: 40% -- Date TBA (set by University)