

ENG 1131: Writing Through Media Section 1788 Spring 2008**Special Topic:** High School in Narrative, Genre, and Form**Instructor:** Lyndsay Brown**Class:** MWF 5 (11:45-12:35) CBD 110B**Screenings:** T E1-E3 (7:20-10:10) WEIL 410**Email:** viautah@ufl.edu**Course Website:** www.nwe.ufl.edu/~viautah/ENG1131Spring09.html**Course Blog:** <http://eng1131teens.wordpress.com/>**Office Hours:** WF 6 (12:50-1:40), and by appointment TUR 4357**Course Description**

The goal of this course is to introduce students to various strategies and approaches for analyzing and interpreting different media works. At the same time, students will learn how to adapt these strategies to the process of writing about media through media. Therefore, we will be exploring the conventions of academic writing, formal presentations, and creative work. Assignments will emphasize the importance of critical analysis and interpretation of media works, but will also provide students with the freedom to engage in a great deal of creativity.

Assuming all assigned work is completed, this class will satisfy the Gordon Rule writing requirement. This course description satisfies UF's General Education requirement for the Humanities content area, as detailed in the Undergraduate Catalog.

(<http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/advisinggened.html#requirements>)

Course Focus

The materials and assignments chosen for this course will ask students to engage in critical analysis and interpretation of popular media genres and some of the different textual forms they can take. Therefore, while we will be reading some young adult novels, we'll also be looking at graphic novels, movies, television, and websites. Part of our agenda in this class will be to consider how we culturally "value" different media, why we enjoy certain media genres, how media plays a role in our everyday lives, and how media reflects and shapes our understanding of the world. Our topic is narrow - modern American high school narratives - so that we can explore the larger question of investment: why has American culture invested such time and energy in a particular narrative of what happens in high school, and what are the results of such an investment?

TextsAnderson, Laurie Halse *Speak*Burns, Charles *Black Hole*Carey, Mike *Re-Gifters*Chbosky, Stephen *The Perks of Being A Wallflower*Clugston, Chynna *Blue Monday*Korman, Gordon *A Semester in the Life of A Garbage Bag*Spinelli, Jerry *Stargirl*

Thomas, *Rob Rats Saw God*

All texts are available at Goering's Book Store (1717 NW 1st Avenue).

Course Policies

Assignment Formatting

All papers must be typed or word processed in 12-point Times New Roman and double-spaced with 1" margins on all sides. Format, citations, page numbers, and documentation must follow MLA style. **Put your name, due date, and assignment in the top left corner of all assignments to be turned in, using single-spacing.** Attempts to pad paper length with overly generous fonts or margins will result in an unprofessional appearance, and your grade will be affected. Any document emailed to me must be in .rtf format.

Attendance

Because much of our work depends upon group discussion of the texts, you should plan to attend every class session. Prolonged absences, even for medical reasons, will not be excused. You may miss up to four classes without penalty EXCEPT that you will lose credit for whatever in-class work you miss. **Every absence over the allowed four will reduce your overall grade by 50 points (½ of a letter grade).**

Tardiness, like sporadic absences, disrupts the class. Of course, you should come to class on time. If you do arrive late, please come in as quietly as possible and begin work quickly. I understand that lateness is occasionally unavoidable, and thus have no specific policy to penalize for being tardy, but I will speak with you if it becomes a problem. Inform me as early as possible in advance if you will miss class due to a university-approved reason (i.e. varsity athletics, etc.). Similarly, you should inform me in advance if you will miss class to observe a religious holiday. Your first absences (for whatever reason) will count toward your "allowed" ones.

If you have a learning disability, hardship, or other special dispensation approved by the Office of Student Affairs, please meet with me to discuss your requirements as early in the term as possible.

Conduct

Students are expected to behave respectfully and professionally when interacting with their instructor and fellow students, whether during discussion, screenings, or via email. Failure to comply with these guidelines will result in a grade of failing and/or dismissal from the class or both.

Cell Phones and Computers

Cell phones should not be used during class—this includes receiving phone calls, text messaging, photographing or filming the class, surfing the Internet, or any other magical innovation taking place on the cell phone.

Students are free to use laptop computers and other portable electronic devices in class for the purposes of taking notes during class discussion or for in-class presentations. WWW browsing, emailing, chatting,

etc., unrelated to class activities is, however, inappropriate and will not be tolerated. In the event of a violation of this policy, I reserve the right to prohibit the use of all electronic devices in class by individual students and/or the class as a whole.

Conferences

I encourage you to make an appointment to see me during my office hours, especially when you have questions about an assignment, need help with a particular writing problem, want extra feedback on a draft, or have questions about my comments on your work. Of course, we can also correspond via email.

Content

This class may cover material that can be considered offensive by some. Some of the texts and/or films you will be asked to analyze may contain material that is racially, politically, religiously, or sexually controversial. If you are unable or unwilling to participate in mature discussion about material that makes you uncomfortable or even offends you, and will not engage in discussion that goes beyond the simple fact of whether or not you personally were offended, this is not the class for you, and you are recommended to drop the course. Substitute course materials will not be provided.

Contesting Grades

If a student has a complaint about a grade on a single assignment, it should be discussed with the instructor, neither the Director of Writing Programs nor the Chair. A student whose complaints have accumulated and is sure his or her final grade will be lower than desired is to fill out a grade appeal form available from the Program Assistant to the Director of Writing Programs in the Department. A faculty committee will review the student's work for the semester, and decide on a grade. Their decision is final.

Course Reserves

Films for the course are put on reserve after the screening period at Library West. Should you miss a screening or need to re-watch a film in order to write an essay, the films are on two-hour reserve. You will need to request the title at the checkout desk with the course number, section, and the instructor's last name. Readings will also be put on electronic reserve/ARES throughout the semester. You will need to create a student account (go to the main library page and select course reserves) and then 'join' this course in order to download and view readings. Paper copies will not be handed out.

Deadlines

Late assignments **will not be accepted** unless the student has made specific arrangements with the instructor prior to the deadline for submission of the late work.

E-Mail and Course Website

Students are expected to regularly check their University of Florida (@ufl) e-mail account and the course website—regularly here means email at least once every 24 hours. Important content will be made available on the course website—changes in the schedule, background readings for the films, etc., and students should consult it at least twice per week.

Students should not expect the instructor to possess a bioport, psychic powers, or the magical ability to remain in constant contact with the computer; thus, students are asked not to complain that the instructor does not reply to email at once. Course grades cannot, due to University policy, be conveyed via email. Should you have questions or concerns about your grade, set up a conference with the instructor.

Harassment

Every student in this class is expected to participate in a responsible and mature manner that enhances education. Any conduct that disrupts the learning process may lead to disciplinary action. Because this course requires much contact, collaboration, and dialogue among students, it is essential that each student work to create an environment of respect and tolerance.

From the University of Florida Honor Code:

(<http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/students.html>) "One of the major benefits of higher education and membership in the university community is greater knowledge of and respect for other religious, racial and cultural groups. Indeed, genuine appreciation for individual differences and cultural diversity is essential to the environment of learning. Another major aspect of university life involves sexual relationships. Sexual attitudes or actions that are intimidating, harassing, coercive or abusive, or that invade the right to privacy of the individual are not acceptable. Organizations or individuals that adversely upset the balance of communal living are subject to university disciplinary action. Only in an atmosphere of equality and respect can all members of the university community grow."

Quizzes

I will occasionally give unannounced quizzes on the readings at the beginning of class. These quizzes cannot be made up if you are absent or late to class.

Screenings

Attendance at screenings is mandatory, as the films will provide the bulk of our discussion material in a week. Missing a screening, therefore, will count as a full week of absences unless you can provide proof by the next screening (i.e. by seven days from the missed screening) that you viewed the film on your own, in the form of a written summary of the film with sufficient detail to convince me that it wasn't merely researched online. Since important information about the films is likely to be conveyed at screenings, it is strongly preferred that you see the films in the screening periods. I will not lend out my personal copies of the films.

Statement on Academic Dishonesty

All students are required to abide by the Academic Honesty Guidelines that have been accepted by the University. The academic community of students and faculty at the University of Florida strives to develop, sustain, and protect an environment of honesty, trust, and respect. Students are expected to pursue knowledge with integrity. Exhibiting honesty in academic pursuits and reporting violations of the Academic Honesty Guidelines will encourage others to act with integrity. Violations of the Academic Honesty Guidelines shall result in judicial action and a student being subject to sanctions in paragraph XIV of the Student Conduct Code. The conduct set forth hereinafter constitutes a violation of the

Academic Honesty Guidelines (University of Florida Rule 6C1_4.017). For more information about academic dishonesty, including definitions of plagiarism and collusion, see: <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/judicial/academic.php>

Statement of Composition (C) Credit

Composition courses provide instruction in methods and conventions of standard written English (i.e. grammar, punctuation, usage) and the techniques that produce effective texts. Composition courses are writing intensive, require multiple drafts submitted to the instructor for feedback prior to final submission, and fulfill 6,000 of the university's 24,000-word writing requirement. For more about the University of Florida Composition requirement, see:

<http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/advisinggened.html>

Statement of Gordon Rule Requirements

To graduate, students must complete courses that involve substantial writing for a total of 24,000 words. This course meets the requirement of E6 classes: Coursework with at least 6,000 words. In this class:

1. The student must write a minimum of 6,000 words in the course (one double spaced, typed page in 12 point type is approximately 300 words).
2. This written work must be evaluated on the effectiveness, organization, clarity, and coherence of the writing as well as the grammar, punctuation, and usage of standard written English.
3. The student must be provided feedback on the written work submitted.
4. Teamwork or writing done by a group or team, class notes, in-class essay examinations, and term papers submitted too late in the semester to be returned to students in class cannot be used to meet the minimum word requirement. Drafts cannot be counted separately from final drafts as part of the total number of words completed during the course.

For more information about the Gordon Rule, see: <http://www.cba.ufl.edu/gened/gordonrule.asp>

Text Requirements

All assignments, including visuals, should be computer generated and should be rendered in the most professional-caliber method available to students. All reading assignments should be completed before class on the day they are listed.

Assignments and Grading

Blog Posts

Students are required to make weekly posts to the class blog, in which they will engage the week's reading and screening. Posts are due by Friday each week at 12 PM EST, and should be a minimum of 500 words (1-1.5 pages). Students are also required to post at least two comments per week to their fellow students' posts. Students are encouraged to post early in the week, so that there is sufficient time to respond.

Short Paper Due 2/6

Students will write a short academic paper (about 1000 words or 4 pages) on a given topic to be determined, most likely on connections between genre and form in a text from the class. Two outside sources must be used in this paper; students are encouraged to use articles from the class.

Group Presentation

Students will be randomly assigned to a small group early in the semester, and will prepare a group presentation on an outside text, using it to 'teach' on the day assigned. A list of optional texts will be provided. Presentations should consider both genre and form, and students are encouraged to select either a genre or form not considered in class (i.e. Western/movie, comedy/radio). After the 20-minute presentation, which will be submitted to the instructor in written form, the group will answer questions and elaborate on how their text relates to issues from the course. Groups are encouraged to use media (clips, websites) in their presentations; presentations consisting entirely of PowerPoint are not allowed. The instructor must approve the topic.

Presentations will be graded by evaluating four elements: submitted presentation outline, presentation content, performance, and quality of collaborative group work.

Final Project Due 4/17

For the final project, students are encouraged to use what they have learned about form in a creative project that responds to the ideas generated by the course. The creative project could take the form of a website, comic book, memoir, video, song, short story, collage or other art form, documentary, script or screenplay, etc. Along with the project, the student must generate a short written supplement (1-2 pages) that explains your process, motivations, and how this object is related to the concerns of the course,

Grade Scale

A:	90-100	C:	70-74
B+:	85-89	D+:	65-69
B:	80-84	D:	60-64
C+:	75-79	E:	0-59

Grade Meanings

Here is the meaning behind the grades I assign to your papers; you can use these statements to determine how you might work toward a higher grade:

- A You did what the assignment asked for at a high quality level, and your work shows originality and creativity. Work in this range shows all the qualities listed below for a B, but it also demonstrates that you took extra steps to be original or creative in developing content, solving a problem, or developing a style. Since careful editing and proofreading are essential in writing, papers in the A range must be free of typos and grammatical or mechanical errors.
- B You did what the assignment asked of you at a high quality level. Work in this range needs revision; however, it is complete in content, is organized well, and shows special attention to style.

- C You did what the assignment asked of you. Work in this range needs significant revision, but it is complete in content and the organization is logical. The style is straightforward but unremarkable.
- D You did what the assignment asked of you at a poor quality level. Work in this range needs significant revision. The content is often incomplete and the organization is hard to discern. Attention to style is often nonexistent or chaotic.
- E A failing grade is usually reserved for people who don't do the work or don't come to class. However, if your work is shoddy and shows little understanding of the needs of the assignment, you will receive a failing grade.

Grade Percentage Breakdown

Weekly Posts:	200 points
Participation:	150 points
Short Paper:	150 points
Group Presentation:	200 points
Final Project:	300 points
Total:	1000 points

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

I reserve the right to change this schedule as necessary.

Week 1 The Adolescent Dream/Dreams of Adolescence

T 1/6: Introduction *Clueless* (Amy Heckerling, 1995, 97 min)

W 1/7: No Class

F 1/9: Form: Novel/YA Novel, course blog instructions

Week 2

M 1/12: Korman Chapters 1-3, group assignments

T 1/13: *Beverly Hills, 90210* (Darren Star, 1990-2000)

W 1/14: Korman 4-6

F 1/16: Korman 7-9

Week 3

M 1/19: No Class: Martin Luther King Jr. Day

T 1/20: *Can't Buy Me Love* (Steve Rash, 1987, 94 min), *Pump Up the Volume* (Allan Moyle, 1990, 102 min)

W 1/21: Film Discussion

F 1/23: Korman 10-end

Week 4 Superpowers/The Magical Teen

M 1/26: Form: Film, Graham (ARES)

T 1/27: *Ferris Bueller's Day Off* (John Hughes, 1986, 102 min)

W 1/28: **Writing the Short Paper**, Hine (ARES)

F 1/30: Clugston Chapters 1-3

Week 5

M 2/2: Spinelli 1-11

T 2/3: *The Craft* (Andrew Fleming, 1996, 101 min)

W 2/4: Spinelli 12-18

F 2/6: **Short Paper Due**, Form: Presentation

Week 6

M 2/9: Spinelli 19-26

T 2/10: *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* (Joss Whedon, 1997-2003)

W 2/11: Spinelli 27-end

F 2/13: Carey 1-75

Week 7 You're Lucky to Get Out Alive

M 2/16: Form: Television, Newman (ARES)

T 2/17: *Carrie* (Brian De Palma, 1976, 98 min)

W 2/18: Carey 76-end

F 2/20: Buffy Discussion

Week 8**M 2/23: Group 1 Presentation**

T 2/24: *The Faculty* (Robert Rodriguez, 1998, 104 min)

W 2/25: Chbosky Part 1 and 2 (1-96)

F 2/27: Doherty (ARES)

Week 9**M 3/2: Group 2 Presentation**

T 3/3: *My So-Called Life* (Marshall Herskovitz and Edward Zwick, 1994)

W 3/4: Chbosky Part 3 (98-139), Birns (ARES)

F 3/6: Chbosky Part 4 (142-213)

Week 10 Spring Break – No Class – Read Burns**Week 11 High School is Hell****M 3/16: Group 3 Presentation**

T 3/17: *Heathers* (Michael Lehmann, 1989, 102 min)

W 3/18: Nash (ARES)

F 3/20: Form: Graphic Novel

Week 12**M 3/23: Group 4 Presentation**

T 3/24: *Mean Girls* (Mark Waters, 2004, 97 min)

W 3/25: Burns 1-241

F 3/27: Burns 241-end

Week 13**M 3/30: Group 5 Presentation**

T 3/31: *Veronica Mars* (Rob Thomas, 2004-2007)

W 4/1: Bolte (ARES)

F 4/3: Anderson First and Second Marking Periods (1-92)

Week 14 Is Escape Possible? Creating the Self/Creating Community**M 4/6: Group 6 Presentation**

T 4/7: *The Breakfast Club* (John Hughes, 1985, 97 min)

W 4/8: Anderson Third Marking Period (95-137)

F 4/10: Anderson Fourth Marking Period (141-end)

Week 15

M 4/13: Thomas 1-103

T 4/14: *Freaks and Geeks* (Paul Feig, 1999-2000)

W 4/15: Thomas 103-154

F 4/17: **Final Project Due** Discuss projects, evaluations

Week 16

M 4/20: Thomas 154-200

T 4/21: TBA (either *Brick* or *Romy and Michelle's High School Reunion*)

W 4/22: Wrap-up