

## English 311: Teaching Literature to Adolescents

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231 LHH (331-8573)  
Office hours: W 2:00-4:00 or by appt.  
<http://secondaryworlds.com>

### Required Texts

Walker, Alice. *The Color Purple*.

Cisneros, Sandra. *The House on Mango Street*.

Steinbeck, John. *Of Mice and Men*.

Beach, Richard, et al. *Teaching Literature to Adolescents*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition.

### Independent Reading Texts

Three works of Young Adult literature for literature circles, wiki reviews, and podcast.

### Course Overview

English 311 introduces to students the important classic and contemporary materials (including works by women and writers of color and/or ethnic diversity), teaching strategies, issues, and research related to adolescent literature as well as the criteria for guiding the reading of adolescents. In my 311 course, we will spend time examining theoretical approaches to literary reading, considering the role of young adult literature within the secondary canon, looking at censorship in schools, practicing effective methods of teaching literature, and developing two-week unit plans based on best practice principles. And all the while, we will learn how to integrate new technologies in the English language arts curriculum.

### Teaching Philosophy and Classroom Policies

I believe that a student-centered classroom is the most effective learning environment. This means our class will depend on your ideas and input, in group discussions and other collaborative activities. Consequently, your attendance, preparation, and participation are especially important. While I encourage you to attend every class, you may miss two without penalty. Additional absences will harm your grade, except when circumstances are beyond your control, as in family tragedy or serious illness. Missing four or more meetings may result in failing this class.

I also believe that the best way to measure student learning is through authentic assessment. Since you are heading into the English teaching profession, it makes sense to spend time developing skills you will need in your future career. A significant part of your grade will therefore depend on activities that real-world middle and high school teachers perform every day. Like professional teachers, you will need to be creative, work hard, and meet deadlines. Late work will not receive full credit.

If there is any student in this class who has special needs because of a learning, physical or other disability, please contact Disability Support Services (200 Student Services Building) at 331-2490.

Important deadlines this semester:

January 13—100 percent tuition refund.

March 9—Drop deadline for W grade.

**1/10 T Introduction**

**1/12 R Young Adult Literature**

*Teaching Literature*, Ch. 2, 5

**1/17 T Theoretical Approaches**

*Teaching Literature*, Ch. 7, 10

**1/19 R Theoretical Approaches**

*Of Mice and Men*, Ch. 1-3

**1/24 T Theoretical Approaches**

*Teaching Literature*, Ch. 1, 9

**1/26 R Theoretical Approaches**

*Of Mice and Men*, Ch. 4-6

**1/31 T Literature Circle 1**

Wiki Review 1 Due

**2/2 R The Secondary Canon**

*The Color Purple*, pp. 1-99

**2/7 T The Secondary Canon**

*Caught off Guard*, Ch. 1-2 (e-reserve)  
American Library Association (online)

**2/9 R The Secondary Canon**

*The Color Purple*, pp. 100-199

**2/14 T The Secondary Canon**

*The Color Purple*, pp. 200-294

**2/16 R The Secondary Canon**

“A Study of High School Literature Anthologies”  
Applebee (online)

**2/21 T The Secondary Canon**

*Teaching Literature*, Ch. 4

**2/23 R The Secondary Canon**

*Teaching Literature*, Ch. 6, 8

**2/28 T The Secondary Canon**

Teaching with Archives (online)

**3/1 R Literature Circle 2**

Wiki Review 2 due

**SPRING BREAK**

**3/13 T Practical Skills**

*Teaching Literature*, Ch. 3  
Introduce Pedagogy Project

**3/15 R Practical Skills**

*The House on Mango Street*, pp. 1-64

**3/20 T Practical Skills**

*Teaching Literature*, Ch. 12  
*The House on Mango Street*, pp. 65-110  
The House on Our Street (online)

**3/22 R Practical Skills**

*Macbeth* Acts 1-3 (online)

**3/27 T Practical Skills**

*Macbeth* Acts 4-5 (online)

**3/29 R Practical Skills**

*Teaching Literature*, Ch. 11, 12

**4/3 T Practical Skills**

Untracking Pedagogy  
Keeping Track, Ch. 1, 6  
(e-reserve)

**4/5 R Literature Circle 3**

Wiki Review 3 due  
Podcast Workshop

**4/10 T Practical Skills**

Podcast Due

**4/12 R Practical Skills**

Pedagogy Project Workshop

**4/17 T Practical Skills**

Pedagogy Project Workshop

**4/19 R Pedagogy Project Due**

Submit hard copy  
Submit zip file to MCTE archive  
Course evaluations

**4/25 Wednesday 9:30**

No final exam  
Return all

**Wiki Reviews (15%)**

A wiki is a collaborative writing tool that makes it easy to create web sites. For this assignment, your literature circle group will write reviews of the YA novels you read and publish them on our class wiki (<http://yareviews.wikispaces.com>). Each review must contain an image of the cover, links to additional resources on the author or text (including audio and video if possible), and an in-depth (minimum 500 words) treatment of the text, written collaboratively by your group members and utilizing key quotations from the novel. No repeats, please. More details on this assignment will follow.

**Podcast (15%)**

A podcast is an audio recording that is delivered over the web and transferred to a portable player such as an iPod. If you choose this option, you will create a podcast on one of the YA novels you read this semester. Think of your podcast as a book talk in audio form: its main objective is to interest the audience—in this case, secondary students—in reading a particular book. It should include an engaging opener, key excerpts of the text, and basic information, like the author and the title. No repeats, please. More details on this assignment will follow.

**Literature Circles (15%)**

Throughout this semester, your book group will read three YA novels, meeting during the indicated class periods to discuss the books. Beyond introducing you to YA literature, this assignment aims to familiarize you with the practice of literature circles, a commonly used method in the English language arts classroom.

**Pedagogy Project (40%)**

The cumulative project of the semester will be to create a unit plan for use in your future classroom. The Pedagogy Project should be thematically focused on an idea or series of ideas that you hope to teach. It should include at least ten lesson plans and all additional material, such as handouts, notes, discussion questions, etc. Each lesson plan should follow a consistent format. More details about this project will follow.

**Participation (15%)**

I look forward to your enthusiastic participation in large and small group discussions and activities. You may miss two classes this semester without penalty, and missing four or more may result in failing this course.