

GSWS 3330F: Gender, Race, and Rebellion
Dr. Jeremy Johnston
Tentative Course Outline
Fall 2021

Course Description

When it comes to twenty-first century rebellions, adolescents are taking center stage, and specifically adolescent girls. In this course, we will examine contemporary girlhood and how adolescent girls are at the forefront of race- and gender-based rebellions. Understanding the state of youth activism, and the factors that encourage adolescent girls to rebel against harmful social structures is particularly important because, as we will discuss throughout the semester, youth have played a crucial role in many of the most effective social movements going back to the 1960s, and adolescent girls today are on the frontlines of rebelling against issues such as police brutality, government policies, and environmental catastrophe. Specifically, adolescent girls frequently demonstrate a hyper-awareness of how these injustices are informed by gender and race. The course is divided into three sections. First, we will examine the foundational features of adolescent rebellion and youth activism. Second, we will turn to literary representations of girlhood rebellion in Young Adult (YA) fiction, specifically investigating how adolescent narratives position girls as leaders against systemic injustices, particularly in racialized ways. And, finally, we will investigate current examples of rebellions being led by adolescent girls by looking at prominent youth leaders such as Malala Yousafzai, Greta Thunberg, Jamie Margolin, and Xiye Bastida, as they advocate against gender-based and other systemic injustices across the globe.

Course Objectives

By the end of the course, successful students will be able to:

- Discuss how rebellions develop and how they function against specific systemic forces.
- Develop a working knowledge of contemporary youth activist movements led by girls at the local, national, and global levels.
- Better understand the ways in which issues of gender, sexuality, class, ethnicity, and race have intersected in protest movements and particularly those led by adolescent girls.
- Recognize the narrative features of rebellion, and how literary adolescent girls are on the forefront of rebellions in Young Adult literature.

In addition, the course will facilitate development of students’:

- Analytical thinking skills.
- Oral and written communication skills.
- Independent research skills.

Evaluation

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| • Seminar Presentation (20 mins) | 20% |
| • Seminar Reflection | 5% |
| • Response Papers (2 Total) | 10% (5% Each) |
| • Annotated Bibliography | 15% |
| • Participation | 15% |
| • Final Research Essay or | 35% |

Seminar Presentation (20 min.)

In groups of 2-3, you will deliver a 20-minute seminar presentation on an adolescent rebellion of your choosing—in literature, in media, or in real life—and how that rebellion connects to gender and race. While you must examine and analyze your source material for the class, the style and nature of your presentation will be up to your group (i.e., an interactive lecture, a panel discussion, or a multimedia presentation). Remember to properly cite any relevant research.

Seminar Reflection

During the week following your seminar presentation, you will submit a 1-2 page self-reflection that:

- Briefly describes how your group developed their presentation.
- Assesses how you and your peers worked as a group. Consider examining the layers of group dynamics such as what worked, what surprised you, what was challenging, and how did your group inevitably overcome such challenges.

Response Papers

Over the semester, you will write two *short* (2 pages, double-spaced) responses to weekly readings. These responses must be submitted no later than one week after your selected readings are covered in class. While the deadlines for these responses are generally up to you, at least one response must be completed by reading week, while the second response must be submitted by the final class. These responses are not formal essays, but you may use them as an opportunity to develop your ideas for the final research essay.

Annotated Bibliography (5 citations)

You will write an annotated bibliography composed of five scholarly secondary sources that aim to inform your final research essay. This assignment allows me to comment on your proposed final project while you're in process. Reviewing the relevant academic criticism will also enable you to think deeply and rigorously about your topic, the issues around it, and potential counterarguments. Notably, you are not beholden to these sources for your final assignment, but these entries should demonstrate your working through your chosen topic.

Participation

I expect that all students will complete assigned course readings/viewings and will be prepared to discuss those readings on the appropriate day. Class discussion will comprise a large part of our course, and while I recognize that not all students are comfortable speaking in class, I do expect that all students will be engaged and actively listening. Weekly prompts will be posted in the discussion forums on OWL, allowing for additional opportunities to think through and discuss the weekly readings with your peers. Please get in touch with me at any point if you feel the nature of this course is making your participation difficult.

In the event we are online and meeting via Zoom, I will assign each student to be a co-host on a rotating weekly basis. As co-host, the student will assist with any technical issues that arise, monitor the chat and periodically inform the instructor of any questions/comments, and summarize any discussion that takes place in the chat for the other students. Please note: the chat

should only be used for class purposes. I will notify you as to when you are the co-host before the second-class meeting.

Final Research Essay

You will write a 3,000 word research essay (roughly 12 pages) related to the topic of gender, race, and rebellion. The essay must contain a clear and arguable thesis and incorporate a least five scholarly sources.

Required Course Texts

Suzanne Collins. *The Hunger Games*.

Sherri L. Smith. *Orleans*.

Angie Thomas. *The Hate U Give*.

Malala Yousafzai and Christina Lamb. *I Am Malala: The Story of the Girl Who Stood Up for Education and was Shot by the Taliban*.

Greta Thunberg. *No One is Too Small to Make a Difference*.