

**Writing 2291G: Special Topics in Writing
Creating Youth: Writing for Young Adults
Course Outline
Winter 2022**



Although this academic year might be different, Western University is committed to a **thriving campus**. We encourage you to check out the [Digital Student Experience](#) website to manage your academics and well-being. Additionally, the following link provides available resources to support students on and off campus: <https://www.uwo.ca/health/>.

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Class Time: W 10:30-1:30

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Office Hours: ***T 10:30-12:00 and By Appt.
Location: PAB 150

**Email is the best way to contact me. Please allow at least 48 hours for me to respond to you.
***I will be holding office hours virtually this semester. More information is available on OWL.

Land Acknowledgement:

Western University is situated on the traditional territories of the Anishinaabeg, Haudenosaunee, Lunaapeewak and Attawandaron peoples, who have longstanding relationships to the land and region of southwestern Ontario and the City of London.

Course Description and Objectives

In recent years, literature for young adults has become enormously popular, even as critics and writers struggle to define the genre. Generally, young adult (YA) literature is literature written for readers between the ages of 12 and 18, but it can also be geared toward university-aged readers. Most works of YA feature a teenage protagonist, a protagonist who does not yet identify as an adult, or one who approaches problems from an adolescent perspective. While the genre is most commonly targeted to adolescents, approximately half of individuals reading YA literature are adults, and children younger than 12 often read YA literature as well.

The purpose of YA literature, as critic Roberta Seelinger Trites asserts, is to help adolescents "learn about the social forces around them. They learn to negotiate the levels of power within which they myriad of social institutions they must function including family; the church; school; the government; social constructions of sexuality, gender, race, and class; and social mores surrounding death." As Trites explains, YA literature can help adolescents learn how to negotiate their place in the world. The genre then, which includes realistic fiction, speculative fiction, historical fiction, drama, and verse novels, is diverse and is defined primarily by the characters inhabiting the literature and those for whom it is written.

In this course, we will consider the art and craft of writing for young adult readers. We will begin by reading and discussing a range of texts written for young adults. The purpose of the reading will be to discover and examine principles of craft, paying particular attention to narration, character development,

story development, and style. As we read, we'll consider the differences and similarities between "great" YA literature and "great" adult literature. We will then write literature for young adults, completing a variety of assignments and in-class workshops, commenting on one another's work. Our goal is to complete several pieces geared specifically to young adult readers.

Throughout the semester, in addition to gaining and sharing knowledge through the assigned readings and writing assignments, successful students will learn to

- Understand YA literature as a genre and how it has developed;
- Identify key elements of YA literature and apply those elements in their own writing;
- Generate ideas in a variety of genres, including fiction and poetry;
- Analyse and respond critically to published writing and the work of their peers;
- Incorporate feedback into revisions;
- And identify and correct errors in composition, grammar, and mechanics.

Required Texts

In addition to the following novels, we will also read secondary source material, which I will post to OWL. You may purchase the editions I have selected, available at the UWO bookstore, or you may use whatever edition you prefer, including an electronic version. You will need to bring a version of the text to class as we will discuss specific passages. Because this class is focused on writing literature, we may not read a text in its entirety.

The Sun is Also a Star (2016), Nicola Yoon
The Hate U Give (2017), Angie Thomas
The Marrow Thieves (2018), Cherie Dimaline

Course Delivery

For the month of January, we will meet online, synchronously through Zoom. In an attempt to keep our course meetings secure, I will schedule a recurring session and will post the link in OWL. Do not share the link or pass code with anyone outside of our class.

Western anticipates that we will be able to return to in-person learning in February. Should the university determine that classes will remain virtual, I will provide you with necessary information as soon as I can.

All course materials will be posted to our OWL site: <http://owl.uwo.ca>. Any changes will be indicated on the OWL site and discussed with the class.

If students need assistance, they can seek support on the [OWL Help page](#). Alternatively, they can contact the [Western Technology Services Helpdesk](#). They can be contacted by phone at 519-661-3800 or ext. 83800.

[Google Chrome](#) or [Mozilla Firefox](#) are the preferred browsers to optimally use OWL; update your browsers frequently. Students interested in evaluating their internet speed, please click [here](#).

Course Requirements (**complete statement of all assignments/grade components**)

*Please note that all major assignments will be due on Fridays at Midnight, with the exception of the Revised Novel Chunk and Process Analysis.

Participation/Workshop Participation	10%	Ongoing
Short Writing Exercises	10%	Ongoing
Short Fiction	15%	Due:
Novel Pitch	15%	Due:
Novel Chunk	20%	Due:

Revised Novel Chunk and Process Analysis	30%	Due: Apr. 12
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Participation/Workshop Participation: In my opinion, the most successful college classrooms have students and instructors equally engaged in a discussion about the readings and assignments. I expect that all students will complete assigned course readings and will be prepared to discuss those readings on the appropriate day as well as prepared to participate in workshops. Class discussion, in-class writing, and work shopping will comprise a large part of class, and while I recognize that not all students are comfortable speaking in class and that there is some difficulty in holding class discussions via Zoom, I do expect that all students will be engaged and actively listening.

For the weeks we meet virtually, I will assign each two students to be co-hosts. As co-hosts, the students 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: 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.

Students are required to complete a Participation Activities Worksheet throughout the term and to submit it electronically by the last day of class. Students who do not submit the Worksheet will receive a 0 for participation.

Students are expected to actively participate in writing workshops. We will have a minimum of 3 writing workshops during the semester. Students will be placed in groups by the instructor, and students will receive detailed instructions for submitting drafts of writing projects to OWL to facilitate sharing information with their groups.

Short Writing Assignments: You will complete several short writing assignments over the semester. These assignments will be completed in the Forum Module of OWL.

Novel Analysis/Short Fiction: You will complete either a short fiction assignment or a novel analysis assignment, which we will begin in class and workshop. A detailed prompt is available in OWL.

Novel Pitch and Outline: You will complete a novel pitch and a novel outline. A detailed prompt is available in OWL.

Novel Chunk: You will complete a chunk of a novel-in-progress. A detailed prompt is available in OWL.

Revised Novel Chunk and Process Analysis: Based on feedback received from the instructor and during class workshops, you will revise your novel chunk and complete a process analysis to explain how you approached and completed your revision.

Course Policies

Discussion Guidelines:

We will cover a variety of topics pertaining to young adult literature. Among other topics, we will consider how race, class, gender, sex, and sexuality are presented within the genre. Some of the materials we will consider may include topics that may be difficult to read about and to discuss. Ensure you are comfortable discussing this potentially sensitive material. Additionally, this class is a space in which students are free to express their views, to post questions, or to raise issues without reprisal.

Students should also feel free to address any topics in their written projects, taking care to do so within the parameters of the genre. If a writing project contains scenes of a sensitive or upsetting nature, I expect students to prepare their peer review groups.

Professionalism & Privacy:

Western Students are expected to follow the [Student Code of Conduct](#). Additionally, the following expectations apply to this course:

- Students are expected to be courteous and kind and to follow online etiquette expectations provided on OWL.
- All course materials created by the instructor are copyrighted and cannot be sold/shared.
- All course materials created by graduate students (i.e., presentations, handouts, discussion questions, etc.) are the intellectual property of the student creating the materials and cannot be sold/shared.
- Recording are not permitted (audio or video) without the instructor's or the students' explicit permission.
- Permitted recordings are only to be used for class and are not to be distributed.
- All recorded sessions, if any, will remain within the course site or unlisted if streamed.
- Students should feel free to keep their cameras on or off as they choose, with the exception of presentations. When you are giving a presentation, please turn your camera on.
- Students should also feel free to use an appropriate virtual background and to use a nickname on Zoom. If you choose to use a nickname, please email me so that I learn your nickname and mark your attendance based on your nickname.

Submitting Assignments: All assignments are due in-class on the date stated on the class schedule. You are expected to submit an electronic version to OWL. All papers should be submitted as .doc or .dox files. Do not submit PDFS. Assignments should be submitted at the time indicated on the class schedule/assignment prompts.

It is your responsibility to submit assignments on time. Papers submitted late will receive a 5% deduction per day they are late (if the paper is due on a Wednesday and you submit it on Friday, you will receive a 10% deduction; therefore, a 90 will receive a mark of an 82).

Please get in touch via email **24-hours prior** to an assignment's due date to request an extension.

Note: if you need an extension, you do not need to share with me the intimate details of your personal life. That information is none of my business, and you should never have to disclose private information to get support. If you feel compelled to offer a reason for requesting an extension, I encourage you to be creative (e.g., your cat vomited on your rough draft, or you're a Marvel super-villain who is planning an inter-galactic heist).

Attendance Policy: The very nature of this course requires that you attend regularly to do well. You are expected to come to class. Should you need to be absent, notify me as soon as you know you will be away. If you miss more than **2 classes**, I reserve the right to deduct 10% off your final grade (e.g., an earned final grade of 80% will be reported as a final grade of 72).

Working from Home: The pandemic has changed the way we conceive of workspaces and home spaces. As we are all working from home, I understand that you (and that I) may be interrupted by pets, parents, partners, and/or children, etc. As a group, we will be tolerant and understanding of such interruptions. Should you need to step away from the virtual class to deal with something going on at home, please feel free to do so, leaving a comment in the chat if you are able.

Cameras and Microphones: Please feel free to have your camera on or off as you choose or as is necessary to accommodate your internet speed/bandwidth. If you are able, please do have your camera on when asking a question. If you chose to use a static picture of yourself or an image, you are expected to choose one appropriate for an academic/professional setting. To minimize background noise, please keep your microphone off unless you are speaking. Use the hand raised feature when you want to speak. You should

feel free to use an appropriate virtual background and to use a nickname on Zoom. If you choose to use a nickname, please email me so that I learn your nickname and mark your attendance based on your nickname.

Owl/Sakai: The use of OWL/Sakai is necessary for successful completion of this course. This includes accessing readings as stipulated in the course outline, downloading instructions and guidelines for assignments, and submitting assignments OWL. All course information, including assignments, will be posted on the course website.

Communicating with Instructor: Email is the best way to communicate with me. It may take up to 24 hours for me to respond to you during the week and 48 hours on the weekend.

Western Academic Policies and Statements

Absence from Course Commitments

[Policy on Academic Consideration for Student Absences](#)

In the interest of the health and safety of students and health care providers, you are no longer required to seek a medical note for absences this term. If you are unable to meet a course requirement due to illness you should use the [Illness Reporting Tool](#). This tool takes the place of the need to submit a medical note and the Self-Reported Absence System formally used by undergraduate students.

You are required to self-report every day that you are ill and unable to complete course commitments. Details about when you should submit missed work, the format of the missed work can be found in the Section 7. Evaluation above. Students should communicate promptly with their instructor and use this tool with integrity.

Accommodation for Religious Holidays

The policy on Accommodation for Religious Holidays can be viewed [here](#).

Special Examinations

A Special Examination is any examination other than the regular examination, and it may be offered only with the permission of the Dean of the Faculty in which the student is registered, in consultation with the instructor and Department Chair. Permission to write a Special Examination may be given on the basis of compassionate or medical grounds with appropriate supporting documents. To provide an opportunity for students to recover from the circumstances resulting in a Special Examination, the University has implemented Special Examinations dates. These dates as well as other important information about examinations and academic standing can be found [here](#).

Academic Offenses

“Scholastic offences are taken seriously, and students are directed [here](#) to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence.

Accessibility Statement

Please contact the course instructor if you require material in an alternate format or if you require any other arrangements to make this course more accessible to you. You may also wish to contact Accessible Education (AE) at 661-2111 x 82147 for any specific question regarding an accommodation or review [The policy on Accommodation for Students with Disabilities](#).

Correspondence Statement

The centrally administered **e-mail account** provided to students will be considered the individual’s official university e-mail address. It is the responsibility of the account holder to ensure that e-mail received from the University at his/her official university address is attended to in a timely manner. You can read about the privacy and security of the UWO email accounts [here](#).

Turnitin and other similarity review software

All assignments will be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. Students will be able to view their results before the final submission. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between Western University and Turnitin.com.

Arts and Humanities Academic Policies and Statements

Copyright and Audio/Video Recording Statement

Course material produced by faculty is copyrighted and to reproduce this material for any purposes other than your own educational use contravenes Canadian Copyright Laws. You must always ask permission to record another individual and you should never share or distribute recordings.

Rounding of Marks Statement

Across programs, we strive to maintain high standards that reflect the effort that both students and faculty put into the teaching and learning experience during this course. All students will be treated equally and evaluated based only on their actual achievement. *Final grades* on this course, irrespective of the number of decimal places used in marking individual assignments and tests, will be calculated to one decimal place and rounded to the nearest integer, e.g., 74.4 becomes 74, and 74.5 becomes 75. Marks WILL NOT be bumped to the next grade or GPA, e.g. a 79 will NOT be bumped up to an 80, an 84 WILL NOT be bumped up to an 85, etc. The mark attained is the mark you achieved, and the mark assigned; requests for mark “bumping” will be denied.

Support Services

The following links provide information about support services at Western University.

[Academic Counselling \(Science and Basic Medical Sciences\)](#)

[Appeal Procedures](#)

[Registrarial Services](#)

[Student Development Services](#)

[Student Health Services](#)

Scholastic Offences, including Plagiarism

The University Senate requires the following statements, and Web site references, to appear on course outlines:

“Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site: <http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/scholoff.pdf>.

Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea, or a passage of text from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offence (see Scholastic Offence Policy as above).

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers

submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>).”

Prerequisites

The University Senate requires the following statement to appear on course outlines:

“Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.”

The prerequisite for registration in this course is a) a final grade of 65 or more in one of Writing 2101F/G, 2125F/G (or the former 2121F/G), 2111F/G, 2130F/G, or 2131F/G; or b) a final grade of 70 or more in one of Writing 1000F/G, 1030F/G, 1031F/G, or c) Special Permission of the department.

Medical Accommodation Policy

For UWO Policy on Accommodation For Medical Illness, see:

<http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/medical.pdf>

(downloadable Student Medical Certificate (SMC): <https://studentservices.uwo.ca> under the Medical Documentation heading)

Students seeking academic accommodation **on medical or other grounds** for any missed tests, exams, participation components and/or assignments **worth 10% or more of their final grade** must apply to the Academic Counselling office of their home Faculty and provide documentation. Academic accommodation on medical grounds cannot be granted by the instructor or Writing Studies, and Writing Studies requires students in these circumstances to follow the same procedure when seeking academic accommodation on non-medical (i.e. non-medical compassionate or other) grounds.

Students seeking academic accommodation **on medical grounds** for any missed tests, exams, participation components and/or assignments **worth less than 10% of their final grade** must also apply to the Academic Counselling office of their home Faculty and provide documentation. Where in these circumstances the accommodation is being sought on **non-medical grounds**, students should consult in the first instance with their instructor, who may elect to make a decision on the request directly, or refer the student to the Academic Counselling office of their home Faculty.

Students should also note that individual instructors are not permitted to receive medical documentation directly from a student, whether in support of an application for accommodation on medical grounds, or for other reasons (e.g. to explain an absence from class which may result in a grade penalty under an ‘Attendance’ policy in the course). **All** medical documentation **must** be submitted to the Academic Counselling office of a student’s home Faculty.

“Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to MentalHealth@Western: <http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.”

Special Requests: Special Examinations, Incomplete Standing, Aegrotat Standing

Please refer to the “Information for All Students in a Writing Course” for more detailed information. Briefly, remember that your instructor does not have the discretion to initiate, consider, or grant (or not) such requests; you must go directly to the Dean’s office of your home faculty.