

English 199: CRN 22047
Grow Up Already: Teenage Life in Literature and Film
MW 12-1:20 116 Eslinger
Office Hours: M 10:30-12, R 1-2:30 and by appt

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Course Overview: The trials and tribulations of adolescence have long served as the central focus for myriad authors and filmmakers. In this course we will closely analyze contemporary literature and film made *for* adults, but concerned primarily with the teenage experience. For the first eight weeks, we will read two novels (one graphic) and watch two feature films, and then *you* will select the final book and film for our last two weeks of class. We will examine why the teenage years serve as such a preoccupation for so many authors and auteurs, and look at what these depictions tell us about not only our culture's view of adolescence but also of itself.

Some questions we will examine are: What do these depictions of teenage life say about our culture's notions of childhood and adulthood? What do coming of age stories tell us about the particular values of our society? And, importantly, what cultural mores, moralities, fears or ambivalences are projected through these portrayals of teenage life?

Course Objectives: By the end of this course, you will not only have improved your understanding of the use of adolescence in contemporary film and literature, you will also be able to critically analyze both written and visual texts. You will be able to devise your own arguments and offer support for those arguments. You will be able to effectively participate in and facilitate course discussions, as well as engage in online discussions. In short, you will leave this course with competency in the key elements needed for success in the college classroom.

Required Texts/Materials:

Books:

Daniel Clowes, *Ghost World*, Fantagraphics Books, 2014

Nick Dybek, *When Captain Flint Was Still a Good Man*, Riverhead Books, 2012

Films:

Precious, dir. Lee Daniels, 2010

The Incredibly True Adventure of Two Girls in Love, dir. Maria Maggenti, 1995

One additional book and one additional movie determined by you in Week 4. You are required to purchase these.

All books are available at the University Bookstore. All books and films are on Reserve at the Knight library. Films are required texts. You will need to watch them outside of class at least twice. You can do this through the Reserve copies at the library, or through online rental or purchase from such services as Amazon Instant Video or Netflix.

Course Assignments: Along with active participation in all discussions, the course requirements are:

- Two 2-page close reading papers of individual texts
- One 3-page analysis paper, critically discussing a pair of texts
- One final 4-5-page paper analyzing and close reading one of the final texts
- Participation in five online discussion board conversations
- Participation in an author interview
- In the first eight weeks, discussion leader responsibilities for fifteen minutes of one class session
- In the last two weeks, discussion leader responsibilities for one half of one class (40

minutes) on student-chosen book or movie

Papers: For the first two Close Reading papers, you will look at a short excerpt of a book or film and analyze it in response to the larger themes of the work. For the Analysis paper, you will put two texts in conversation with each other. For the Final paper, you will combine both close reading and analysis to discuss one of the final unit texts in conversation with any other texts previously discussed. Detailed guidelines for all three types of papers will be handed out before each assignment.

Paper formatting: For all papers, the margins should be standard margins in Microsoft Word. The font should be 12-point Times New Roman. Your name, the course, the assignment type, and the date should be single-spaced at the top of the left-hand corner on the first page. The remainder of the document should be double-spaced. There should be no line breaks between the title and the start of the essay or between paragraphs. Failure to adhere to these guidelines will result in an incomplete paper.

Participation: Active participation is necessary for this course to succeed. This includes speaking in large and small groups and facilitating discussions. If speaking in a group is difficult for you, come see me *early in the term* to discuss strategies for participation.

Attendance: Attendance is mandatory. You are expected to show up *on-time and prepared* for every class. You are allowed two absences. Each unexcused absence after the first two will result in the final course grade being lowered by one half. I do not distinguish between excused and unexcused absences.

If you must be absent, you are responsible for turning in all assignments *by the start of the missed class session*. Assignments **will not be accepted via email**. They must be turned into the classroom or 124 PLC. You are also responsible for any homework assigned on the day of your absence. It is your responsibility to find out about missed assignments from classmates, Miriam or Blackboard.

A Note about Movies: In this course, film and literature will both be treated as *text*. That is to say, both will be read closely and carefully. Films should be watched twice. The first viewing is for absorbing overall content. A second viewing is required to more closely examine the details of the story and production.

Late Assignments: Late work will not be accepted.

Grading:

Participation (including peer review and author interview)	10%
Online discussion board conversations	15%
Discussion leader responsibilities – 15 minutes	5%
Close Reading papers (2)	15%
Analysis paper	10%
Final Paper	25%
Facilitation of Final Unit – 40 minutes	20%

Plagiarism: All work submitted in this course must be your own and be written exclusively for this course.

Access for Students with Disabilities: If you have a disability (physical or learning) which you

think may affect your performance in this class, please see me during the first week of the term so we can discuss whatever accommodation may be necessary.

Blackboard: All discussion boards, assignments, course documents and information are available on the Blackboard website. If you have trouble accessing the Blackboard site, call 346-4412.

English Department Learning Outcomes: The English Department has six desired learning outcomes for all courses:

1. read literary and cultural texts with discernment and comprehension and with an understanding of their conventions;
2. draw on relevant cultural and/or historical information to situate texts within their cultural, political, and historical contexts;
3. perform critical, formal analyses of literary, cinematic, and other cultural texts;
4. write focused, analytical essays in clear, grammatical prose;
5. employ logic, creativity, and interpretive skills to produce original, persuasive arguments;
6. employ primary and/or secondary sources, with proper acknowledgment and citation, as they contribute to a critical essay's thesis.

Tentative Course Schedule

The schedule is subject to change. All assignments are DUE on the date they appear.

Week 1

M 1/5 Syllabus & Intro

W 1/7 *When Captain Flint Was Still a Good Man*, CH 1 (1-41)

Week 2

M 1/12 *Captain Flint*, CH 2-5 (43-148)
Copy of *Captain Flint* discussion board postings due (Original discussion board question, answer and responses due on Blackboard *before the start of class*. Consult Blackboard for details.)
Discussion Leader Group 1

W 1/14 *Captain Flint* CH 6-half of 7 (149-break on 205)
Discussion Leader Group 2

Week 3

M 1/19 NO CLASS – MLK DAY

W 1/21 *Captain Flint* CH 7-10 (205-306)
Final Unit Selection Sheet due
Close Reading preparation sheet due

Week 4

M 1/26 Selection and delegation of duties for final unit
Author interview preparation
Close reading of *Captain Flint* paper (2 pages)

W 1/28 Author Interview
Nick Dybek

Note: Watch *Precious* before MONDAY 2/2.

Week 5

M 2/2 *Precious*: discussion
Copy of *Precious* discussion board postings due (Original discussion board question, answer and responses due on Blackboard *before the start of class*. Consult Blackboard for details.) *Harold and Maude*: Discussion

W 2/4 *Precious*: discussion
Discussion Leader Group 3

Week 6

M 2/9 *Ghost World* (1-32)
Reading Pictures
Close reading of *Precious* paper (2 pages)

W 2/11 *Ghost World* (33-80)
Discussion Leader Group 4

Copy of *Ghost World* discussion board postings due (Original discussion board question, answer and responses due on Blackboard *before the start of class*. Consult Blackboard for details.)

Note: Watch *Incredibly True Adventures of Two Girls in Love* before MONDAY 2/16

Week 7

M 2/16

Incredibly True Adventure of Two Girls in Love: Discussion
Copy of *Incredibly True* discussion board postings due (Original discussion board question, answer and responses due on Blackboard *before the start of class*. Consult Blackboard for details.)

W 2/18

Incredibly True Adventure of Two Girls in Love: Discussion
Discussion Leader Group 5
Analysis paper preparation

Week 8

M 2/23

Analysis paper due: *Ghost World and Incredibly True* (3 pages)
Final Unit Work Day

W 2/25

Final Unit Work Day

Week 9

M 3/2

Final Movie TBD
Group A presentation
Group B presentation
Copy of *Final Movie* discussion board postings due for Groups D, E, F
(Original discussion board question, answer and responses due on Blackboard *before the start of class*. Consult Blackboard for details.)

W 3/4

Final Movie TBD
Group C presentation
Final Book TBD
Group D presentation
Copy of *Final Book* discussion board postings due for Groups E, F, G
(Original discussion board question, answer and responses due on Blackboard *before the start of class*. Consult Blackboard for details.)

Week 10

M 3/9

Final Book TBD
Group E presentation
Group F presentation

W 3/11

Draft 1: Final Paper (3-4 pages)
Peer Review

Finals Week

M 3/16
at 12pm

Final Draft: Final Paper (4-5 pages)