

English 199: CRN 22154
Grow Up Already: Teenage Life in Literature and Film
MW 10-11:20 116 ED
Office Hours: T 12:30-1:30, R 12:30-2 and by appt

Miriam Gershow
105 PLC, 346-0051
mgershow@uoregon.edu

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 offer feedback on peer writing. 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

But I'm a Cheerleader, dir. Jamie Babbit, 2000

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 Duckstore. 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, Google Play 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-page paper analyzing and close reading one of the final texts
- Five 1-paragraph responses to discussion leader questions
- In the first eight weeks, discussion leader responsibilities for fifteen minutes
- In the last two weeks, discussion leader responsibilities for one half of one class (35 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 105 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 Canvas, classmates, or Miriam.

A Note about Movies: In this course, film and literature will both be treated as *text*. 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 in order to write about it in specific detail.

Late Assignments: Late work will not be accepted.

Grading:

Participation (including peer reviews)	10%
Answer to Canvas Questions	10%
Discussion leader responsibilities – 15 minutes	5%

Close Reading papers (2)	20%
Analysis paper	15%
Final Paper	25%
Facilitation of Final Unit – 40 minutes	15%

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) that 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.

Canvas: Course assignments are posted on email. Course announcements and emails will be sent through Canvas. In your Notification Preferences, you are required to set the Announcement and Conversations preferences to ASAP. See attachment for details.

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.

Course Schedule

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

Week 1

M 1/4 Syllabus & Intro

W 1/6 *When Captain Flint Was Still a Good Man*, CH 1 (1-41)

Week 2

M 1/11 *Captain Flint*, CH 2-5 (43-148)

Discussion Leader Group 1

1-paragraph typed response to question (check email the day before)

W 1/13 *Captain Flint* CH 6-half of 7 (149-break on 205)

Discussion Leader Group 2

1-paragraph typed response to question (check email the day before)

Week 3

M 1/18 NO CLASS – MLK DAY

W 1/20 *Captain Flint* CH 7-10 (205-306)

Final Unit Selection Sheet due

Close Reading preparation sheet due

Note: Watch Precious before WEDNESDAY 1/28

Week 4

M 1/25 Selection and delegation of duties for final unit

Close Reading *Captain Flint* paper (2 pages)

W 1/27 *Precious* Discussion

Week 5

M 2/1 *Precious* Discussion

Discussion Leader Group 3

1-paragraph typed response to question (check email the day before)

W 2/3 Reading Pictures

Draft: Close Reading *Precious* paper (1-2 pages) TWO COPIES

Peer Review

Week 6

M 2/8 *Ghost World* (1-32)

Close Reading *Precious* paper (2 pages)

W 2/10 *Ghost World* (33-80)
Discussion Leader Group 4
1-paragraph typed response to question (check email the day before)

Note: Watch *But I'm a Cheerleader* before MONDAY 2/15

Week 7

M 2/15 *But I'm a Cheerleader*: Discussion

W 2/17 *But I'm a Cheerleader*: Discussion
Discussion Leader Group 5
1-paragraph typed response to question (check email the day before)
Analysis Paper Preparation Sheet

Week 8

M 2/22 **Analysis paper draft: *BIAC & GW* (2-3 pages) TWO COPIES**
Peer Review
Final Unit Work Day

W 2/24 **Analysis paper: *Ghost World & But I'm a Cheerleader* (3 pages)**
Final Unit Work Day

Week 9

M 2/29 *Final Movie TBD*
Group 1 presentation
Group 2 presentation
Groups 4, 5, 6: 1-paragraph typed response to question about Final Movie (check email the day before)

W 3/2 *Final Movie TBD*

Group 3 presentation
Final Book TBD
Group 4 presentation
Groups: 1, 2, 3: 1-paragraph typed response to question about Final Book (check email the day before)

Week 10

M 3/7 *Final Book TBD*
Group 5 presentation
Group 6 presentation

W 3/9 **Draft 1: Final Paper (2-3 pages) TWO COPIES**
Peer Review

Finals Week

M 3/14 by noon

Final Draft: Final Paper (4 pages)