Course Overview
Childhood in America has been many things: a unique stage in the development of a human and an American citizen; an ideal of parental doting; and a metaphor for the nation itself. What does it mean to grow up in America? Has it meant something different for women and various communities? To mark a powerful turning point in the 2002 film *Real Women Have Curves*, America Ferrera’s character Ana talks back to her hyper-critical mother, “This is who we are, Mama. Real women.” Ana’s declaration goes beyond her personal relationship with her mother as she stands up for all women who have been made to feel ashamed for their bodies, their choices, their desires, or their differences. The journey from childhood to adulthood, from innocence to experience, that the film traces is a movement from shame to pride and self-acceptance, a not uncommon story of growing up for American women. In our course we will explore how women use the coming-of-age narrative to portray the diverse experiences of growing up in the U.S. What do their stories tell us about identity, difference, and gender roles? What is their relationship and responsibility to active feminist movements? What are the range of possibilities for “This is who we are”? Students will apply historical, cultural, formal, and feminist theoretical knowledge to a critical analysis of primary works in order to develop their literary interpretations.

Read me! The following pages introduce you to our broad learning outcomes, the coming-of-age narratives we will be reading this term, my policies on participation and late work, our labor and production and how it will be assessed, as well as a schedule of readings to help us manage the workload.
Required Materials
It’s your responsibility to make sure that you have the following materials. Bring a physical copy of the book to class on discussion days. Reading is a tactile as well as a mental activity, and we will talk about the value of the actual book and deep reading in the first week of class.

- **Textbooks**: The following five books are required reading. I will be using and referring to page numbers in these editions, which are available through the UO Duckstore: Julia Ward Howe, *The Hermaphrodite* (9780803218871); Louisa May Alcott, *Little Women* (9780393976144); Zitkala-Ša, *American Indian Stories* (9780142437094); Toni Morrison, *The Bluest Eye* (9780307278449); Alison Bechdel, *Fun Home* (9780618871711).
- **Technology**: Daily access to Canvas and your student @uoregon.edu email

Learning Outcomes
What skills, experiences, and knowledge do I hope you will get out of this course? By the end of the term, my goals for your learning are that you will improve your proficiency and artistry at:

- reading coming-of-age narratives and critical texts with a view to better understanding their conventions.
- drawing on relevant information to situate these narratives and texts within their American cultural, political, historical, and gendered contexts.
- using creativity and interpretive skills to develop original, thoughtful analyses rooted in close readings of the texts.
- synthesizing a diversity of primary/secondary sources, with proper acknowledgment and citation.

***In our first week of class, we may add to this list of learning outcomes based on what you think is important in your English education and would like to get out of the course.

Resources for Success
I am here to help you succeed; don’t hesitate to e-mail or visit me! I will make every effort to respond to your e-mail within 24 hours. In addition, you have many resources on campus to help you with writing and studying. I put live links to these resources on our Canvas homepage.

- The Teaching and Learning Center’s Writing Lab located on the fourth floor of the Knight Library provides shorter drop-in sessions with a writing tutor for any subject
- The Writing Associates Program offers free, one-on-one peer tutoring appointments for students in English classes. Writing Associate tutors are advanced English majors who have been trained to tutor writing. They are available to help students with any aspect of their writing for this course, from learning how to write about literature and media to crafting clearer and more effective analysis.
- The Center for Multicultural Academic Excellence (CMAE) offers writing support during the regular school year. They also offer many other mentoring services for students from all backgrounds in the utilization of all resources available regarding financial aid, scholarships, internships, career development, professionalization, and ultimately academic success!
- Student Support Services (SSS) is also taking qualified students. They offer advising, tutoring, a study lounge with computers and free printing, as well as personal counseling.
- You can find additional sources of academic support on the Undergraduate Studies webpage.
- Writing handbooks:
  - Purdue OWL
  - UNC Writing Center Tips + Tools + Writing for Success (UMinnesota Libraries)
Assignments + Grading

Community Engagement

Note-taking Duty

Midterm Project

Final Project or Exam

Optional Advanced Labor Activities

I use a labor-based grading system. In a nutshell, if you do all of the labor asked of you by meeting the minimum requirements for each assignment, then you’ll earn a “B” (85%) course grade. If you do not participate fully, turn in assignments late, forget to do assignments, or do less labor than what is expected of you for assignments, etc., then it will reduce your final grade (see the table below in “Knowing where you stand”).

Higher grades, such as an “A,” however, require advanced labor. In order to raise your grade, you may complete, according to their guidelines and in the spirit asked of you, the optional “A” labor assignments. Rather than keeping track of what you earn on assignments, you will keep track of your complete, incomplete, missing, and late assignments to determine your grade.

Community Engagement: I will lead the course and design the assignments and activities. You will be responsible for your own learning. As a community of scholars, we will also be responsible for each other’s learning by supporting and pushing each other to work through questions, analyses, and difficulties. A key component of our class will be developing a culture of support or a community of compassion—a group of scholars who genuinely care about each other’s wellbeing. The best way to learn is to teach other, to help, to serve. Rather than thinking of the members of the classroom as students and teachers, we will instead function as collaborators and allies with various skills, abilities, experiences, insights, and talents we can offer each other. Your responsibilities to our community are to:

• attend class regularly (no more than 2 absences)
• prepare for class: complete the assigned reading before class, and bring your book, reading notes, and questions for discussion
• actively participate in small and large group discussions: ask and respond to questions; poke, prod, and pick at our analyses of the texts; listen graciously and attentively to each other
• complete assigned homework or in-class writing

Note-taking Duty: Our in-person class will be a low-tech learning environment. Cell phones, laptops, tablets, or other electronic devices are not permitted during class discussions and most activities. You may take handwritten notes in your book or notebook, if you wish, but we will have 2 assigned note-takers for each class who will be responsible for taking notes of the discussion. We will rotate note-taking duty through the entire class. The note-takers are the only two students allowed to use a laptop. At the end of class, the note-takers will email me their notes, I will check over them to clean up any misinformation, and post the notes on Canvas under “Discussions.”

Midterm Project: To practice your close reading and interpretive skills, you will develop an in-depth analysis of one or two of the books we have read thus far in the course. This analysis will likely take the form of a 7-8 page paper (2200-2500 words), but we can discuss alternatives to the traditional academic essay. Regardless, good analysis is a fully-developed, thoughtful, and sustained inquiry into one specific theme, context, narrative device, or theoretical question with close readings of key passages in a text. We will spend some time in class discussing, drafting, and revising our analysis.
**Final Writing Project or Exam:** You will have the option to capstone your learning in our course with a timed cumulative exam (you will have 24 hours to complete multiple questions) or a writing project.

**Optional Advanced Labor Activities:** In order to raise your grade, you may complete, according to their guidelines and in the spirit asked of you, the advanced “A” labor assignments. In some cases, “A” labors will be “more involved” versions of already required assignments that encourage you to go more in-depth on a topic or to reflect on your process. In other cases, they will be a separate activity or assignment. NO partial credit is given for an “A” labor that does not meet all minimum requirements, nor is any credit given for LATE or MISSED “A” labors. “A” labor assignments (more detailed instructions and due dates will be posted with the assignments or on Canvas):

- a “more involved” midterm project
- a “more involved” final project or exam
- facilitating a class discussion (independently or with up to two of your colleagues)
- a reading narrative describing your deep reading process with one of the required books

To earn a grade of “A-,” complete the first two items above for the midterm and final projects and one of the last two items. To earn a “B+,” complete one of the first two items and one of the last two items. Students may talk to me about using any of the above items to raise their grade generally.

**Grading Scale For Final Grade:** A: 94-100; A-: 90-93; B+: 88-89; B: 84-87; B-: 80-83; C+: 78-79; C: 74-77; C-: 70-73. I do not give A+ grades.

**Grading:** All work will be assessed as “Complete” or “Incomplete” rather than with a letter grade. You will receive ample feedback from me on your assignments, including homework and in-class writing I collect, to help you revise and improve your writing and close reading skills. It means that without the tyranny of a letter grade, you may take risks in your creative work, be supported in developing your unique voice, and more genuinely engage with the reading and writing processes. It does not mean that you can slack off. You must submit COMPLETE work on time. The information that follows explains the different categories of COMPLETE, INCOMPLETE, LATE, MISSED, and IGNORED.

**Complete assignments:** All work must meet the minimum requirements of the assignment or community engagement and be submitted by the due date. This includes in-class participation and activities, homework, and the midterm and final projects. Expect to spend a significant amount of time outside of class on reading and thinking deeply. However, the more you engage with in-class work, the more it will help your out-of-class work. My job is to support your growth as a lifelong reader, writer, and learner. Let me know if you have questions about meeting requirements!

**Incomplete assignments:** I will use a basic rubric to determine whether your work meets all of the requirements of our in-class work and each assignment. If I determine that your work is missing something and therefore not meeting “B” grade expectations, I will let you know. You have 48 HOURS to revise and resubmit any incomplete work before it becomes MISSED WORK. Re-submitted work will count as a LATE assignment. Talk to me before the due date if you are confused or struggling to meet the minimum requirements of an assignment. I’m happy to work with you! I can help you talk through your confusion, brainstorm ideas, consider possibilities, give you resources, and discuss your work with you—that’s an integral part of my role in our class! I can’t make exceptions or extend a deadline unless you talk to me before the assignment is due.

**Late assignments:** You are expected to turn in all work on time. However, I understand that life can be unpredictable. You are allowed 2 LATE assignments, which includes the midterm project as well as homework or in-class writing assignments I give out periodically. Every late assignment
after the second will result in deductions from your final grade percentage (see table below). Late work is defined as any work that is submitted AFTER the due date/time BUT within 48 hours of the deadline posted on the syllabus/Canvas. Incomplete assignments re-submitted for a “Complete” grade count as LATE! NOTE: I cannot accept a late final exam/project.

**Missed assignments:** If you submit late work AFTER the 48 hours stipulated in “Late assignments,” then it will be considered MISSED, which is a more serious mark against your final grade. Because assignments build off one another as well as build trust among the community, turning in something beyond 48 hours reduces how useful it is to your growth as a reader and writer. Doing the assignment before the end of the term will earn you some credit, though. See the table below for more detail on how “MISSED assignments” affect your final grade.

**Ignored assignments:** Ignored assignments are any assignments unaccounted for in the term—that is, I have no record of you doing it or turning it in by the end of Week 10. Any IGNORED assignments will keep you from meeting a “B” grade because ignoring the work that is so crucial to one’s development as a learner in our community does not meet our primary goal of learning.

**Knowing where you stand:** This system gives you a clear idea of what your final grade looks like at any moment. If you are attending and participating in class regularly, submitting assignments on time and earning “Complete” grades, the base line is a B (85%). I will use Canvas for tracking your labor and assignments, but because Canvas only has a few options for marking your work (Complete/Incomplete/Late) and we have a few more layers to this, I will always note in my final comments to your work whether the assignment is LATE, MISSED, or IGNORED. Ask me at any time if you are unsure of where you stand. Below is a table that shows how your final grade is affected by absences/non-participation days, and LATE, MISSED, and IGNORED assignments:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>each absence/ non-community engagement day (after the second)</th>
<th>each LATE assignment (after the second)</th>
<th>each MISSED assignment</th>
<th>each IGNORED assignment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-3 %points</td>
<td>Midterm/Final</td>
<td>-3 %points</td>
<td>-10 %points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All other assignments, including homework</td>
<td>-2 %points</td>
<td>-3 %points</td>
<td>-10 %points</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Exemplary Labor:** If by our final assignment deadline during Finals Week, you miss no classes, participate in all activities, have no late, missed, or ignored assignments, and have not exercised the clemency clause, then your course grade will increase by 1/3, e.g. from a B to and B+).

**Clemency Clause:** A student may request clemency for any reason that is related to rare and unusual circumstances out of their control, but only once in the term. The clemency plea is NOT an “opt out clause” for anyone who happens to not fulfill the course requirements in some way.

My job is to make sure that whatever agreement we come to will be fair to others in class. I will decide in consultation with the student whether clemency is warranted. The student must come to me as soon as possible, usually before they are unable to meet the course requirements, so that we can determine an equitable arrangement, one that will be fair to all in the class and still meet the university’s expectations for student engagement hours, conduct, and workload.
Other Policies + Expectations

Academic Honesty, Authorship, and Plagiarism: It’s important to understand ‘authorship’ and ‘ownership of ideas and words’ in academic writing. This helps writers give the correct credit to other writers and thinkers for their words and ideas. When you use someone else’s words or ideas without telling your reader where they come from, you are PLAGIARIZING. Common examples of plagiarism include incorrect citation of sources and copying and pasting parts of an assignment from the internet or other students. Getting too much help from someone editing your writing is also a form of academic dishonesty. I am looking to help you improve and gain important experience in analytic writing. I am not expecting perfect writing. If you have a question about using ideas and words from others in your essays, please ask!

All work submitted in this course must be your own and be written exclusively for this course, which means you may not submit papers or portions of papers you have written for any other course without permission. The use of sources (ideas, quotations, paraphrases) must be properly documented. Please refer to our e-handbooks as well as the Library Citation and Plagiarism guide and the Student Conduct Code on the Office of the Dean of Students website. In cases where academic misconduct has been clearly established, the award of up to an F for the final course grade is the standard practice of the English Department. Please see me BEFORE you submit your work if you have any questions about your use of sources.

***Technology problems: Technology can be tricky, but you need to be organized enough to anticipate computer problems. I will never excuse late work based on technology problems. The university has provided ample computer labs, so if your personal technology has failed, you need to find an alternative on campus or near your residence. Because everything will be turned in online, be sure to back up your hard drive regularly.

Incompletes: A request for the grade “Incomplete” must be placed in advance of the end of the quarter. Such approval will be granted only in cases when some minor but essential aspect of the course cannot be completed by a student through unforeseen circumstances beyond their control.

Access: The University of Oregon is working to create inclusive learning environments. Please notify me in week one if there are aspects of the instruction or design of this course that result in disability-related barriers to your participation. You may also wish to contact the Accessible Education Center in 164 Oregon Hall at 541-346-1155 or uoaec@uoregon.edu.

Observance of Religious Holidays: Students who observe their religious holidays at times when academic requirements conflict with those observances must inform instructors in advance of the holiday. Students are responsible for making up missed work according to a schedule determined with the teacher.
Tentative Course Schedule

T 1/08  Introductions: Who are we? Why are we here?
   Toni Morrison, Foreword to The Bluest Eye (in-class)

R 1/10  Introductions: Why read deeply?
   Maryanne Wolf, excerpt from Reader, Come Home (handout)

T 1/15  Julia Ward Howe, The Hermaphrodite

R 1/17  Julia Ward Howe, The Hermaphrodite

T 1/22  Julia Ward Howe, The Hermaphrodite

R 1/24  Louisa May Alcott, Little Women

T 1/29  Louisa May Alcott, Little Women

R 1/31  Louisa May Alcott, Little Women

T 2/05  Louisa May Alcott, Little Women

R 2/07  Midterm Projects

T 2/12  Midterm Projects

R 2/14  Zitkala-Ša, American Indian Stories

F 2/15  Midterm Projects due on Canvas by midnight

T 2/19  Zitkala-Ša, American Indian Stories

R 2/21  Toni Morrison, The Bluest Eye

T 2/26  Toni Morrison, The Bluest Eye

R 2/28  Toni Morrison, The Bluest Eye

T 3/05  Alison Bechdel, Fun Home

R 3/07  Alison Bechdel, Fun Home

T 3/12  Alison Bechdel, Fun Home

R 3/14  Wrap-up and Final Project/Exam Prep

R 3/21  Last day to submit a final project or exam

To help you plan and manage the reading load (based on the average of reading 250 words per minute):

The Hermaphrodite = approx. 80,520 words
   » plan for about 5 1/2 hours of total reading time; or, if English is your second language or you’re a slow reader like me, plan for about 6-7 hours of total reading time

Little Women (Part One) = 88, 371 words
   » plan for about 6 hours of total reading time; or 7-8 hours of slower reading time

American Indian Stories = 32, 246 words
   » plan for about 2 1/2 hours of total reading time; or 3 hours of slower reading time

The Bluest Eye = 65,575 words
   » plan for about 4 1/2 hours of total reading time; or 5-6 hours of slower reading time

Fun Home = it’s hard to say
   » plan for about 2 hours of total reading time