

ELAN_4410_faustm_f02

**ELAN 4410: Literature for Adolescents
Fall Semester 2002**

Time and location: Thursday (time is variable-see Course Outline) in Room 116/17
Aderhold Hall
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Office Hours: By Appointment

“Ordinary people don’t know how much time and effort it takes to learn how to read. I’ve spent eighty years at it, and I still can’t say that I’ve reached my goal.”
-J. W. Goethe

“The real journey of discovery lies not in seeking new landscapes, but in seeing with new eyes.” -Marcel Proust

“There are now so many other people who know or understand my poems a good deal better than I do that I’m rather diffident about giving any sort of explanation, because they appear sometimes to mean so much more, and such different things than anything I ever thought.” -T.S. Eliot (from an interview recorded in 1950)

“I expect people to find things in my books that I didn’t know, but I can expect this only from people who wish to read something they didn’t know.” -Italo Calvino

“I have often wondered about two things. First, why high school kids almost invariably hate the books they are assigned to read by their English teachers, and second, why English teachers almost invariably hate the books students read in their spare time. Something seems very wrong with such a situation. There is a bridge out there, and the ferry service is uncertain at best.” -Stephen King

“If I had a message, I’d send a telegram.” -Ernest Hemingway

Course Description

This course is designed to assist you, the pre-service language arts teacher, as you prepare to assume responsibility for guiding the reading of young adults. Throughout the semester, you will engage with three overarching and essential questions: What literature should we teach? Why should we teach it? And, how should it be taught? In different ways, each of the course requirements is intended to facilitate complex responses to the many issues these questions raise for classroom teachers. Be advised that the profession

you are about to enter is marked by profound disagreements when it comes to providing answers to these seemingly very basic questions.

Before saying more about what you can expect from this course, let me be clear about what you should not expect.

This is not a survey course in literature written exclusively for adolescents. I will be asking you to demonstrate some familiarity with this genre of literature as a potentially valuable resource for language arts teachers in grades 7-12, but the course will not revolve around this topic.

This course is not, strictly speaking, a course in methods. Again, this is not to say we will ignore questions about teaching methodology. My hope is that you will garner lots of good ideas about “how” to read literature productively with young adults but don’t expect to walk away at the end of the semester with a cookbook of successful recipes for teaching particular works of literature.

This course will not position you as the future author of an “idiot’s guide to literary reading,” “literature for dummies,” or any other demeaning approach to making literature exciting and accessible to young readers.

By and large, this course will address only indirectly the problem of teenagers who literally do not know how to decode print.

Finally, you cannot expect a single semester of work to provide you with “everything you need to know about literature instruction in schools.” My hope is that you will feel well prepared to step into a classroom as a teacher, but also as a learner, who expects to grow and change along with your students.

What other hopes do I have?

I hope you will think hard about what I’m calling the “essential questions” and begin to fashion your own response to them based on what you truly believe about reading, teaching and learning.

I hope you will think hard about what literary reading means to you in the context of your own life and the lives of other adults. If helping young people to similarly choose lives that include reading is one of your goals as a teacher, then you need to develop a clear idea about what it means to be a “life-long reader.” In this vein, I hope you will embrace the concept that literary reading ought to be connected with “real-life concerns.” The bottom line is that teachers need to be prepared with good answers for students, who inevitably ask, “Why are we doing this?”

I hope this course helps you develop your understanding of reading as a socially mediated process that involves much more than being able to decode print. One of my goals is to demystify what makes you—and I mean each of you—a person who derives pleasure and who also learns from the experience of reading literature. One of my mentors, James Britton, was fond of saying, “Figure out what it is that you know how to do and teach the kids to do it.” I hope to persuade you to view reading itself an activity and to share my sense that learning how to read is a life-long endeavor.

Finally, with respect to the current climate of increasing emphasis on assessment and accountability, I hope this course provides you with some tools to combat the pressure many teachers are feeling to “teach to a test.” The tests are real, but so is the potential to make evaluation meaningful by connecting it with learning.

As each of us negotiates the coming semester in our own way, I hope you will not hesitate to ask for help when you need it. The challenges before us are great but so are the rewards. Let's work together to see that "no teacher is left behind."

Required Reading

Allen Carey-Webb (2001) *Literature and Lives: A Response-Based, Cultural Studies Approach to Teaching English* (NCTE).

Harvey Daniels (2002) *Literature Circles: Voice and Choice in Book Clubs and Reading Groups*, Second Edition (Stenhouse).

F. Scott Fitzgerald (1925) *The Great Gatsby* (Scribners).

Nella Larsen (1929) *Passing* (Penguin).

Standards for the English Language Arts (1996, IRA/NCTE).

Please note: In addition to the above titles (available from the UGA bookstore) students will be required to obtain copies of three books for young adults as well as self-selected reading for an inquiry project. All other required reading will be provided by the professor.

Course Requirements and Grading

Attendance and Participation: (Expected).

Position Paper: In a paper of 500-700 words (2-3 pages) address the questions that follow. Our society offers myriad opportunities for learning and being entertained. In this rich environment, why would anyone choose to make time for literature? What is it about the experience of reading literature that makes it worthwhile for you (and presumably for others)? What, if anything, justifies the standard practice of including four years of literature instruction in secondary school programs of study?

Draft due on Sept. 5 (10 points possible).

Revision due on Dec. 5 (15 points possible).

Reaction Papers: These short papers (one page maximum!) are intended to generate class discussion that is responsive to student questions and concerns. Use them to record matters you would like to bring before the whole group based on particular reading assignments. See the Course Outline for due dates and subject matter for these papers.

(3 points @ X 7 = 21 points possible).

Response Paper: You will be asked to compose a response to our shared experience of reading *The Great Gatsby* side-by-side with *Passing*. Specific expectations for this assignment will be based on your initial reactions and our subsequent discussion of the novels.

Due on Oct 24 (15 points possible).

Literature Circles Project: Based on our reading of the Harvey Daniels book, I will give you opportunities to experiment with the format he recommends. Although your experience will not be extensive, it will enable you at least to get a feel for the potential value of literature circles. I will ask you to write a brief (one page maximum) self evaluation of your participation in a literature circle this semester.

Due on Nov. 14 (5 points possible).

Independent Reading Project: Locate and read three (3) young adult novels, collections of short stories, and/or collections of poetry. Construct a brief annotated bibliography of your selections by Dec 5 (5 points possible). I will compile these into a resource the whole class can use. Also, be prepared to share one of your independent reading experiences in the form of an in-class “book talk.” (5 points possible). Book talks will commence at the end of class on Sept 19 and continue through November 21.

Inquiry Project: Once you become familiar with Carey-Webb’s *Literature and Lives* (required reading for the class), you will discover that it contains a vast number of references to further reading at least some of which should be of interest to you. For the Inquiry Project you will collaborate with up to three other members of the class. As a team you will decide amongst yourselves what additional reading to pursue (each person must select a minimum of three items) and, together, design a presentation you think would be informative and otherwise useful to your peers in the class. Please note: the reading you select may or may not be directly related to other projects you are working on for TAPPP. Also note: Options for presentations will be reviewed on Sept. 26 after the working groups have been created.

Prospectus due on Sept 26 (format will be provided, 4 points possible for each contributor).

Presentation due on Dec 5 or Dec 12 (20 points possible for each contributor).

92-100= A
85-92= B
78-84= C
70-77= D
below 70= F

Course Outline

8/22 (2:15-4:45)	Course Introduction
8/29 (2:15-4:45)	LIT CIRCLES (chs 1-5) <i>Reaction Paper #1</i> due.
9/5 (2:15-4:45)	LIT CIRCLES (chs. 5-8,10,12,14)

Reaction Paper #2 due.
Position Paper (initial draft) due.

9/12 (11:00-1:30)

LIT & LIVES (chs. 1-4)
Reaction Paper # 3 due.

9/19 (11:00-1:30)

LIT & LIVES (chs. 5-8)
Reaction Paper #4 due.
 Book Talks by:

(1) _____ (2) _____ (3) _____

9/26 (11:00-1:30)

Inquiry Project (prospectus) due; discussion of possible formats.
 Book Talks by:

(1) _____ (2) _____ (3) _____

10/3 (11:00-1:30)

THE GREAT GATSBY
Reaction Paper #5 due.
 Book Talks by:

(1) _____ (2) _____ (3) _____

10/10 (2:15-4:45)

PASSING
Reaction Paper # 6 due.
 Book Talks by:

(1) _____ (2) _____ (3) _____

10/17 (2:15-4:45)

Follow-up discussion.
 Book Talks by:

(1) _____ (2) _____ (3) _____

10/24 (11:00-1:30)

Strategies for reading fiction with young people.
Response Paper due.
 Book Talks by:

(1) _____ (2) _____ (3) _____

10/31 (Fall Break)

11/7 (11:00-1:30) Strategies for reading poetry (including Shakespeare) with young people.
Book Talks by:

(1) _____ (2) _____ (3) _____

11/14 (11:00-1:30)

NCTE STANDARDS
Reaction Paper #7 due.
Self-Evaluation due.
Book Talks by:

(1) _____ (2) _____ (3) _____

11/21 (2:15-4:45)

Connecting evaluation with learning.
Book Talks by:

(1) _____ (2) _____ (3) _____

11/28 (Thanksgiving)

12/5 (2:15-4:45)

Inquiry Project (presentations) due.
UGA course evaluation protocol.

12/12 (2:15-4:45)

Inquiry Project (presentations) due.