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ENG 4905-600: Studies in Youth Literature

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Instructor Information

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Office Hours: By Appointment via Zoom

Course Objectives:

1. Analyze ethical questions in literature for young people.
2. Apply a variety of ethical systems to the texts and determine which systems appear to be most relevant to the ethical worldviews expressed by the texts.
3. Evaluate the ethical systems portrayed in the texts.

Course Description:

Popular discussions of literature for young people tend to focus on the ethical dimensions of the texts at least as much as the aesthetics. This course approaches both the ethical questions posed within fictional worlds as well as the ethical implications of young people's literature on the real world. While the course will be historically grounded and we will discuss some of the notable ethical dilemmas that have faced literature for children and young people in the past, the focus will be on contemporary texts and issues.

Required Textbooks

- Alvarez *Before We Were Free*
- Johnson *You Should See Me in a Crown*
- Levithan *Every Day*
- Skármeta *The Composition*
- Slater *The 57 Bus*
- Takei *They Called Us Enemy*

Additional required readings are linked in D2L, this will include critical texts as well as video and audio content.

Assignments

Discussions	400
	80 Initial Discussions (8x10)
	320 Analysis Discussions (8x40)
Response Papers	600
	200 Ethical Questions

200 Ethical Comparisons
200 Ethical Evaluations

Total 1000

There will not be any extra credit opportunities, but I will allow students to rewrite either response paper 1 or 2 and resubmit it for full credit.

Discussions

Each week will require two discussions. Typically, this will take the form of one initial discussion of “first impressions” and one more detailed analytical discussion.

Response Papers

This course requires 3 response papers. Each paper has a different prompt, and the prompts increase in complexity as the course progresses. The papers are due in weeks 4, 6, and 8.

Academic Integrity

Students are expected to maintain principles of academic integrity and conduct as defined in EIU’s Code of Conduct (<http://www.eiu.edu/judicial/studentconductcode.php>). Violations will be reported to the Office of Student Standards.

Students with Disabilities

If you are a student with a documented disability in need of accommodations to fully participate in this class, please contact the Office of Student Disability Services (OSDS). All accommodations must be approved through OSDS. Please stop by McAfee Gym, Room 1210, or call 217-581-6583 to make an appointment.

The Student Success Center

Students who are having difficulty achieving their academic goals are encouraged to contact the Student Success Center (www.eiu.edu/~success) for assistance with time management, test taking, note taking, avoiding procrastination, setting goals, and other skills to support academic achievement. The Student Success Center provides individualized consultations. To make an appointment, call 217-581-6696, or go to McAfee Gym, Room 1301.

Course Schedule

Week 1: Introduction to Ethics

- Sheila Bonde and Paul Firenze's "A Framework for Making Ethical Decisions" [Click here for the Bonde and Firenze reading](#)
- "A Spirit of Care with Maurice Hamington" [Click here for the Hamington interview](#)

Important Definitions (Required Reading, but only sections 1 & 2 of each definition)

- Alexander, Larry and Michael Moore, "Deontological Ethics", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2021 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2021/entries/ethics-deontological/>
- Hursthouse, Rosalind and Glen Pettigrove, "Virtue Ethics", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2018 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2018/entries/ethics-virtue/>
- Sinnott-Armstrong, Walter, "Consequentialism", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2021 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2021/entries/consequentialism/>

Week 2: Ethics and Literature

- Green, Melanie C., Timothy C. Brock, and Geoff F. Kauffman. "Understanding Media Enjoyment: The Role of Transportation Into Narrative Worlds." *Communication Theory*, vol. 14, no. 4, Oxford University Press on behalf of the International Communication Association, 2004, pp. 311–27, <https://i-share-https://proxy1.library.eiu.edu/login?url=https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=ufh&AN=15261708&site=ehost-live>
- Appel, Markus. "Fictional Narratives Cultivate Just-World Beliefs." *Journal of Communication*, vol. 58, no. 1, Mar. 2008, pp. 62–83. *EBSCOhost*, <https://proxy1.library.eiu.edu/login?url=https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=ufh&AN=31244810&site=ehost-live>
- Nance-Carroll, Niall. "A Prosaics of the Hundred Acre Wood: Ethics in A. A. Milne's *Winnie-the-Pooh* and *The House at Pooh Corner*." *Ethics and Children's Literature*. Ed. Claudia Mills. pp. 89-100. Routledge, 2016. [Click here for the Nance-Carroll reading](#)

Week 3: *They Called Us Enemy*

- Main Text: George Takei's *They Called Us Enemy*
- Takei, George. "Why I Love a Country that Once Betrayed Me." TedTalks. <https://youtu.be/LeBKBFAPwNc>

Week 4: *Before We Were Free*

- Main Text: Julia Alvarez *Before We Were Free*
- Domyenko, Cecilia (dir.). *Code Name: Butterflies*. 2009. <https://youtu.be/8mrAZrVYwsU>
 - Note that some subtitles during interviews may be hard to read. The following is a Word document where I have typed out the subtitles to make them easier to read. [Transcripts of Subtitles for Code Name Butterflies](#)
- Response Paper 1 Due

Week 5: *The Composition*

- Main Text: Antonio Skármeta's *The Composition*
- Nance-Carroll, Niall. "Innocence is No Defense." *Children's Literature in Education*. <https://proxy1.library.eiu.edu/login?url=https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=asn&AN=99045316&site=ehost-live>

Week 6: *The 57 Bus*

- Main Text: Dashka Slater's *The 57 Bus*
- Goldstein, Brian. "Intersectionality, Complexity, of California's Juvenile Justice Dramatized in The 57 Bus." *Juvenile Justice Information Exchange*. 23 July 2018. <https://jjie.org/2018/07/23/intersectionality-complexity-of-california-juvenile-justice-dramatized-for-young-adults-in-the-57-bus/>
- Slater, Dashka. "The Fire on the 57 Bus in Oakland." *The New York Times Magazine*. 29 January 2015. <https://www.proquest.com/magazines/fire-on-57-bus/docview/1650163281/se-2?accountid=10705>
- Response Paper 2 Due

Week 7: *Every Day*

- Main Text: David Levithan's *Every Day*

- Wickens, Corrine M. and Eric Junco. "'Every Person Is a Possibility': A Post-Postmodern Analysis of LGBTQ Young Adult Novel *Every Day*." *Children's Literature Association Quarterly*, vol. 46 no. 2, 2021, p. 160-177. *Project MUSE*, <https://muse-jhu-edu.proxy1.library.eiu.edu/article/799574>

Week 8: *You Should See Me in a Crown*

- Main Text: Leah Johnson's *You Should See Me In a Crown*
- Response Paper 3 Due