



ENG 506-01B, 01W
Problems in Young Adult Literature:
Fitting in with the Fit
COURSE SYLLABUS: Spring 2026

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Instructor: Rebecca Rowe | Office Location: DTH 314
In-Person Student Hours: TTh, 3:30-4:30pm | Virtual Student Hours: W, 10am-12pm; & by appt.
Email Address: Rebecca.Rowe@etamu.edu (preferred form of communication)
Communication Response Time: Within 24 hours (M-F, 8am-5pm)

COURSE INFORMATION

Time: Th 5:00-7:30 PM | **Location:** DTH 208 or Zoom

Textbooks

- Lainoff, Lillie. *One For All*. ISBN: 1250866588
- McNicoll, Elle. *A Kind of Spark*. ISBN: 0593374282
- Saft, Allison. *A Fragile Enchantment*. ISBN: 1250892856
- Stevenson, ND. *Nimona*. ISBN: 0062278223
- Westerfeld, Scott. *Uglies*. ISBN: 1442419814
- Additional materials available on D2L and/or on the course schedule

You will also need access to the following film and TV show:

- *Echo* (2024)
- *Nimona* (2023)

Software Required

- We will be using D2L for all assignment submissions and course materials.
- You will need to read pdfs during the course of the semester. You are not required to print them off, but you are required to be able to look at them during class. Make sure you have something with Adobe Acrobat or another pdf reader.

Optional Materials

- [Purdue OWL MLA](#) is a great resource to check out for citation information.
- www.tinyurl.com/otmarchive is a website I've created with previous students' teaching materials plus additional helpful online resources from me, for those of you interested in the pedagogical elements of this course.
- <https://www.etamu.edu/library/>—the university library website.

The syllabus/schedule are subject to change.

Course Description

This course provides an overview of the various problems associated with young adult (YA) literature. Topics may include the problem novel and new realism, how YA literature is defined, issues associated with censorship, problematic representations within texts or involved in the production of texts, and the problems young adults experience in the texts. Students will explore how adults use this literature to both represent and shape adolescence in various cultural contexts.

This semester's focus is on the representation of dis/ability and neurodiversity. Teens, and their literature, often seem focused on the idea of fitting in. An almost unspoken rule is that the people in the "in-crowd" are almost invariably fit, in terms of being able-bodied and being considered attractive and put together. This semester, we will explore how the teenage story of fitting shifts when someone is not fit, considering different disability studies' lenses and how they help us resee the young adult and their literature.

Student Learning Outcomes:

By the end of this course, students will be able to...	ETAMU Student Learning Outcomes	NACE Career Preparedness Competencies
define adolescence and YA literature within the current American landscape.	Critical Thinking; Social Responsibility	Communication; Critical Thinking
analyze specific YA literature texts and tie such analysis to cultural exploration.	Critical Thinking; Social Responsibility; Oral/Visual Communication	Communication; Critical Thinking
critically and respectfully approach scholarly inquiries and develop inquiries of their own.	Critical Thinking; Personal and Social Responsibility	Communication; Critical Thinking
develop and implement their own project plans.	Critical Thinking; Oral/Visual Communication	Communication; Critical Thinking; Technology

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Minimal Technical Skills Needed

The most important technical skill you need is the ability to use a word processor, such as Microsoft Word or Google Docs. Unless otherwise noted in the assignment prompt, **all projects and essays must be submitted as a Word Doc, a Google Doc, or a pdf**. You will also need to be familiar with D2L and websites such as *YouTube*.

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Instructional Methods

This is a dual-modality course, which means that some of you will be meeting in person with me every week while some of you will be joining us at the same time over Zoom. Much of our work will take place while we are together in that time period, however you are joining us. Each day will consist of a lecture and some kind of class conversation or activity. I will also offer feedback on everything you submit. If you ever want more feedback, please let me know.

Student Responsibilities

You will need to complete readings (or viewings) for every class, including a mixture of primary and secondary sources, in order to engage fully in the conversations we will have each week. This is a graduate course, so I expect each of you to come to class with thoughts, ideas, and questions about our readings. I will lead questions and activities, but part of the work of this course is to develop your own way for approaching the weekly texts, both on your own and in collaboration with your classmates. You will also need to complete a major project (which will require extra work on your part) and small engagement assignments to fully engage with our topic and our community.

GRADING

In this course, **you have control over your grade**. This course uses what's called [Gameful or Gamified learning](#), designed around concepts of gaming. Basically, there are many assignments you can complete in this course, some required and some not. You choose which of the non-required assignments you want to complete based on what interests you and what you think will benefit your learning journey most. So, for example, if your best work has nothing to do with exams, you do not have to take any exams and can instead focus on projects. Likewise, if you really like speaking in class, you can focus on activities that let you present. You choose which assignments work best for you.

As you complete assignments, you will earn experience points (XP) like any other game. While I will assign points to each project, your grade rests mostly on completion. If you do all that is asked of you in the manner and spirit it is asked, you will earn all of the points that assignment is worth. This is why I emphasize *experience* in the XP system: your grade in this course is about how much you experienced (or engaged with) the course content. You can turn in as many or as few assignments as you like to get the score you want; your grade is determined by total XP, *not* a percentage like most classes. In fact, **your grade does not depend on the quality of your work; my feedback will be geared towards quality to help you strengthen your analysis and writing skills**. This table shows what falls under XP and what falls under feedback:

Component	XP	Feedback
Ideas	How you think and write will not affect your XP. I may disagree or misunderstand your ideas, but if you put in the labor, you are guaranteed full points.	My feedback, whether in rubric or freeform, will be geared towards helping you refine your ideas.

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Late	Most work for this class is due Sunday night, 11:59pm, but this is a soft deadline; as long as it's in before I start working the next day, it's fine. After that, late projects will lose one point each calendar day they are late. If you need an extension, fill out the Extension Request Form before the due date or, in the case of emergency, as soon as you can after the due date (e.g., if there is a sudden medical emergency, I do not expect you to submit the extension request on the way to the hospital; just get to it when you can). Extensions are not available for end-of-semester work or short assignments (e.g., discussion boards).	I may give you a comment explaining why you lost XP, but you're expected to know this policy.
Short	Any project that does not meet the word count on the assignment prompt will lose points according to how much of the project is missing. For example, if the assignment is for 1,000 words, and you submit 500, you can only make half the number of points on the assignment because you have only completed half the experience. I do give you wiggle room: as long as you're within 50 words for shorter assignments and 100 words for longer assignments, you'll be fine.	I may give you a comment explaining why you lost XP, but you're expected to know this policy.
Missed the Point	Even though I'm fairly flexible with how students interpret prompts, if you do not complete the project asked of you, you cannot receive full points. For example, if you submit a project that requires research but include no research, the assignment would be incomplete and will receive no more than half of the possible points. Likewise, if you write an essay when a podcast is required, you cannot receive full points because you have not engaged with the public aspect of the project.	I will give feedback to explain what you're missing, how it does not meet the requirements of the assignment, and why this is a problem for the project as a whole. My requirements are not arbitrary and will help you engage with the course to your fullest.
Grammar	Grammar will not affect your XP.	Generally, I do not give feedback on grammar unless it impedes readability. Then, I will give feedback to help you communicate better.
Formatting	How you format your project (e.g., double spaced, font, etc.) will not affect your XP <i>unless</i> the formatting you choose goes directly against the assignment prompt. For example, if I assign	I will not give feedback on formatting unless it impedes readability (e.g., choosing an inaccessible

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	creating a flyer and you submit a PowerPoint instead, you've not used the required formatting.	font) or goes against the assignment prompt.
Citations	Your citation style will not impact your XP unless you have 1) plagiarized by not citing the sources you used; 2) not used any sources when they are required; 3) forgotten a Works Cited completely; 4) submitted a list of links instead of a Works Cited.	I am not a stickler on citations; as long as you don't do any of the four things mentioned in the left cell, will you won't get comments from me.

Your semester grade will be determined by how many XP you have at the end:

A = 90+ XP

B = 80-89 XP

C = 70-79 XP

D = 60-69 XP

F = less than 60 XP

This system is intended **to give you more room to experiment and fail, to alleviate stress since you will have control over all that you do, and to allow you to chart your own educational path within this course.**

Assessments

There are six required assignments:

- **Contextualization Presentation** (10 points) in which you will 10-15-minute presentation on the subject of one of our classes.
- **Track declaration** (10 points) in which you will explain which of the Major-Project tracks you will work through for the rest of the semester.
- **Annotated Bibliography** (10 points) in which you will review pieces like your own proposed project.
- **Formal Proposal** (10 points) in which you will write a formal proposal appropriate for your chosen track after doing the research for your Annotated Bibliography.
- **Workshop Draft** (10 points) which you will submit the penultimate week of class then get feedback on before the Major Project is due.
- **Major Project** (30 points) in which you will engage with the work of this course in a sustained way through one of five options:
 - Scholarly: write an article-length scholarly essay
 - Pedagogical: develop a unit plan/syllabus and other materials to teach children's literature to a level of your choice
 - Creative: create a children's literature of your own
 - Digital: plan and possibly implement a digital project about children's literature
 - Writer's choice: in consultation with me, develop a different project in relation to children's literature

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If you earn full points for these required projects, you will have 80 XP (a B grade). Alongside these required assignments, you can also earn XP by engaging in our course community in a variety of ways in order to bump your grade up higher:

- Class notes (3 XP each, up to 5 times)
- Student hours (3 XP each, up to 5 times)
- Discussion Boards (3 XP, up to 5 times)
- Reading the World (5 XP)
- Social media essay (5 XP)
- Text/event review (5 XP)

Badges

While the gamification system has a lot of advantages, the one concern I hear most often is that students are unsure where they stand overall in the semester. To help you track your progression, you will earn badges when you hit certain mile markers. You can find all the available badges on D2L, but there are four that are especially helpful for tracking your progress:

- A-Mazing!: You have earned 90 XP and now have an A in this course.
- B-eautiful: You have earned 80 XP and now have a B in this course.
- C-Pass: You have earned 70 XP and are now passing with a C in this course.
- Halfway Charged: You have earned 35 XP, half of what you need to pass this course.

That last badge, Halfway Charged, is especially important to help you ensure you're getting XP early enough to get the grade you want. I suggest you earn the Halfway Charged badge by the following dates, depending on what grade you want:

- A: 3/19
- B: 3/26
- C: 4/16

CLASS SCHEDULE

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

LMS

All course sections offered by East Texas A&M University have a corresponding course shell in the myLeo Online Learning Management System (LMS). Below are technical requirements

LMS Requirements:

<https://community.brightspace.com/s/article/Brightspace-Platform-Requirements>

LMS Browser Support:

https://documentation.brightspace.com/EN/brightspace/requirements/all/browser_support.htm

YouSeeU Virtual Classroom Requirements:

<https://support.youseeu.com/hc/en-us/articles/115007031107-Basic-System-Requirements>

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ACCESS AND NAVIGATION

You will need your campus-wide ID (CWID) and password to log into the course. If you do not know your CWID or have forgotten your password, contact the Center for IT Excellence (CITE) at 903.468.6000 or helpdesk@etamu.edu.

Note: Personal computer and internet connection problems do not excuse the requirement to complete all course work in a timely and satisfactory manner. Each student needs to have a backup method to deal with these inevitable problems. These methods might include the availability of a backup PC at home or work, the temporary use of a computer at a friend's home, the local library, office service companies, Starbucks, a ETAMU campus open computer lab, etc.

COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT

If you have any questions or are having difficulties with the course material, please contact your Instructor.

Technical Support

If you are having technical difficulty with any part of Brightspace, please contact Brightspace Technical Support at 1-877-325-7778. Other support options can be found here: <https://community.brightspace.com/support/s/contactsupport>

Interaction with Instructor Statement

As an instructor, communication is key with me. I am happy to be flexible with most things in this course if it will help you succeed, but I'm not a mind reader. You have to tell me what you need so that I can help you. If you need to contact me, send me an **email**. Generally, I will respond to emails sent between 8am and 5pm, Monday-Friday, within 24 hours of receiving them. If you have an urgent question about an assignment that's due on Sunday, you might want to start working on it by Friday so you have a chance to ask me before the weekend. If you forget and get started late, just let me know you need more time in the Extension Request Form. If I plan to be away from my computer for more than a couple of days, I will let you know in advance. I will also update the online grades as quickly as I can. I aim for no more than a week, but it may take me longer, especially with longer projects. You will receive written feedback for every project, so make sure you check for it. I often use rubrics, so if it looks like I didn't leave any comments, look for the rubric.

Additional Course Policies

Policy on Humanity

My courses and teaching are designed around two core concepts: adaptability and empathy:

- I recognize that you have considerable knowledge about many things coming into this class. I start by exploring what you already know so that I can help you take your skills and refine and strengthen them. I also want you to be able to take what you learn in my

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class forward with you. So, I design my courses around skills that I can teach you that you can then apply elsewhere as you move through your education and life.

- I know that you do not begin and end with this class, and I approach each student first and foremost as a human being who, if we're being honest, may have more important things going on in their lives than this class. **Your health—physical, mental, emotional, spiritual, financial—is more important than anything we will do or discuss, and I want you to prioritize them.** That means a few things:
 - If you need help, accommodation, an extension, or anything else to perform as well as you can while also maintaining your health, please let me know. That also means that you can eat and drink in class if you need to, that you can use technology as it best serves you, and that if you need to leave the room at any point for your health (including mental and emotional), please do so.
 - This class will be full of human bodies, so please be considerate. If you are sick, stay home. There are plenty of ways to make up any day of class.
 - As a fellow human being, I respect you. By respect, I mean that I will always do my best to see you as a whole human being whose life experiences have created a person who acts in certain ways and who deserves to be treated like a human being. All I ask is that just as I respect you as a human being, you treat me and your peers with that kind of respect. We may at times cover new or difficult material and we all may have different opinions about it. I ask that you keep an open mind and be respectful with me, your classmates, and our material.

Ultimately, my goal is to discover where you are on your personal learning journey and help you move along that journey in whatever way I can. Most importantly, **I am here to help you, not harm you.** If there is ever anything I can do to help you with that, please let me know!

Attendance Policy

While your presence in the course will help both you and your classmates learn and process the material, life often finds a way to get in the way. So, **every student is allowed three missed days within the semester without a penalty.** You do not have to tell me why you're absent; you may be sick or need to work an extra shift or look after a child or simply need a mental health day to be the best you that you can be. You do not owe me an explanation for organizing your time as well as you can. When you have missed three days, I will let you know that you have used your free absence days. **At this point, you will lose five grade points for every day you miss.**

If you are absent for any reason at any point in the course, you can complete a **make-up** activity by contacting me to receive the specific activity for that day. Completing this makeup activity will count as your attendance for the day and will allow you to complete whatever educational objective you missed for the day you are gone. Because I provide makeup work, your three free absences include any of ETAMU's excused absences, such as religious holidays or university competitions. Even if you miss class for an excused reason, you will need to engage with the content of the course when you can.

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Syllabus Change Policy

The syllabus is a guide. Circumstances and events, such as student progress, may make it necessary for the instructor to modify the syllabus during the semester. Any changes made to the syllabus will be announced in advance.

University Policies

Student Conduct

All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. The [Code of Student Conduct](#) is described in detail online in the [Student Guidebook](#). Students should also consult the [Rules of Netiquette Webpage](#) for more information regarding how to interact with students in an online forum.

ETAMU Attendance

For more information about the attendance policy, please view the [Attendance Webpage](#) and the [Class Attendance Policy](#).

Academic Integrity

Students at East Texas A&M University are expected to maintain high standards of integrity and honesty in all their scholastic work. For more details and the definition of academic dishonesty see the following procedures:

[Undergraduate Academic Dishonesty University Procedure 13.99.99.R0.03](#)

[Undergraduate Student Academic Dishonesty Form](#)

[Graduate Student Academic Dishonesty University Procedure 13.99.99.R0.10](#)

[Graduate Student Academic Dishonesty Form](#)

Use of Artificial Intelligence

East Texas A&M University acknowledges that there are legitimate uses of Artificial Intelligence, ChatBots, or other software that has the capacity to generate text or suggest replacements for text beyond individual words. However, the learning that takes place in this course requires your unique perspective and human experience. Use of AI would make it harder to evaluate your work. **It is not permitted to use any generative AI tools in the course**, and any such use of AI will be treated as an academic integrity issue:

Students with Disabilities-- ADA Statement

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

Office of Student Disability Resources and Services

East Texas A&M University

Velma K. Waters Library Rm 162

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Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835
Fax (903) 468-8148
Email: studentdisabilityservices@etamu.edu
Website: [Office of Student Disability Services](#)

Nondiscrimination Notice

East Texas A&M University will comply in the classroom, and in online courses, with all federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination and related retaliation on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, age, genetic information, or veteran status. Further, an environment free from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression will be maintained.

Campus Concealed Carry Statement

Texas Senate Bill - 11 (Government Code 411.2031, et al.) authorizes the carrying of a concealed handgun in East Texas A&M University buildings only by persons who have been issued and are in possession of a Texas License to Carry a Handgun. Qualified law enforcement officers or those who are otherwise authorized to carry a concealed handgun in the State of Texas are also permitted to do so. Pursuant to Penal Code (PC) 46.035 and ETAMU Rule 34.06.02.R1, license holders may not carry a concealed handgun in restricted locations. For a list of locations, please refer to the [Carrying Concealed Handguns On Campus](#) document and/or consult your event organizer.

Pursuant to PC 46.035, the open carrying of handguns is prohibited on all East Texas A&M University campuses. Report violations to the University Police Department at 903-886-5868 or 9-1-1.

East Texas A&M Supports Students' Mental Health – Counseling Services

The Counseling Center at East Texas A&M University, located in the Halladay Building, Room 203, offers counseling services, educational programming, and connection to community resources for students. Students have 24/7 access to the Counseling Center's crisis assessment services by calling 903-886-5145. For more information regarding Counseling Center events and confidential services, please visit www.tamuc.edu/counsel

The university aims to provide students with essential knowledge and tools to understand and support mental health. As part of our commitment to your well-being, we offer access to Telus Health, a service available 24/7/365 via chat, phone, or webinar. Scan the QR code to download the app and explore the resources available to you for guidance and support whenever you need it.



<http://telusproduction.com/app/5108.html>

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