WRITING FOR YOUNG ADULTS

CRWR 291.01
TR 2:00-3:20
LA 106

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Course Overview:

This course is designed to give you the chance to practice writing fiction for a young adult audience. By reading examples of young adult (or YA) lit, discussing the craft of writing and how it applies to writing YA fiction, and working on your own pieces, you will begin to explore the possibilities inherent in YA literature. You will begin the semester by studying the craft of writing YA fiction: how it differs (if at all) from writing for an “adult” audience; whether there are rules that one must obey when writing; and how these rules are bent in the YA works that you enjoy. We will read a new YA novel together in order to see how the aspects of the craft are at work in one piece. As the semester progresses, you will begin to work on your own pieces. Because most young adult readers don’t seem to read much short fiction, I will encourage you to work on novels in this class. The final portfolio will consist of at least three chapters (ideally four) of a novel intended for a young adult audience.

Readings:

- *The Magic Words*, by Cheryl Klein. Order online IMMEDIATELY from Amazon.

- *The Walls Around Us*, by Nova Ren Suma. Order online IMMEDIATELY from Amazon.

Assignments:

You will write three pieces to workshop in class; these will ideally be chapters from a novel that you want to work on. (They can, however, be short stories.) You will have the chance to get feedback on each chapter (or story) from the class members, as well as from me. These three stories comprise the majority of the written work that you will accomplish in class, and should therefore represent your best work.
Note: Your chapters are due on Moodle before class on the class day BEFORE your story would be workshopped. (If you are going to be workshopped on Thursday, you will upload your chapter onto Moodle before class on Tuesday.) I will create a Moodle forum for you where you can paste in your chapter.

Final Portfolio:

At the end of the semester, I will ask you to revise the three chapters (or stories) and ideally add a fourth for your final portfolio. You will turn this in on the last day of class. We will have time near the end of the semester to discuss and work on our revisions and additions.

Grading:

The grading breakdown is as follows:

- Workshop chapters (turned in on time): 50%
- Final Portfolio: 25%
- Participation: 25%

SCHEDULE

WEEK ONE

T 1/24 Introductions. **Assignment: Read “I’m YA and I’m Okay” (Handout). Think of favorite YA novel that you’ve read in the past two years. ORDER YOUR BOOKS.

Th 1/26 Exercises; Discuss Genre: YA, Middle Grade, Children’s Literature. **Assignment: Read First Pages (Handout).

WEEK TWO

T 1/31 Exercises; Plot **Assignment: Read CODE NAME VERITY, pp.1-89, and “Quartet: Character” (pp. 193-219) in SECOND SIGHT

Th 2/2 Exercises; Character **Assignment: Read CODE NAME VERITY, pp.89-203. Bring Klein book to class on Tuesday.

WEEK THREE
T 2/7 Exercises; Voice **Assignment: Read CODE NAME VERITY, pp. 204-end. Compile a character from observations. Go to at least three different locations and watch people—a mixture of age, gender, situation.

Th 2/9 Exercise Out of Class

WEEK FOUR

T 2/14 Discuss Dialogue, as well as The Walls Around Us. **A and B are due on Moodle

Th 2/16 Workshop A and B. **C and D are due.

WEEK FIVE

T 2/21 Workshop C and D. **E and F are due.

Th 2/23 Workshop E and F. **G and H are due.

WEEK SIX

T 2/28 Workshop G and H. **A and B are due.

Th 3/2 Workshop A and B. **C and D are due.

WEEK SEVEN

T 3/7 Workshop C and D. **E and F are due.

Th 3/9 Workshop E and F. **G and H are due.

WEEK EIGHT

T 3/14 Workshop G and H. **A and B are due.

Th 3/16 Workshop A and B. **C and D are due.

WEEK NINE

NO CLASS—SPRING BREAK

WEEK TEN

T 3/28: Workshop C and D. **E and F are due.
Th 3/30: Workshop E and F. **G and H are due.

WEEK ELEVEN

T 4/4 Workshop G and H. **Read The Magic Words, Ch. 18.

Th 4/6 No Class

WEEK TWELVE

T 4/11 Discuss Publication. **Assignment: Write sample query letter to an agent.

Th 4/13 Workshop query letters in class. **Assignment: Read revision strategies for novels.

WEEK THIRTEEN

T 4/18 Discuss revision/expansion of novels. **Assignment: Create an outline for the rest of the novel.

Th 4/20 Workshop/share novel outlines. **Assignment: Work on revision.

WEEK FOURTEEN


Th 4/27 Workshop new work. **Assignment: Finish revision.

WEEK FIFTEEN

T 5/2 Workshop new work. **Assignment: Complete portfolio.

Th 5/4 LAST CLASS. PORTFOLIOS DUE.