

ENGL 3704 - Literature for Middle School Readers

Fall 2026 Syllabus, Section 01, CRN 41576,

Credit hours: 3

Instructor

Jacklynn Mercer

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Public Instructor Information

Instructor Title: Senior Lecturer

Instructor Professional Qualifications:

- Ed.D., Educational Leadership, Youngstown State University, 2024
- MA, Professional Communication, YSU, 2021
- MA, English, YSU, 2012
- BS, English Education, YSU, 2009

Instructor Office Location: DeBartolo Hall, 226

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Course Description

3704. Literature for Middle School Readers. Study of fiction and nonfiction genres for students in the middle school grades, including characters and authors from various cultures and ethnicities. Required of middle childhood reading and language arts majors. Prereq.: Completion of ENGL 1551 with grade "C" or better. 3 s.h.

Course Readings

Group	Title	Author	ISBN
Required	The Giver	Lowery, Lois	9780544336261
Required	Doll Bones	Black, Holly	9781416963998
Required	Orbiting Jupiter	Schmidt, Gary D.	9780544938397
Required	Refugee	Gratz, Alan	9780545880831
Required	Getting Away with Murder: The True Story of the Emmett Till Case	Crowe, Chris	9780451478726
Required	Front Desk	Yang, Kelly	9781338157826
Required	Stamped: Racism, Antiracism, and You	Reynolds, Jason and Kendi, Ibram X.	9780316453691
Required	The Year We Fell From Space	King, Amy Sarig	9781338236361
Required	King and the Dragonflies	Callender, Kacen	9781338129335
Required	Other Words for Home	Warga, Jasmine	9780062747815
Required	Snapdragon	Leyh, Kat	9781250171115

The course readings are subject to change in the event of extenuating circumstances, research developments, current events, and/or to ensure better learning.

Schedule of Topics and Assignments

Day	Date	Reading(s)	Proposed Topic	Due/To Prepare for Class
Tue	8/25		Course Introduction, Who are Middle Grade Readers?	



Thu	8/27	See readings on Blackboard	What is Middle Grade Literature?	
Tue	9/1	The Giver	Dystopian Literature	Reading Response #1
Thu	9/3	Hanson, C.F. (2009). The utopian function of memory in Lois Lowry's The Giver. Extrapolation, 50(1), 45-60. Lea, S.G. (2006). Seeing beyond the sameness: Using The Giver to challenge colorblind ideology. Children's Literature in Education, 37(1), 51-67. DOI: 10.1007/s10583-005-9454-2	Dystopian Literature	
Tue	9/8	Snapdragon	Graphic Novels	Reading Response #2
Thu	9/10	Butcher, K.T. & Manning, M.L. (2004). Bringing graphic novels into a school's curriculum. The Clearing House, 78(2), 67-72. https://www.jstor.org/stable/30197687	Graphic Novels	
Tue	9/15	King and the Dragon Flies	LGBTQ Representation in MG Lit	Reading Response #3
Thu	9/17	Dinkins, E.G. & Englert, P. (2015), LGBTQ literature in middle school classrooms: possibilities for challenging heteronormative environments. Sex Education, (15)4, 392-405, DOI: 10.1080/14681811.2015.1030012 Wood, E. (2010). Pushing the envelope: Exploring sexuality in teen literature. The Journal of Research on Libraries and Young adults, 1(1).	LGBTQ Representation in MG Lit	
Tue	9/22	Doll Bones	Fantasy	Reading Response #4
Thu	9/24	Smith, M., & Mathur, R. (2009). Children's Imagination and Fantasy: Implications for Development, Education, and Classroom Activities.	Fantasy	
Tue	9/29	The Year We Fell from Space		
Thu	10/1			Reading Response #5
Tue	10/6	Orbiting Jupiter	Realistic, rural fiction	
Thu	10/8			Midterm
Tue	10/13	Refugee See readings and videos on Blackboard	Refugee Stories Historical Fiction	Reading Response #6
Tue	10/20	Other Words for Home	Refugee Stories	Reading Response #7
Tue	10/27	Front Desk	Immigrant Stories	Reading Response #8
Thu	10/29	Khiantani, N., & Buchanan, L. B. (2022). Disrupting Dominant Narratives of Asian Americans in the United States Using Yang's Front Desk.		
Tue	11/3	Stamped	MG Non-fiction Civil Rights Movement	Reading Response #9
Thu	11/5	Kuehl, R. (2022). Through the lines: Exploring past/present connections in middle grade novels. The Reading Teacher, 75(4). doi:10.1002/trtr.2041	MG Non-fiction Civil Rights Movement	



Tue	11/10	Getting Away with Murder: The True Story of the Emmett Till Case Wolk, S. (2009). Reading for a better world: Teaching for social responsibility with young adult literature. Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy, 52(8). doi:10.1598/JAAL.52.8.2	MG Non-fiction Civil Rights Movement	Reading Response #10
Thu	11/12	No Class		
Tue	11/17	Getting Away with Murder: The True Story of the Emmett Till Case See additional readings and videos on Blackboard	MG Non-fiction Civil Rights Movement	
Thu	11/19	No Class		
Tue	11/24	Getting Away with Murder: The True Story of the Emmett Till Case	MG Non-fiction Civil Rights Movement	
Thu	11/26	No Class		
Tue	12/1	"The Fun They Had" by Asimov "Fluffle-Picking Time" by Grabenstein	Middle Grade Short Stories	
Thu	12/3	"Thank You, Ma'am" by Hughes "The Sand Castle" Villanueva	Middle Grade Short Stories	Final Paper due Sunday, 12/6, at 11:59 pm
Tue	12/8	No Class		
Thu	12/10	No Class		

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