

DR. MEGHANN  
MEEUSEN

ENGL 5830:  
MULTICULTURAL  
ADOLESCENT  
LITERATURE

Fall 2020

## Course Objectives



### Class Meetings

We will meet synchronously in WebEx on September 16, September 30, October 28, and November 18. There will also be three opportunities for individual conferences.

### Contact Info

[meghann.meeusen@wmich.edu](mailto:meghann.meeusen@wmich.edu)

### Office Hours

Tuesday and Wednesday  
12pm-4pm in WebEx



**Analytical Depth:** Students will work to develop literary analysis techniques and critical approaches cultivated in earlier courses in order to refine their abilities to interpret, evaluate, critique, and interrogate texts.

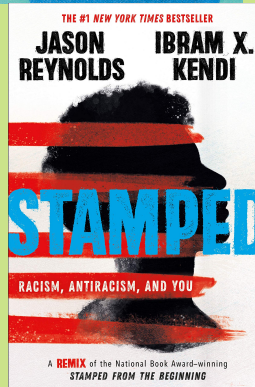
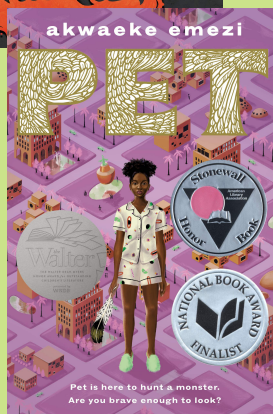
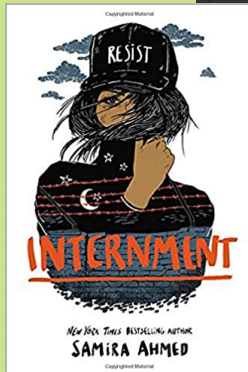
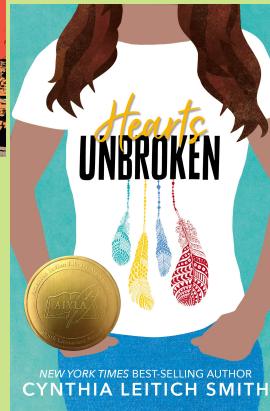
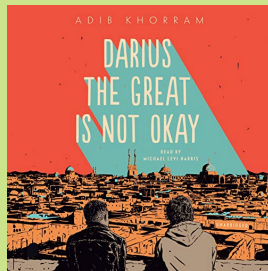
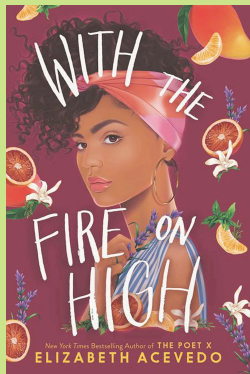
**Criticism and Theory:** Students will work to cultivate understanding the elements, terms, and theories associated with studies of multiculturalism, cultural representation, critical race theory, and related critical approaches.

**Textual Knowledge:** Students will work to broaden their knowledge and understanding of underrepresented and marginalized voices in adolescent literature.

**Ideology and Representation:** Students will work to interrogate explicit and implicit ideologies of texts, as well as critical and popular perspectives related to power, race, representation, and culture in adolescent literature.

**Social Justice and Intersectionality:** Students will explore how adolescent literature might participate in activism related to human rights, civil rights, and equality, with particular attention to the complexly interconnected and overlapping nature of race, class, sexuality, ability, and gender.





93%-100% A  
distinctive, exceptional,  
outstanding work

88-92% BA  
83%-87% B  
strong, thoughtful work

78-82% CB  
73%-77% C  
average, complete work

68-72% DC  
62%-67% D  
problematic, sloppy work

## Required Books and Materials

*With the Fire on High* by Elizabeth Acevedo  
*Darius the Great is Not Okay* by Adib Khorram  
*Internment* by Samira Ahmed  
*Stamped* by Jason Reynolds and Ibram X Kendi

*We Set the Dark on Fire* by Tehlor Kay Mejia  
*Hearts Unbroken* by Cynthia Leitich Smith  
*Pet* by Akwaeke Emezi

Students will also choose one text that speaks to the Black Lives Matter movement and one fantasy novel with an #OwnVoices author; lists of potential options will be provided.

**E-Learning:** As a 5000-level course, ENGL 5830 is built on the expectation that students will take individual responsibility for engaging with course content, rather than being monitored with quizzes and other accountability assessments. One of the main goals of the course is to provide students with a wealth of resources and foster opportunities for them to share resources with one another. To gain the full and robust benefits of the course, however, students **MUST** read, listen to, and engage with e-learning materials. The ideas we'll study are incredibly meaningful in our contemporary social climate-- don't miss out on this opportunity.

**Other Requirements:** Students will also read self-selected texts and films, and critical articles will be a regular part of class reading. Please let Dr. Meeusen know if you are unsure about how to search for academic texts academic databases through the WMU library. Using digital texts and listening to books via audio is also encouraged – services like Libby, Hoopla, and Overdrive provide free access to many materials via digital means, and Dr. Meeusen is happy to help students access these services.





### **Knowledge Sharing: 60% of final grade**

Discussion Board: 200 points

10 boards, 20 points each (10 points for initial post and 5 points for replies)

Critical Text Handout: 200 points

Book Talk Presentation: 200 points

### **Individual Writing: 40% of final grade**

Line of Inquiry Assignment: 100 points

Final Research Project & Rationale: 300 points

### **ONLINE DISCUSSION BOARDS**

**(20% of final grade):**

Students will discuss class content and relevant readings with their colleagues via an online discussion board. For each module in e-learning, students should read/watch/review ALL materials and post in the discussion boards. For each forum, students should contribute an initial post plus at least two responses. For full credit, each post must:

- be at least 150 words in length
- quote the week's reading or associated online content
- end with a question that encourages colleagues to move discussion forward

### **MIDTERM LINE OF INQUIRY ASSIGNMENT**

**(10% of final grade):** Students will propose a "line of inquiry" proposal, exploring the potential of a particular critical question and what research might be used to delve more deeply into this particular critical or analytical study. Then, students will meet with Dr. Meeusen to discuss their ideas and plan to develop this line of inquiry into the final essay project.

### **CRITICAL TEXT HANDOUT (20% of final grade):**

Students will sign up for one critical book (grad) or article (undergrad) related to a specific class reading and create a two page handout summarizing the main thesis and argument the writer makes, sharing this handout with the rest of the class.

### **BOOK TALK VIDEO PRESENTATION (20% of final grade):**

Students will read an adolescent text that pairs well with class reading, reviewing and analyzing the book in a video book talk to share with their colleagues.

### **INDIVIDUAL FINAL ESSAY PROJECT (30% of final grade):**

Students may choose between a traditional scholarly essay or a creative writing project, both with a self-commentary component. Students planning to take the comprehensive exam are encouraged to use this opportunity to "practice" for the specialization component of the exam.



## Procedures & Resources

**Late Work:** I do not accept late work. Although I reserve the right to make exceptions to this policy, this is only possible after a discussion with me. If you foresee a problem completing an assignment on time, please contact me at least 24 hours in advance, and we can discuss possible arrangements.

**Resources:** Please make yourself familiar with the following campus services and policies; if you have any questions, don't hesitate to ask:

- Disability Services for Students [www.wmich.edu/disabilityservices](http://www.wmich.edu/disabilityservices)
- Division of Student Affairs / Diversity Questions [www.wmich.edu/students/diversity](http://www.wmich.edu/students/diversity)
- Sexual and Gender-Based Harassment and Violence, Intimate Partner Violence, and Stalking Policy [www.wmich.edu/sexualmisconduct](http://www.wmich.edu/sexualmisconduct)
- Religious Observance [http://www.wmich.edu/facultysenate/downloads/MOA0702\\_religious\\_observances\\_final.pdf](http://www.wmich.edu/facultysenate/downloads/MOA0702_religious_observances_final.pdf)
- Office of Student Conduct [www.wmich.edu/conduct](http://www.wmich.edu/conduct)
- Civility Statement [http://wmich.edu/sites/default/files/attachments/u370/2016/Civility%20Stmnt.7-27-16\\_0.pdf](http://wmich.edu/sites/default/files/attachments/u370/2016/Civility%20Stmnt.7-27-16_0.pdf)

If you are a student with a disability (e.g. physical, learning, psychiatric, vision, hearing, etc.) and think that you might need special assistance or accommodation in this or any other class, please call Disability Services at (269) 387-2116 or visit them at Woodlawn Place. Please don't hesitate to speak with me about ways to meet your needs in this capacity.

Additionally, I am more than happy to discuss ways that this course could better meet any student's needs, and I encourage anyone who is struggling for any reason to contact me. I will do my very best to fairly accommodate all students who express concern in a respectful way.

**Academic Integrity:** Students are responsible for making themselves aware of and understanding the University policies and procedures that pertain to Academic Honesty. These policies include cheating, fabrication, falsification and forgery, multiple submission, plagiarism, complicity and computer misuse. The academic policies addressing Student Rights and Responsibilities can be found at

<http://catalog.wmich.edu/content.php?catoid=24&navoid=974>.

If there is reason to believe you have been involved in academic dishonesty, you will face academic penalty based on the infraction's severity, which can include a failing grade and/or referral the Office of Student Conduct. Please consult with me if you are uncertain about an issue of academic honesty prior to the submission of an assignment.

Dr. Meeusen's private phone: 586-651-0289



## Inclusivity

In my classroom, all are welcome. We listen to each other, and we practice respect, kindness, and compassion. We seek to understand each other, and we value everyone's perspectives, including (and especially) perspectives of those who are marginalized due to race, gender, sexuality, disability, ethnicity, religion, class, and any other construct that defines a person's sense of self. We strive to critically explore ideologies that prevail in our society, and we seek to consider the destructive nature of power dynamics that perpetuate inequality.

If anyone in the class behaves in a manner contrary to these values, I will respectfully address the behavior directly. I also encourage anyone who feels that these values have been disrespected or violated to respectfully speak up and/or speak with me privately. This includes instances in which my words or actions do not align with this statement of inclusivity, for I acknowledge that we are all human beings who make mistakes, and only in learning about how our behavior affects others can we become more positive members of society. If you have questions or concerns about this statement, please speak to me immediately.