

2017-18 Banned Books Extraordinary Life Stories

Ms. Brooke Kukay

- Huron High School, room 202
- bkukay@huron-city.k12.oh.us

Required Course Texts and Materials

- Turnitin.com Account
- assigned novels/short stories (handouts)
- notebook with insert for handout (or binder/folder)
- writing utensils including highlighters

Course Focus

Books get banned, censored, and challenged based on a huge variety of factors: maybe they contain “dirty” words, or sexual content, or witches and wizards, or explicit or implicit political messages. But, with broader bans on books becoming increasingly rare, the goals of those currently supporting book censorship often come down to this: keeping the books out of schools and thus out of the hands and minds of children. Consider Arizona’s recent decision to ban “ethnic studies” courses, which has blocked teachers from assigning a variety of texts (e.g. certain American history textbooks, Mexican-American literature) in their classrooms, or arguments over science textbooks with certain approaches to evolution. Public education is one of the United States’ most extensive political and social undertakings, so it’s perhaps not surprising the books making up that education should become sites of controversy.

By reading and writing about a range of controversial texts that depict and critique characters' encounters with books, language, and education, students in this course will examine the contentious connections between literature and education. We will pay particular attention to the social and cultural values forwarded and challenged by the course texts: In short, what exactly is being “kept” from children and/or adults when particular texts are challenged or banned within school districts? Readings will come from a variety of genres and cultures; writing will also be a key part of students’ work.

Justice William O. Douglas On the Right to Read

Where suspicion fills the air and holds scholars in line for fear of their jobs, there can be no exercise of the free intellect. . . . A problem can no longer be pursued with impunity to its edges. Fear stalks the classroom. The teacher is no longer a stimulant to adventurous thinking; she becomes instead a pipe line for safe and sound information. A deadening dogma takes the place of free inquiry. Instruction tends to become sterile; pursuit of knowledge is discouraged; discussion often leaves off where it should begin.

Justice William O. Douglas, United States Supreme Court: *Adler v. Board of Education*, 1951

Student Learning Outcomes

The Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects (“the standards”) represent the next generation of K–12 standards designed to prepare all students for success in college, career, and life by the time they graduate from high school. The standards establish guidelines for English language arts (ELA) as well as for literacy in history/social studies, science, and technical subjects. Because students must learn to read, write, speak, listen, and use language effectively in a variety of content areas, the standards promote the literacy skills and concepts required for college and career readiness in multiple disciplines.

The Common Core asks students to read stories and literature, as well as more complex texts that provide facts and background knowledge in areas such as science and social studies. Students will be challenged and asked questions that push them to refer back to what they’ve read. This stresses critical- thinking, problem-solving, and analytical skills that are required for success in college, career, and life.

See link for further detail: <http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/>

Academic Policies

Much of your education will involve learning what others have written and then integrating those ideas into your own thinking. However, in academic writing any ideas or words not credited to another are assumed to be those of the author. The problem of plagiarism comes in when you fail to give credit for those ideas that are not original to you. The word "plagiarism," which comes from the Latin word for "kidnapping," refers to the unacknowledged use of another's words, ideas, or information. You will be introduced to strategies to avoid plagiarism, the conventions for using and acknowledging sources, and good procedures. This will help you to gain confidence in your own writing so that you do not feel a need to borrow the ideas and/or words of others without acknowledging that borrowing.

The following is a guide to help you avoid plagiarism:

What does not need to be acknowledged?

- Common knowledge. If most readers would likely know something, you need not cite it.
- Facts available from a wide variety of sources. If a number of textbooks, encyclopedias, or almanacs include the information, you need not cite it.
- Your own ideas and discoveries.

What must be acknowledged?

- Any direct quotation. The exact words quoted must be placed in quotation marks.
- Paraphrases and summaries of others' ideas and/or words which provide background information, present facts not commonly known, and explain various positions on your topic.
- Arguable assertions. If an author presents an assertion that may or may not be true, cite the source.
- Statistics, charts, tables, and graphs from any source. Credit all graphic material even if you create the graph. The purchase of research papers or the employment of a person or agency to prepare such papers to be plagiarism. In addition, though you may get help in writing your paper, there are limits to the amount of help you can honestly receive. For instance, others may read your paper and point out weaknesses, but they must not rewrite the paper for you.

A problem can also occur if you want to submit a paper for one course that you have already submitted to another instructor for another class. To avoid this problem, discuss the paper with your current instructor before handing it in. See the student handbook for additional information regarding HCS's academic honesty policy.

Assignments

This course is graded on a points system. *All due dates will be announced in class. You are responsible for keeping track of the specific due date for each assignment.* **Late work will not be counted.** Not all assigned reading will be discussed in class, but you must keep up with the reading assignments in order to fully comprehend the course and assignments. You are responsible for making sure you know when to complete the assigned reading and when the major assignments are due. **In order to pass this course you must complete all major writing and speaking assignments.**

Semester I Final Exam

Speech/Presentation additional information will be distributed in class.

Due: week of exams

"Start early and work hard. A writer's apprenticeship usually involves writing a million words (which are then discarded) before he's almost ready to begin. That takes awhile." –David Eddings

Attendance and Participation

A primary method of learning in this course is based upon reflective analysis of the course content (readings, films, and class discussion). This method of learning requires active participation in discussion so that ideas

and beliefs can be shared, supported, possibly challenged and even reconstructed based upon new ideas and insights. Simply attending class without contributing to the discussion is not really “attending” class. You must be present to fully participate in this course. You will be periodically graded for participation during class. You must come to class prepared and participate in class discussions to receive credit for participation during each class.

****Do not use computer during class instruction/discussion unless otherwise instructed.**

****Do not play games on the computer or shop online. If you are caught doing either you will be removed from the computer and lose credit in class for that day.**

Essay Submission

Each student must have a turnitin.com account for this course. I will give you the course information for your assigned course section. Every draft will be submitted and graded on turnitin.com. At the end of the year you will have an electronic portfolio of all the work you submitted in class. If you fail to submit a draft by the submission due date, (all final drafts will be due by 11:59 p.m. on the day they appear on the syllabus) your work will not be counted. If for some reason you are unable to submit to turnitin.com, you must email me (and carbon copy yourself) an attachment with your essay by 11:59 p.m. on the day the essay is due. It will be up to you to see me about the essay submission failure before class on the following day. I will reopen turnitin.com and it will be up to you to convert the essay to a usable format and resubmit your essay. Failure to complete this process will cause you to lose credit for the assignment.

“Close the door. Write with no one looking over your shoulder. Don’t try to figure out what other people want to hear from you; figure out what you have to say. It’s the one and only thing you have to offer.” – Barbara Kingsolver

Class Rules and Procedures

An additional handout will be distributed in class.

A Final Word

I hope that you will find our class to be a place where you can receive help with developing your academic writing and analytical skills. Though many students are uncomfortable with academic writing, understanding how to go through various writing processes will help you achieve your writing goals. To make this course as successful as possible for yourself, I encourage you to take advantage of the resources around you and to keep in touch with me as we go through the semester.

If you have any questions about these achievement requirements or other class matters, please be sure to talk to me.

“When I look back, I am so impressed again with the life-giving power of literature. If I were a young person today, trying to gain a sense of myself in the world, I would do that again by reading, just as I did when I was young.”

Maya Angelou