

## LITERATURE OF ADOLESCENCE (ENGLISH 50-01)

SPRING 2003

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"The imagination of a boy is healthy, and the mature imagination of a man is healthy; but there is a space of life between, in which the soul is in a ferment, the character undecided, the way of life uncertain..." (Keats, preface to *Endymion*)

Contemporary America (like several other English-speaking countries) imagines a stage of life called adolescence, in which young women and young men rebel against adults, rely on their peers, and decide who they are and what they want to become. Has this stage always existed? For everyone? What did its closest analogues look like 50, or 400, years ago? How have literary authors explored this stage—from youthful or grownup perspectives—in novels, film, plays, comics, poems? And what can historians, psychoanalysts, journalists and others who have studied adolescence tell us about how we can read works which depict it?

We'll explore those questions—and others of your own choice—throughout the class. I expect you to do all the reading, to show up in class, to speak up, and to listen well (participation counts for 20% of your grade). You'll accomplish one **in-class presentation**, introducing to the rest of us a work of nonfiction relevant to our topic (I'll give you a list of such works, though you need not stick to it). You'll also write three papers. The **first paper** (20%) will examine one literary work. The **second paper** (25%) will bring at least one nonfiction source (perhaps the source of your presentation; perhaps not) to bear on one literary work. The **third paper** (35%) will involve more than one literary work, and will likely bring in some outside research, too. One (any one) of these three papers may focus on a work not on the syllabus, though you should clear that work with me in advance. We'll also have a few very short (ungraded) writing assignments designed to help you get ready for your papers.

You can contact me in my office, or via email, or if you must at home (651 698 1238; that number may change this spring) between 10am and 11:30pm. Late work goes down by one grade per day unless you speak to me in advance: I'm happy to make arrangements for people who have (for example) three papers due on the same day, a serious illness, or the lead role in a play—but I need advance warning. I strongly encourage all of you to show me rough drafts the week before your papers are due—I'll get the drafts back to you with my comments *if* I receive them in time.

Required texts (all at Ruminator Books):

William Shakespeare, *As You Like It*

John Edgar Wideman, *Sent For You Yesterday*

Lorrie Moore, *Who Will Run the Frog Hospital?*

George Eliot, *The Mill on the Floss*

Colin MacInnes, *Absolute Beginners*

Henry Fielding, *Tom Jones*  
Robert Lowell, *Selected Poems*  
Brian Hall, *The Saskiad*  
Pamela Lu, *Pamela: A Novel*  
Ariel Schrag, *Definition*

We will also study short poems by various hands (via handouts) and one film (shown in class).

## SCHEDULE

- Tu Jan 28 Introduction: selected poems (handout 1)
- Th Jan 30 More selected poems (handout 2)
- Tu Feb 4 Film: *Hairspray*  
SHOWN IN DAVIS LECTURE HALL, LOWER LEVEL, CAMPUS CENTER—please be on time for this 94 minute film!
- Th Feb 6 Discussion for *Hairspray*; class presentations assigned
- Tu Feb 11 Shakespeare, *As You Like It*, acts 1-3
- Th Feb 13 *As You Like It* (entire)
- Tu Feb 18 Wideman, *Sent For You Yesterday*, 1-86
- Th Feb 20 *Sent For You Yesterday*, 87-end; class presentations begin
- Tu Feb 25 Moore, *Frog Hospital* (entire)  
SPECIAL GUEST DISCUSSION LEADER
- Th Feb 27 Moore, *Frog Hospital* (continued)  
Eliot, *Mill on the Floss*, books 1 and 2
- Tu Mar 4 *Mill*, books 3, 4, 5
- Th Mar 6 *Mill*, books 6 and 7
- Friday Mar 7 DEADLINE FOR DRAFTS OF FIRST PAPER (optional)
- Tu Mar 11 MacInnes, *Absolute Beginners* 1-106
- Th Mar 13 *Absolute Beginners* 107-end
- Friday Mar 14 FIRST PAPER DUE

SPRING BREAK BEGIN READING *TOM JONES*

Tu Mar 25 Fielding, *Tom Jones*, 1-255

Th Mar 27 *Tom Jones*, 256-365

Tu Apr 1 *Tom Jones*, 366-477

Th Apr 3 *Tom Jones*, 478-539

Friday Apr 4 DEADLINE FOR DRAFTS OF SECOND PAPER (optional)

Tu Apr 8 *Tom Jones*, 540-641

Th Apr 10 Lowell: "Her Dead Brother," "Words for Hart Crane," "Waking in the Blue," "For the Union Dead," "Fourth of July in Maine," "For Robert Kennedy," "For Eugene McCarthy"

Friday Apr 11 SECOND PAPER DUE

Tu Apr 15 Lowell: *1930s* (pp. 187-198), "The Hard Way," "End of Camp Alamosook," "Growth (Harriet)," "Ivana"

Th Apr 17 Hall, *The Saskiad* 1-108

*This class may be postponed due to the religious holidays*

Tu Apr 22 *The Saskiad* 109-222

Th Apr 24 *The Saskiad* 223-end

Tu Apr 29 Schrag, *Definition*; poems (handout 3)

Th May 1 Lu, *Pamela*

Mon May 5 DEADLINE FOR DRAFTS OF THIRD PAPER (optional)

Tu May 6 Wrap-up

Mon May 12 THIRD CRITICAL PAPER DUE