

**English 352.090, Special Topics in Children's Literature: Twilight Series / Supernatural YA Lit (Writing Enhanced), Fall 2011 F379**

**Course Professor: Dr. Austin**

**Mon / Wed 12:30-1:45 P.M.**

**Office: LA 230; 468-2136; E-Mail: [nqaustin@sfasu.edu](mailto:nqaustin@sfasu.edu)**

**Fall 2011 Office Hours:**

**Mon: 1:45-2:30p.m.; 5:00p.m.-6:00p.m.**

**Tues: 1:00p.m.-3:30p.m.; 5:00p.m.-6:00p.m.**

**Wed: 10:30a.m.-12:30p.m.; 3:45p.m.-5:45p.m.**

**Required Texts:**

Jackson, Anna, Karen Coats, and Roderick McGillis. *The Gothic in Children's Literature*.

Meyer, Stephanie. *Twilight*.

“” *New Moon*.

“” *Eclipse*

“” *Breaking Dawn*

Diterlizzi, Tony and Holly Black. *The Spiderwick Chronicles*.

Gorey, Edward. *Gashlycrumb Tinies*

**Course Description:**

Literature of the supernatural heavily influences the production and marketability of children's texts. Supernatural characters and Gothic elements once reserved for Victorians are now consumed eagerly by children, young adults, and scholars of children's and young adult literature. This seems ironic given that our American, nostalgic notions of childhood seem at odds with the inclusion of the Gothic, the supernatural, and the oddness of the human (and inhuman) psychic identity. We will focus a great deal on human psychology, psychoanalytic literary theory, close-reading, and reader-response criticism. We will never concern ourselves with rather we "like" the texts or not. That is what book clubs do. We will do particular literary analysis in an attempt to find psychological gaps between Bella's psychological make-up and that of Edward's. In addition, we will carefully map the trajectory of the human consciousness in an attempt to unravel a psychology behind the supernatural worlds (if such a psychology exists) and also our depictions and fascinations with such worlds in children's and young adult Literature.

In this course, students will be trained to close-read a variety of texts featuring the supernatural. Not only is The Twilight Saga the name of a most popular series of books for young adults, but I have also chosen it as the title for this course, as twilight (and all images the term might generate in a reader's mind) seem to contradict our views of children's literature as a place where fairies are merciful and happily-ever-after prevails.

**Program Learning Outcomes:**

1. The student will demonstrate the ability to read complex texts, closely and accurately.
2. The student will demonstrate the ability to comprehend both traditional and contemporary schools/methods of critical theory and apply them to literary texts to generate relevant interpretations.
3. The student will demonstrate knowledge of literary history in regard to particular periods of World, British and American literature.

4. The student will demonstrate ability to effectively conduct literary research.
5. The student will demonstrate the ability to write clear, grammatically correct prose for a variety of purposes in regards to literary analysis.

### **Course Objectives:**

- (1) Students will recognize the work of key authors in the field of children's literature.**
- (2) Students will be able will gain in-depth knowledge about the lifestyles, times, genres, and cultures that produce and have produced literature for young children.**
- (3) Students will produce grammatically correct, research based, close-readings of literary texts.**
- (4) Students will know significant dates, terms, and movements if children's literature.**
- (5) Students will learn to effectively revise their critical essays and original scholarship.**

### **Grading:**

2 Short Essays (5-6) Pages W / Revision	(60%)
Exams 1 and 2	(30%)
Average of Reading Quizzes	(10%)

\*\*According to the College of Liberal and Applied Arts Writing Enhanced Policy, one essay for this course must go through at least one extensive revision.

### **SideNotes:**

- \* You must have a valid SFA e-mail account and check it regularly to be successful in this course.
- \* The best way to contact me is via e-mail. Phone calls are only returned when you call from a local number. My response time for callbacks is around 72 hours. I only return phone calls to local Nacogdoches numbers. E-mails take about 12 hours or less. E-mails sent on weekends are answered as soon as possible on the next business day, not during the weekend itself.
- \* Read your syllabus completely. Do not send e-mails asking me questions that are already answered on your syllabus, because I don't answer them.
- \* If you miss class, it is your responsibility to get lecture notes. Do not come by my office asking me to give you a personal lecture. I won't do it.
- Don't send me e-mails asking what we missed in class. I don't answer them. Get a friend to help you take notes.
- \* All assignments not meeting the minimum requirements will be given a grade of F.

### **Rubric:**

Be aware, I only give A's to those who have mastered the course in every way. I do not give them for hard work (I expect everyone to work hard), so that you won't be on probation / suspension, or because I "like" you (I am not in a position to like you personally, or your trendy Abercrombie gear).

To quote Karen Coats, a colleague of mine:

Let's start with what is average. Average means that you are not at one end of the continuum, or the other. Remember high school? The people on the one side of the continuum, academically

speaking, took honors or merit classes, got As and Bs in them, and applied to college. The people at the other side made other choices.

You're a college student. That means you have left a large segment of the population of your high school, your hometown, your world to their other choices, and this changed the nature of the continuum. In other words, instead of being compared to the whole spectrum of people who make a whole spectrum of choices, you are now in a self-selected, teacher validated group that have made the choice to pursue academic glory and higher learning. Grading scales reflect that change by becoming "tougher." This is because everyone in the pool is used to A's and B's, making the kind of work and thinking that used to get As and Bs now seem average.

### **That said, these are the standards for a C:**

If your work is clear, concise yet thorough, and competently executed, this counts as a C.

**Conception:** Your idea for your paper should reflect that you have read, thought about, and paid attention to the way we have talked in class about similar issues. Your main point should be clearly stated and defended with appropriate evidence. You should remain focused on your topic throughout your paper, and you should have thoroughly examined the aspects of your topic from your perspective. Your ideas should be internally consistent.

**Organization:** Your paper should have a logical, clearly identifiable organization. Each paragraph should address only one aspect of your topic, and when you change aspects, you start a new paragraph. Transitions between paragraphs should be competently handled. Your strategy, that is, how you manage the interweaving of your idea and your organization, should be standard and straightforward. For instance, if you follow a traditional pattern of an introduction that includes a flagged thesis statement ("in this paper I will..."), then proceed with evidence and close with a restatement of the initial problem, then that's a standard, straightforward organization--a C strategy.

**Style:** Your style should be clear and readable. You should sound intelligent.

**Grammar and Mechanics:** Your paper should not contain distracting errors in grammar or mechanics. Minimally, you should have run a spell check program, and you should know the difference between a complete sentence, a fragment, and a run-on. Your paper should be relatively free (7 or less) of grammatical errors.

### **To get an A, then:**

**Conception:** Your idea should contain some new, perhaps surprising, element, some angle that is uncommonly thoughtful and insightful. You are not rehearsing other people's ideas, and you are going beyond the kind of reading that an average intelligent person might do. You expose and challenge the explicit and implicit assumptions of the text. If you are incorporating research, you will have WORKED your sources--using what supports your argument, and acknowledging and dealing with what challenges it.

**Organization:** Your organization should be flawless. You should address and work through opposition to your argument early, and spend the rest of your time building a strong case, supported with evidence that moves from weaker points to stronger ones. If you are incorporating research, you will spend some time positioning your argument in the context of the larger conversation.

**Style:** Your presentation should be artful. You have obviously paid attention to the way your language sounds as well as what it says. You have found a way to make your presentation style match the content of your paper (other than a groovy font style!), perhaps through a sustained metaphor, or a particularly apt example that you carry through and refer to in the entire paper.

Grammar and Mechanics: Your paper should be relatively (3 or less) clean and free of grammatical and mechanical errors.

**B:**

Conception: Your idea will be better than average, but you may have overlooked or not acknowledged or interrogated the assumptions that inform it.

Organization: Your organization will be strong, but the signaling might still be a bit clunky--you may find yourself using a lot of directional phrases because your argument doesn't flow naturally. (Ex. "As I said earlier..." "Firstly, secondly, thirdly...")

Style: It's clean, readable, there's a consistent sense of voice, and there aren't any places where a reader has to go back and reread a sentence just to understand its structure.

Grammar/Mechanics: Very few (5 or less) errors.

**D:**

Conception: Your idea will be immediately obvious to a casual reader--a no-brainer. Remember, this is college, not common sense (c.: As I stated above, as a college student, you start out above average in your approach to reading and writing, so reverting back to the obvious puts you below average in reference to your peers.

Organization: Perhaps you split your focus (which means you start out talking about one thing and shift to another). Or you jump from one idea to the next with no logical strategy or transitions. If there is no plan, or if you don't stick to the plan, this is faulty organization.

Style: Reads like a casual chat with friends, rather than a smart, academic paper.

Grammar/Mechanics: Consistent problems in sentence structure, no visible attempt at proofreading.

**F:**

(The most common cause of an F is a failure to adequately address the assignment. For instance, if I specify that this assignment is to be researched, or if it is to address a certain topic in a certain way, you have to at least complete the assignment.)

Conception: No clear idea governs the words on the page.

Organization: No plan is evident, much less achieved.

Style: Reads like a casual chat with friends.

Grammar/Mechanics: Consistent problems in sentence structure, no visible attempt at proofreading.

-Karen Coats

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**Office Hours:**

Office hours are held religiously, when possible. There will be times, however, that office hours will be cancelled. I will only cancel office hours due to illness or university committee meetings. By the way, office hours are only for professional matters: academic advising, degree audits, or the like. They are NOT for personal issues, counseling, or ANY NON-ACADEMIC MATTERS. Please do not drop by my office "just to talk." I'm not a counselor, nor do I give psychic readings. You may be wondering, "why would I come by your office without an academic purpose?" You know, I was wondering the same thing!!!

**Final Grades:**

To be perfectly honest with you from the start, I am very hard on writing. This is because of a strong pedagogical belief that courses such as English 352, developed to prepare professionals to enter both the fields of English Education and Young Adult Literature should embody the rigorous standards that mirror "real world" requirements for not only entrance into these fields, but also for the acquisition of ethos needed to contribute to, and join key conversations. At this level in your academic career, there is NO excuse for your writing to contain patterns of errors.

\*\*I will be happy to discuss any evaluation of your papers, assignments, and journals, 48 hours after I have returned them to you. I will NOT discuss them with you until 48 hours have passed and after you have read my comments. You may come by to discuss your grade with me, but I never change grades, unless there is a serious discrepancy between your grade and my paper rubric.

Occasionally, a student's grade will fall on the boundary of the next highest letter. In these cases, student participation, attendance, and numerical average will be considered closely, and the student might get the higher of the two grades. Do not expect me to automatically round up your grade. In other words, an 89.99999 will still earn you a grade of B. I won't round up at all.

### **Attendance Policy:**

As a professional, you will no doubt be expected to demonstrate a certain amount of responsibility for, and commitment to your training, seriousness, and dedication within our field. Toward this end, classes like English 352 are specifically designed to aid English Majors, Critics, and Teachers of English by presenting both pedagogical strategies and critical theories that inform the production of Children's and Young Adult Literature. Absences and lack of participation disrespects your colleagues, and our profession. It also makes you seem as though you lack the stamina to complete requirements that would qualify you to join conversations, present arguments, and make an overall contribution to the field of Children's Literature. However, life sometimes makes it impossible to keep even the most important appointments. Therefore, for our purposes, I will not differentiate between excused and unexcused absences. You are allowed 2 absences (one week of the course) for whatever reasons you chose. After 2, I will take one letter off your final course grade for each additional absence. I don't give "extra" absences. You get TWO!! That's it, period! In order to be counted for the day, you must arrive on time and stay until the end of class. If you arrive late, you will be counted absent; if you leave early, you will be counted absent. Plan to spend the entire time with us from start to finish. In addition, you will need to take care of your bathroom needs before and after class.

### **Guests:**

You may bring guests to this course only if you check with me 24 hours prior. Do NOT bring your young children to this course—A) It's unprofessional; B) I will NOT censor course material in any way, nor will I ask other students to keep their comments "appropriate" because "your children are in the room." This is a college classroom. Take care of your child care needs on your own personal time.

### **Cell Phone:**

Unfortunately, today's world makes us feel as though we must always be "connected" at all times. Despite this hyper-link ideology, I do NOT allow cell phones in my classroom at all. Leave your cell phones in your cars, in your pockets, or in your purses / trendy-galleria-tote bags. They should never go off in class. If your cell phone should mis-fire and ring during this course, I will take five points off your final course grade for each offense, and I will also count you absent for the day.

### **Lap-Top Computers:**

You may not use laptop computers in this course. Wireless Internet has killed this tool for all of us. While lap-tops may be good for notes, too many students are quite irritatingly using laptops to check e-mail, surf the net, and instant message during classes. So, no laptops are allowed in my course, unless they are provided by disability services for documented learning disability of some kind (this requires documentation from DS).

### **Courtesy:**

This should be a no-brainer, but just so we are clear, the university clearly expects a certain standard of conduct for students enrolled in classes. Side conversations during lecture, checking cell phones, text messaging, and etc all violate this policy, and make you look unconcerned and disrespectful. In this course, if you engage in disruptive behaviors, you will be removed. I will then assign you a grade of F in the course.

### **Plagiarism:**

During the last five years, the Internet has made Plagiarism a common occurrence among students. The very basic definition of Plagiarism is the copying, or paraphrasing of writing without appropriate citation and documentation. Another way to think of it is to let someone else's writing overpower your own. Plagiarism is unacceptable and will not be tolerated in this course. There is NO acceptable excuse, even claiming that you do not know what plagiarism is, or that in the past you have simply used the writing from other sources i.e. the internet, scholarly articles or books, piecing parts together to make yourself a complete paper. If you are not clear what Plagiarism is, it is YOUR responsibility to inform yourself. You may also want to bring me drafts of your papers that might seem as though they might not be your own writing so that I can help you. The penalty for Plagiarism is an F in the course. I will then report your action to your academic Dean.

Academic integrity is a responsibility of all university faculty and students. Faculty members promote academic integrity in multiple ways including instruction on the components of academic honesty, as well as abiding by university policy on penalties for cheating and plagiarism.

### **Definition of Academic Dishonesty**

Academic dishonesty includes both cheating and plagiarism. Cheating includes but is not limited to (1) using or attempting to use unauthorized materials to aid in achieving a better grade on a component of a class; (2) the falsification or invention of any information, including citations, on an assigned exercise; and/or (3) helping or attempting to help another in an act of cheating or plagiarism. Plagiarism is presenting the words or ideas of another person as if they were your own. Examples of plagiarism are (1) submitting an assignment as if it were one's own work when, in fact, it is at least partly the work of another; (2) submitting a work that has been purchased or otherwise obtained from an Internet source or another source; and (3) incorporating the words or ideas of an author into one's paper without giving the author due credit.

Please read the complete policy at [http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic\\_integrity.asp](http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic_integrity.asp)

**Withheld Grades Semester Grades Policy (A-54)**

*Please copy and paste the following information regarding Withheld Grades into your syllabus. Add additional information as needed to meet your departmental or course needs.*

Ordinarily, at the discretion of the instructor of record and with the approval of the academic chair/director, a grade of WH will be assigned only if the student cannot complete the course work because of unavoidable circumstances. Students must complete the work within one calendar year from the end of the semester in which they receive a WH, or the grade automatically becomes an F. If students register for the same course in future terms the WH will automatically become an F and will be counted as a repeated course for the purpose of computing the grade point average. I only give grades of WH for extended hospital stays and military service, all of which must be extensively documented.

### **Students with Disabilities**

*Please copy and paste the following statement and place in your course syllabus.*

To obtain disability related accommodations, alternate formats and/or auxiliary aids, students with disabilities must contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS), Human Services Building, and Room 325, 468-3004 / 468-1004 (TDD) as early as possible in the semester. Once verified, ODS will notify the course instructor and outline the accommodation and/or auxiliary aids to be provided. Failure to request services in a timely manner may delay your accommodations. For additional information, go to <http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/>.

### **Assignments:**

**\* You must complete all assignments exactly as specified. All assignments not meeting minimum requirements will receive a grade of F.**

**Quizzes**-I will use these to make sure you are reading. If you don't read, we can't discuss, and you won't be prepared to do the type of analysis that your exams and papers will require.

**Short Essays**-All short essays must be turned into the turn it in assignment tab on Blackboard. Essays not turned in through the Blackboard turn it in tab will be given a grade of zero. These essays will be written over an assigned topic. They require significant outside scholarship. Each essay should present a close reading of a primary text and effectively argue just why your reading is logical and understandable. The short essays should adhere to MLA guidelines with 1 inch margins all around, written in Times New Roman, 12 point Font, and meet the minimum page requirement of five pages. Papers that do not meet ALL the assignment requirements will receive a grade of F.

In order for essays to be graded, they MUST meet the following criteria:

- (1) MLA Format
- (2) Page length (excluding works cited page) must be met. This means if I ask for 6 pages, I want six COMPLETE pages—down to the very bottom of the sixth page, 1 inch margins, with a works cited page started at least at page 6. If you give me 5 ½ pages, I will assign you a grade of F and move on to the next essay.

- (3) Good condition. Make sure your paper is in good condition. Take pride in your work. If your toner cartridge is going out, replace it. DO NOT give me papers that you would not turn into a potential employer, or a literary journal.
- (4) Five Peer-Reviewed, Current, Critical, Academic Sources.

**Exams**-Both exams for this course will ask you to identify literary terms and respond to an essay question about the texts for the course. The exams will be written in class and require a Bluebook.

**Late Assignment Policies:**

I do not accept late work under circumstances, except Hospital Stays that must be documented extensively with both diagnosis and admission documentation. I am extremely reluctant to give make-up exams, and will only do so for hospital stays. Illness does not excuse exams. I also require EXTREME documentation of your excuse for missing the exam before I will allow you to take a make-up. Make-up exams are all essay so they typically take longer. Trust me, you don't want to take a make-up exam so make certain that you only take them as a last resort. In all cases, the make-up exam must be taken no later than one week from the date of the original exam.

**Extra Credit:**

I have become bothered by the idea of extra credit ideologically and ethically. In addition, it is a book-keeping nightmare. Therefore, I do not offer extra credit of any kind.

**Tentative Schedule**

Week One- Thurs: Introductions / Twilight

Week Two: Gothic; Twilight

Week Three: Gothic; Twilight

Week Four: Gothic; Spiderwick Chronicles; Essay One Due: Wednesday

Week Five: Gothic; New Moon

Week Six: Gothic; New Moon; W: Exam One

Week Seven: Gothic; Gashlycrum

Week Eight: Gothic; Eclipse

Week Nine: Gothic; Eclipse

Week Ten: Gothic; Eclipse

Week Eleven: Breaking Dawn; Wednesday: Essay Two Due

Week Twelve: Gothic; Breaking Dawn

Week Thirteen: Gothic; Breaking Dawn

Week Fourteen: Gothic; Breaking Dawn



Week Fifteen: Gothic; W: Exam Two

Week Sixteen: Final Examinations