

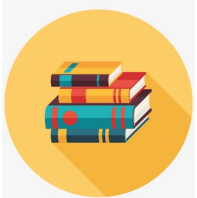
ENG 4930: Independent Reading | Section 101

## Queer(ing) YA

Autumn 2021 | Ohio University | Dr. Edmond Y. Chang

ENG 4930  
Section 101  
CN 15102  
W 9:30-10:30 AM  
Independent  
Reading Course  
Autumn 2021  
Ohio University

Dr. Edmond Y. Chang  
331 Ellis Hall  
Office Hours:  
TuTh 12-1 PM  
or by appointment  
[change@ohio.edu](mailto:change@ohio.edu)



"First sentences are  
doors to worlds."  
Ursula K. Le Guin

"I'm fascinated with  
the stories that we  
tell. Real histories  
become fantasies and  
fairy tales, morality  
tales and fables.  
There's something  
interesting and funny  
and perverse about  
the way fairytale  
sometimes passes for  
history, for truth."  
—Kara Walker

ACCORDING TO William P. Banks in "Literacy, Sexuality, and the Value(s) of Queer Young Adult Literatures," reading, teaching, and studying YA can disrupt "mythical constructions that continue to pervade American culture, particularly myths about gender, sexuality...and creates a space in a critical pedagogy for re-envisioning the options before us." This course will take up this provocation and engage close readings of young adult novels—primarily in the supernatural, fantasy, and speculative subgenre—to interrogate the feminist, queer, and intersectional possibilities and postfeminist problems dramatized by the texts. We will compare and contrast YA novels, past and present, to question and analyze race, gender, sexuality, class, ability, nation, and other norms and identities. To that end, we will look at a range of YA texts, beginning with popular white women writers and ending with authors of color, including Francesca Lia Block, Suzanne Collins, Malinda Lo, Zoraida Córdova, Jen Wang, Akwaeke Emezi, Tehlor Kay Mejia, Aiden Thomas, and Melissa Bashardoust.

A REQUIREMENT for this class is a well-developed curiosity about the world, about the culture we live in, and about the cultural productions we imagine, produce, and consume. In other words, this class is about reading, critiquing, and analyzing our culture through different literatures and texts. We will engage different practices enjoying and analyzing literature and other media, as well as develop literary, feminist, and queer strategies, habits, and perspectives of reading, thinking, and writing. Foremost, we will read and research with pleasure and for pleasure. We will also close read for analysis. And lastly, we will read and deploy literature as theory, as dramatizing the concerns, wonders, struggles, and politics of lived life and experience.

SPECIFICALLY, our course goals include:

- We will develop and demonstrate a familiarity with a range of texts, terms, and theories, engaging with feminist and queer young adult literature, geographical areas, genres, and literary traditions.
- We will identify and articulate different ways to explore, close read, and analyze YA literary and media texts.
- We will consider and reflect on questions and intersections of race, gender, sexuality, ability, class, nation, culture, and power.
- We will use young adult literature as vernacular theory to think, talk, write about and to interrogate the world around us.

WE WILL spend the semester asking and addressing difficult, challenging, and sometimes discomfiting ideas, questions, and topics, focusing on different identities, bodies, histories, desires, experiences, and even struggles and violences. Our texts, theories, and discussions deal with lived experiences, feelings, and challenges. Whether on the page, screen, on campus, or in the community, we will explore and engage multiple perspectives, levels of familiarity with the material, and heady and heartfelt responses. In other

"Too many adults wish to 'protect' teenagers when they should be stimulating them to read of life as it is lived."  
—Margaret A. Edwards



### Required Course Texts & Materials

- Block, *Weetzie Bat*.
- Collins, *The Hunger Games*.
- Lo, *Ash*.
- Córdova, *Labyrinth Lost*.
- Wang, *The Prince and the Dressmaker*.
- Emezi, *Pet*.
- Mejia, *We Set the Dark on Fire*.
- Thomas, *Cemetery Boys*.
- Bashardoust, *Girl, Serpent, Thorn*.
- Short readings will be available via Blackboard
- Web access and an active Ohio University email account.



## Course Requirements

Weekly Preparations	(10%)
Response Papers	(30%)
Research Proposal	(10%)
Final Project	(20%)
Class Participation	(30%)

words, our class will be a safe, respectful, but not necessarily comfortable space. While pushing boundaries and comfort zones are essential to critical thinking, making connections, and intellectual and personal freedom, see me with concerns and queries, for reasonable accommodations, and for further resources on campus.

## Requirements & Grading

Your grade should not be the sole exigence or motivation for this class. It is the hope of the course that you walk away from class with something more. Find some pleasure and some edification and some knowledge from this class (or any class really) and success is usually not far behind. With that in mind, your grade will be a reflection of engagement, effort, close reading, critical thinking, writing, and participation.

### Critical Essay & Question Weekly Preparations (10%)

Each week, you will read the literary text assigned for a particular week, articulate one or two main points from the week's scholarly text (as assigned), generate a critical question or two connecting the two, and get class discussion started for the day. You will develop a single-spaced 1-page handout that outlines relevant author, text, your prompts, and other framing information.

### Critical Response Papers (30%)

Over the course of the semester, you will complete a number short, critical, analytical response papers. These single-spaced, one-page writings serve as close readings of, analyses of, and articulations of the texts and connections you see, read, and talk about in the tutorial. These responses are more than just summaries or personal reactions and will be graded on clarity, focus, coherence, critique, and your ability to concisely formulate arguments. You will be required to generate a response paper approximately every other week for a minimum of 7. See the response paper prompt for more details.

### Research Proposal Memo & Bibliography (10%)

As part of your Final Project research and writing process, you must generate a 1-page research proposal in business memo format and a working bibliography. You will also arrange for a conference with me to go over your proposal. The proposal and bibliography will be graded for clarity, detail, completion, and manuscript format. Your proposal and conference must be completed at least 4 weeks prior to the end of the semester.

### Final Project (20%)

At the end of the semester, you will complete a Final Project that integrates what you have read, explored, and discussed, that draws on specific terms, concepts, or issues from the class, and that articulates the critical value of YA literature. The project asks you to make connections and to create an argument across different kinds of evidence and added research. Your final project can be a traditional research paper, a media production (which includes a substantive analytical component), or a hybrid of the two.

### Participation and Preparedness (30%)

Preparedness and participation forms a large component of your final grade. It is essential that you prepare for class, attend class, and participate. Missing class or participation may seriously compromise your ability to do well in this class. Moreover, negative participation will hurt your participation grade. Participation is determined by 1) your **respectful** presence in class and

"If one is lucky, a solitary fantasy can totally transform one million realities."  
—Maya Angelou



"I've come to believe that if you're not scared at least a little by what you're writing, it's probably not important enough to write."  
—Malinda Lo

"So here is why I write what I do: We all have futures. We all have pasts. We all have stories. And we all, every single one of us, no matter who we are and no matter what's been taken from us or what poison we've internalized or how hard we've had to work to expel it--we all get to dream."  
—N.K. Jemisin

interactions with me and others, 2) your **willingness** to discuss, comment, and ask questions, 3) your **preparation** for class, which includes having the required materials and doing all of the assigned reading or work for class, 4) your **engagement** and **collaboration** in group work, presentations, student/office hours, and course events, and 5) your care of and contribution to the class *Blackboard* or “Bb”—bookmark the address, check regularly, comment as required, and think of the blog as an extension of class:

[https://blackboard.ohio.edu/ultra/courses/\\_578633\\_1/cl/outline](https://blackboard.ohio.edu/ultra/courses/_578633_1/cl/outline)

## Attendance

**Attendance is required.** If you are absent, you miss the explanation of an assignment, the discussion of a reading, the chance to participate, and overall, the class as a community of learning. Also, you are expected to be in class on time. In the first minutes of class I may make important announcements, establish the agenda for the day, begin immediately with an important lesson, or field questions. If you come in after we start class, even by only a few minutes, you are late and will be mark as such. Chronic or conspicuous attendance problems will negatively affect your overall participation grade for the class. **Moreover, absences for more than 7 class sessions (50% of class time or more) will result in a failing grade regardless of reason. All absences are your responsibility.** If you know you are going to miss class, please let me know (via email) as soon as possible and make any necessary arrangements. When you do miss class, always find another student to get class notes or see me during office hours in order to make up missed work in a timely manner. You are always responsible for all material covered during your absence.



### Response Paper Formatting

1) 1” margins top, bottom, left, and right on each page.

2) Single-spaced block header with your name, date, course, my name. For example:

Student Name  
ENG 2981T  
August 23, 2021  
Dr. Chang

3) Response (week) number and title (e.g. Week #2: Race in *The Great Gatsby*).

4) Response papers are single-spaced, standard indented paragraphing, no page numbers.

5) Standard Times Roman Font, 12 point only.

6) Correct MLA citation and bibliographic format. Bibliography if necessary.

## Assignment Format

All papers must be typed or produced on a word processor. All documents should be saved in Microsoft Word format (or if necessary Rich Text Format). All papers must follow the manuscript format outlined by the assignment. Unless instructed otherwise, **all papers must use MLA citation and documentation conventions.** All papers must be neatly printed (in black), stapled in the top, left-hand corner if necessary, and should not be three-hole punched. Papers that do not follow these format guidelines will not be accepted. They will be returned unread to you. Papers will be regarded as late until they are resubmitted in the proper format. **Always make a backup copy of every paper you turn in**, lest you be one of the unhappy people whose paper is eaten by the computer. You may even want to take the precaution of e-mailing your paper to yourself as an attachment during the drafting process and certainly before you exit the document and leave the computer. Or you may want to invest in cloud-based file storage like OneDrive (which all OU students have already have access) or DropBox.

## Evaluation Rubric

Over the course of the quarter, your assignments will receive feedback and comments that will identify what you are doing well and what still needs improvement. Your grades assess your fulfillment of the assignment, the quality of work, detail, analysis, and argumentation, overall effort, and finally, style, polish, and risk taking. Consider the following evaluation rubric as signposts or a kind of legend to your progress and evaluation:

- **Outstanding (A/A+):** Offers a very highly proficient, even memorable demonstration of the trait(s) associated with the course or assignment goal(s), including some appropriate risk-taking and/or creativity.
- **Strong (B+/A-):** Offers a proficient demonstration of the trait(s) associated with the course or assignment goal(s), which could be further enhanced with



## Late Assignments

All assignments must be done completely and turned in on time. Late assignments will be penalized half a grade for every day that they are late. So, if your essay is late by one day and you received a B- for your work, then your final grade would be a C+. Moreover, I will not comment on late work. However, you still need to complete late work or you will receive a zero. If you miss class on the due date of a paper, you must notify me and make arrangements to get the paper to me as soon as possible. **Unless previously arranged, I DO NOT accept assignments via email.** Remember that a paper has not been officially handed in until it is in my hands. Never turning anything in late is always the best policy.



Contact  
Dr. Chang

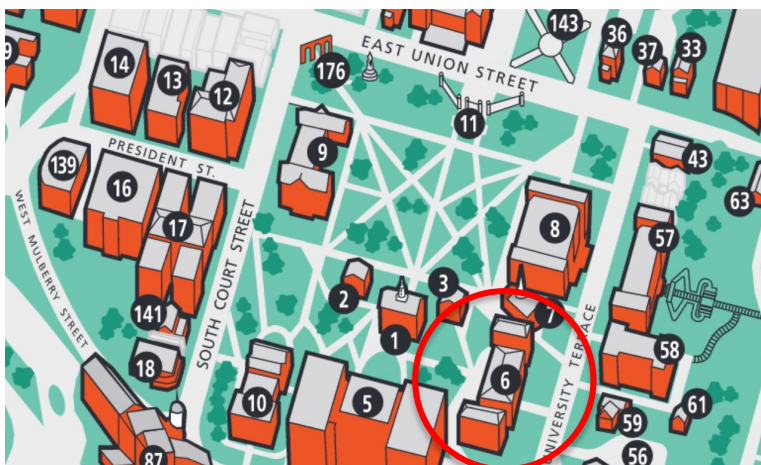
Office:  
331 Ellis Hall  
Office Hours:  
TuTh 12-1 PM  
by appointment  
E-mail:  
[change@ohio.edu](mailto:change@ohio.edu)  
Google Talk:  
EDagogy

revision, additional support, and creativity.

- **Good (B-/B):** Effectively demonstrates the trait(s) associate with the course or assignment goal(s), but less proficiently; could use revision to demonstrate more skillful and nuanced command of trait(s).
- **Acceptable (C/C+):** Minimally meets the basic course or assignment requirement, but the demonstrated trait(s) are not fully realized or well-controlled and would benefit from significant revision.
- **Inadequate (D/D+):** Does not meet the course or assignment requirement; the trait(s) are not adequately demonstrated and require substantial revision on multiple levels.

## Finding Help

My office and office hours are listed in the left sidebar. I am available during that time and by appointment to help you. I encourage you to come see me early in the term even if it is just to talk about the class, about the assignments, or about school in general. I may ask you to meet with me when I think a conference would be useful. My office is located on the third floor of Ellis Hall (east of Alden Library), Room 331.



**Email** is the best way to contact me. I will do my best to answer your emails and Bb posts, usually **within twenty-four hours**. If there is an emergency and you need to reach me, please contact the main English office in 201 Ellis Hall. Furthermore, when time permits, I will supplement my office hours with virtual hours via Google Talk (**nickname: EDagogy**); if I am logged in, during reasonable hours, you are more than welcome to discuss the class or ask questions. Please, when you initiate an IM conversation, **use a greeting**, please identify yourself to me, and be **patient** because my responses may not be immediate.

You can also find additional writing and academic help at the Student Writing Center (SWC) on campus, a good resource for this class and other classes. The SWC is located in the Academic Advancement Center (AAC) on the second floor of Alden Library and offers a variety of services including help with reading, papers, brainstorming ideas, and research. See <https://www.ohio.edu/university-college/academic-achievement-center> to make an appointment and for more information.

## Accommodations

Any student who feels they may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should see me or contact me **in the first week of class** to discuss their specific needs and provide written documentation from Student Accessibility Services. If you are not yet registered as a student with a



disability, please contact Student Accessibility Services at 740-593-2620 or visit the SAS office in 348 Baker University Center. The SAS website is: <https://www.ohio.edu/uc/sas/index.cfm>.

## COVID-19

All students are required to abide by the university's pandemic strategies and protocols, which are updated and outlined: <https://www.ohio.edu/coronavirus>. Please follow all guidelines and recommendations regarding masking, social distancing, testing and symptom reporting, and vaccination. If you have physical or mental health concerns, changes in employment, housing, or responsibilities, or face other challenges, insecurities, or problems, please seek out Ohio's health services: <https://www.ohio.edu/wellness/student-resources>, counseling center: <https://www.ohio.edu/student-affairs/counseling>, or see me for further help, resources, or accommodations.

## Academic Integrity

All students are required to uphold the highest academic standards. Plagiarism, or academic dishonesty, is presenting someone else's ideas or writing as your own. In your writing for this class, you are encouraged to refer to other people's thoughts and writing—as long as you cite them. Many students do not have a clear understanding of what constitutes plagiarism, so feel free to ask questions at any time. For our class, plagiarism includes:

- a student failing to cite sources of ideas
- a student failing to cite sources of paraphrased material
- a student failing to cite sources of specific language and/or passages
- a student submitting someone else's work as his or her own
- a student submitting his or her own work produced for another class

If you have any doubt about how to cite or acknowledge another's writing, please talk to me. Any plagiarism or academic dishonesty will result in failure of an assignment or of this course. It is always better to be safe than sorry. Please review the Ohio University's Academic Misconduct page at <https://www.ohio.edu/communitystandards/academic/students.cfm>.

## Harassment, Discrimination, and Sexual Misconduct

Ohio University and this course are committed to a safe, supportive, and inclusive learning environment. Title IX makes clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender is a Civil Rights offense subject to the same kinds of accountability and support applied to offenses against other protected categories such as race, national origin, and so on. As your instructor, I am a mandatory reporter and am required by law to share with the University any information regarding sexual misconduct or information about a crime that may have occurred on campus. For more information about policies and resources or confidential reporting options, see the Office of University Equity and Civil Rights Compliance: <https://www.ohio.edu/equity-civil-rights/> or the Division of Student Affairs page on Student Conduct & Community Standards:

<https://www.ohio.edu/communitystandards/process/sexualassault.cfm>

"The ability of writers to imagine what is not the self, to familiarize the strange and mystify the familiar, is the test of their power."  
—Toni Morrison



"My imagination makes me human and makes me a fool; it gives me all the world and exiles me from it."  
—Ursula K. Le Guin

"If you're struggling with what you're writing—if you're afraid to be your true self on the page—I dare you to stop listening to the outside voices and try listening only to yourself this one time. Write the book you most want to write...Write the book that is the most unapologetically YOU, no matter how long it takes."  
—Nova Ren Suma

**syl-la-bus: n 1: a summary outline of a discourse, treatise, or course of study or of examination requirements 2: subject to change**

Dr. Chang / ENG 4930 / Autumn 2021 / Ohio University / Online

First Day of Classes

August						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

Mon 9/6  
Labor Day

Week 5 or 6 CR is  
recommended.

October						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

Research Proposal  
Memo Due

11/24-11/26  
Thanksgiving Recess

December						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

**Week 1: August 23-27: INTRODUCTION**

Introduction to the Course & Syllabus

Suzanne Collins, *The Hunger Games* (2008)

Banks, "Literacy, Sexuality, and the Value(s) of Queer Young Adult Literatures"

**Week 2: August 30-September 3:**

Suzanne Collins, *The Hunger Games* (cont.)

Taskar and Negra, "Feminist Politics and Postfeminist Culture"

**Week 3: September 6-9:**

Malinda Lo, *Ash* (2009)

McRobbie's, "Postfeminism and Popular Culture"

**Week 4: September 13-17:**

Malinda Lo, *Ash* (cont.)

Orenstein, "What's Wrong with Cinderella?"

**Week 5: September 20-24:**

Zoraida Córdova, *Labyrinth Lost* (2016)

**Week 6: September 27-October 1:**

Zoraida Córdova, *Labyrinth Lost* (cont.)

**Week 7: October 4-8:**

Jen Wang, *The Prince and the Dressmaker* (2018)

**Week 8: October 11-15:**

Akwaeke Emezi, *Pet* (2019)

**Week 9: October 18-22:**

Tehlor Kay Mejia, *We Set the Dark on Fire* (2019)

**Week 10: October 25-29:**

Tehlor Kay Mejia, *We Set the Dark on Fire* (cont.)

**Week 11: November 1-5:**

Aiden Thomas, *Cemetery Boys* (2020)

**Week 12: November 8-12:**

Aiden Thomas, *Cemetery Boys* (cont.)

**Week 13: November 15-19:**

Melissa Bashardoust, *Girl, Serpent, Thorn* (2020)

**Week 14: November 22-26:**

Melissa Bashardoust, *Girl, Serpent, Thorn* (cont.)

**Week 15: November 29-December 3:**

Francesca Lia Block, *Weetzie Bat* (1989)

**Week 16: Finals Week**

Week 1 or 2 CR is  
recommended.

September						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

Fri 10/1 Fall Break

Week 10 or 11 CR is  
recommended.

November						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

Final Project Due