

IS 1001: First Year Seminar  
"Alone in a Crowd: Voices from the Edge"

Section 1: 1:00-1:50 PM Monday/Wednesday  
Section 2: 2:15-3:05 PM Monday/Wednesday

### Instructor

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### Office Hours

Mondays 3:15-4:15 PM; Tuesdays 1PM-3PM; and by appointment

### Dates to Remember

- Required Convocation: Thursday, September 4, 7PM, Edson Auditorium

### Required Texts

Texts may be purchased at John's Total Entertainment on Atlantic Avenue. Please attend class before purchasing your texts.

- *Fat Kid Rules the World* by E. L. Going
- *The Skin I'm In* by Sharon Flake
- *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* by Sherman Alexie
- *Keeping You a Secret* by Julie Peters
- *Right Behind You* by Gail Giles

In addition, you will be assigned *one* text of the following:

- *Deadline* by Chris Crutcher
- *Does My Head Look Big in This?* by Randa Abdel-Fattah
- *Looking Like the Enemy* by Mary Matsuda Gruenewald
- *Total Constant Order* by Crissa-Jean Chappell
- *Endgame* by Nancy Garden

### Other Resources

This syllabus, as well as other resources will be posted in our class Moodle site: <http://moodle.umn.edu>. Log in with your UMM username and password and click on our course.

### Students with Disabilities

This material and course texts are available to persons with disabilities in alternate formats on request. Please contact Disability Services. It is University policy to provide, on a flexible and individualized basis, reasonable accommodations to students who have disabilities that may affect their ability to participate in course activities or to meet course requirements. Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact their instructors and Disability Services to discuss their individual needs for accommodation.

## Course Description and Goals

This course explores the lives of people who have been disenfranchised, marginalized, or isolated due to race, social class, illness, disability, etc. Further, members of the course will study the “flip side” of this isolation—the concept of community. Enrollees in this FYS will study conditions that lead to isolation or community, will learn about their local and social contexts, and will become more critical thinkers about the communities in which they live.

My goals as an instructor are to serve as a resource and sounding board for you; to be an approachable faculty member who can help guide you through this unique experience of first semester university; and to provide a safe but challenging environment for you to explore ideas related to our course. My expectations of you are outlined below.

The goals of each First Year Seminar are to teach you to think critically and to assess sources of information. Additionally, you will be challenged to recognize that your perceptions are not universal but are shaped by the lenses through which you interpret the world and your own positions in it.

## Expectations (How to Succeed in this Course)

This course is run in seminar-style format. As such, students in the course will be expected to do the following:

- Participate actively in discussion by speaking and listening;
- Learn to access resources related to various course topics; and
- Become an active and vibrant member of our course community and your campus community during the semester.

In addition, you should:

- Be in class on time. Being late will disrupt the class discussion and negatively impact your grade.
- Spend an adequate amount of time in preparation. To succeed in this course you will need to be willing to spend, per week, four hours outside of class reading and working on the course components (UMM policy is that one credit is defined as three hours of learning effort per week for an average student to earn an average grade in the course: 2 credits times 3 hours/week/credit - 2 hours/week in class = 4 hours/week outside class).
- Cooperate with your peers. Cooperation is vital to your future success, which ever path you take. I encourage cooperation amongst students where ever possible, but the act of copying or other forms of cheating will not be tolerated. Material from the [academic integrity web site](#) states: Academic integrity is essential to a positive teaching and learning environment. All students enrolled in University courses are expected to complete coursework responsibilities with fairness and honesty. Failure to do so by seeking unfair advantage over others or misrepresenting someone else’s work as your own, can result in disciplinary action.

## Assignments and Grading

Your performance in this class will be evaluated based on several elements:

- Class participation (30%)
- Group book project (25%)
- Journal or Blog (20%)
- Free writes and other in-class assignments (10%)
- Community building activities (15%)

*Class Participation:* Since this class is discussion based, your contribution to class discussions and activities is vital. What does it mean to participate in class? It means coming to class—you can't participate if you don't show up. It also means completing readings and assignments for class—you can't discuss intelligently if you are unprepared. Third, it means speaking regularly in class—we all benefit from sharing in each other's knowledge. You have something to offer. As members of a community, all voices are valued and will shape what we do and the ideas that we develop. But beyond speaking, it is also actively listening to your peers and trying to understand what they are saying. Finally, class participation means THINKING—you must think about the books and other materials we are reading, think about and carefully consider your responses and those of your classmates, and think about the themes of the course—*isolation and community*. When engaged in class activities, remember to respect others' opinions, even if they disagree with you. The important thing about classroom discussion to remember is that you are not debating with your peers—you should be trying to understand different points of view and communicating your point of view to others.

*Group book project:* In class you will indicate your preference of an additional book to read and you will be assigned to a group. Your group will present on your book. Components of the presentation should include a brief summary of the book, a discussion of the important themes or ideas, discussion of how your book relates to the themes of *isolation and community*, an aesthetic component, and research/additional information about an issue or topic within the book. A detailed description of this assignment will be handed out in class.

*Journal or Blog:* We will have an electronic course web site via Moodle. Not only are resources posted there, but some activities and assignments will be completed in this format. One of these is the journal or blog. You may create a blog in Moodle that your classmates (but no one else) can view or you may post journal entries each week (which only you and the instructor can view). I will post some ideas each week in Moodle to help you get started. Your blog or journal should capture your thoughts on *community and marginalization* in the readings that we've done that week or build on ideas that came from class discussion or apply a personal perspective to our activities. You will be graded on the connections you make from the readings to real life and the connections you make among the various readings and activities we do in class. The journal or blog entry will be due by 4:30 PM Friday each week.

*In-class assignments:* Occasionally you will be asked to reflect on concepts in writing or by performing some activity rather than by discussion. The quality of your in-class assignments will make up part of your course grade.

*Community-building activities:* Part of the work of this course is to get to know your campus community and the broader local community. To do this, you will be asked to collect Community Outreach Points (COPs). These are described in the handout distributed in class. Points might come from attending a meeting of an organization, finding information about Morris, or participating in building community in our class. In addition, each of you will be responsible for leading at least one community-building activity in class during the semester.

**Work will be collected at the beginning of the class period. No late work will be accepted unless arrangements are made in advance or in the event of illness as verified by a physician.**

## **Workload and Grading**

This course is a two credit course. University of Minnesota policy defines one credit as equivalent to three hours of learning effort per week for an average student to achieve an average grade in the course. Therefore, at least 6 hours of learning effort per week are required for this course. We spend approximately 2 hours per week in class; you should expect to put in at least 4 hours of work outside of class to achieve an average grade in this course. All courses must be passed with C- or better in order to move forward in the

program. A grade of less than C- will prevent you from student teaching. Grades will be assigned based on the following scale, according to University of Minnesota policy:

93-100%	A	4.00	Represents achievement that is outstanding relative to the level necessary to meet course requirements
90-92	A-	3.67	
87-89	B+	3.33	
84-86	B	3.00	Represents achievement that is significantly above the level necessary to meet course requirements
80-83	B-	2.67	
77-79	C+	2.33	
74-76	C	2.00	Represents achievement that meets the course requirements in every respect
70-73	C-	1.67	
67-69	D+	1.33	
62-66	D	1.00	Represents achievement that is worthy of credit even though it fails to meet fully the course requirements
0-61	F	0.00	Represents failure (or no credit) and signifies that the work was either (1) completed but at a level of achievement not worthy of credit or (2) was not completed and there was no agreement between the instructor and student that the student would be awarded an I

### Some Final Reminders

**I want you to be engaged.** The idea of the course is to think deeply about ideas. This is fundamental to a liberal arts education. This is the type of experience where the more you put into it, the more you get out of it. I want each of you to have the best experience possible. You will have that good experience by engaging with the material rather than thinking about learning as a process of jumping through hoops.

**I am here to help you!** If you are struggling with something, please see me and talk to me about it, whether it's related to the course or not. Use my office hours, set up an appointment, whatever. Additional resources that may help you include:

[The Academic Assistance Center:](http://www.morris.umn.edu/services/dsoaac/aac/) www.morris.umn.edu/services/dsoaac/aac/

[Student Counseling:](http://www.morris.umn.edu/services/counseling/) www.morris.umn.edu/services/counseling/

[Disability Services:](http://www.morris.umn.edu/services/dsoaac/dso) www.morris.umn.edu/services/dsoaac/dso

[Multi-Ethnic Student Program:](http://www.morris.umn.edu/services/msp/) www.morris.umn.edu/services/msp/

### Calendar of Learning Events

Date/Day	Course Activities and Assignments Due
August 27 (Wed)	Course introduction Book selection Community Building Activity: <u>Michelle Page</u>
September 1 (Mon)	NO CLASS—LABOR DAY
September 3 (Wed)	Due: <i>Fat Kid Rules the World</i> Chapter 1-41 Community Building Activity: _____

September 8(Mon)	<p>Convocation discussion  Due: <i>Fat Kid Rules the World</i>  Chapter 42-end</p> <p>Community Building Activity: _____</p>
September 10 (Wed)	<p>Library Research Session #1  Meet Jayne Blodgett in Briggs Library 350A</p>
September 15 (Mon)	<p>Due: <i>Sizing Myself Up, Intimate Enemies, To Apu with Love, Cro-Magnon Karma</i></p> <p>Community Building Activity: _____</p>
September 17 (Wed)	<p>Due: <i>The Skin I'm In</i>  Chapters 1-15</p> <p>Community Building Activity: _____</p>
September 22 (Mon)	<p>Due: <i>The Skin I'm In</i>  Chapters 16-end</p> <p>Community Building Activity: _____</p>
September 24 (Wed)	<p>Due: <i>The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian</i>  Beginning through "Hunger Pains" (p. 113)</p> <p>Community Building Activity: _____</p>
September 29 (Mon)	<p>Due: <i>The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian</i>  "Rowdy Gives Me Advice..." (p. 114) through end</p> <p>Community Building Activity: _____</p>
October 1 (Wed)	<p>Library Research Session #2  Meet Jayne Blodgett in Briggs Library 350A</p>
October 6 (Mon)	<p>Due: <i>Keeping You a Secret</i>  Chapters 1-13</p> <p>Community Building Activity: _____</p>
October 8(Wed)	<p>Due: <i>Keeping You a Secret</i>  Chapters 14-end  Due: Topics for book projects chosen</p> <p>Community Building Activity: _____</p>
October 13 (Mon)	<p>Due: <i>Speaking Out</i> excerpts</p> <p>Community Building Activity: _____</p>
October 15 (Wed)	<p><b>NO CLASS, TAKE-HOME ASSIGNMENT</b>  Michelle at Education Minnesota</p>

October 20 (Mon)	<b>NO CLASS: FALL BREAK</b>
October 22 (Wed)	Due: <i>Right Behind You</i> Chapters 1-16  Community Building Activity: _____
October 27 (Mon)	Due: <i>Right Behind You</i> Chapters 17-end  Community Building Activity: _____
October 29 (Wed)	Due: <i>Doing What It Takes to Survive, Full Circle, Show and Tell, A Question of Class</i>  Response ideas due, Sources due!!! Community Building Activity: _____
November 3 (Mon)	Due: <i>Strip!, Appraising God's Property, Marked for Life, To Live and Diet in L.A.</i>  Community Building Activity: _____
November 5 (Wed)	Video: <i>Taboo</i> or <i>Waging a Living</i>
November 10 (Mon)	NO CLASS—MICHELLE AT CONFERENCE Assignment: Small Group meetings, Work on Group Book Project
November 12 (Wed)	NO CLASS—MICHELLE AT CONFERENCE Assignment: Small Group meetings, Work on Group Book Project
November 17 (Mon)	Due: Book Presentation
November 19 (Wed)	Due: Book Presentation
November 24 (Mon)	Due: Book Presentation
November 26 (Wed)	<b>NO CLASS—THANKSGIVING BREAK</b>
December 1 (Mon)	Due: Book Presentation
December 3 (Wed)	Due: Book Presentation
December 8 (Mon)	Evaluations and Surveys  Community Building Activity: _____
December 10 (Wed)	Celebrating our Community  Community Building Activity: _____
December 19-21 Finals Week	<b>FINALS WEEK—NO FINAL EXAM</b>

