This course will explore the connections between literature written for young adults and contemporary teen identity. Do YA novels accurately portray the complex challenges of teenage life, or do they simply commodify these challenges for mass consumption and marketing? To what extent do representations of teens in literature affect how teens see themselves and how others see them? What should teachers and scholars of YA literature understand about its connection to adolescent identity and culture?

Students will read and discuss multiple young adult texts including popular series novels by Meg Cabot and Cecily von Ziegesar, as well as critically-acclaimed YA books by Angela Johnson, Sharon Flake, Gary Paulsen, Allan Stratton, Ben Mikaelsen, and John Green.

Representative critical readings include:
*The Idea of Identification* by Gary C. Woodward  
*Chick Lit: The New Women’s Fiction* edited by Suzanne Ferriss and Mallory Young  
*Identity Development: Adolescence Through Adulthood* by Jane Kroger  
*Consumerism and American Girls’ Literature* by Peter Stoneley  
*Experiencing Narrative Worlds* by Richard J. Gerrig

Students will read and respond to young adult novels and related critical texts weekly, prepare and deliver an oral presentation, and complete a seminar paper or project.

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