15th Annual Young Adult Literature Conference

October 24 - 25, 2014

The Q Conference Center
1405 N. 5th Ave.
St. Charles, IL 60174

Conference At-A-Glance

Friday 7:00 pm - 9:30 pm  Welcome Reception, Workshops, and Teacher Presentations
Saturday 8:30 am - 2:30 pm  Featured Book Workshops, Closing Event

About the Conference

Since 2000, the popular Young Adult Literature Conference (YAL) from the Center for College Access and Success at Northeastern Illinois University, has demonstrated how the combination of compelling books and engaging learning strategies provide powerful learning experiences for middle and high school students. Teachers participate in interactive workshops designed around one of the conference books. They leave with teaching strategies they can use immediately in their classrooms. Teachers from our partner schools are encouraged to follow up with our Unit for Books Mini-Grant Program; they can apply for a classroom set of books in exchange for a unit that includes young adult literature and best practice literacy strategies.

Registration/Fees

Registration includes entry to this two day conference, two books, three meals, 6 CPDUs, and an overnight stay in a private room at the Q Conference Center.

Teachers in GEAR UP schools can attend for a $50.00 fee to cover the cost of food.

Teachers from Morton High School District schools should get district approval to attend and arrange for payment of conference fees.

For all others, registration fees are $450.00.

Register at:
http://homepages.neiu.edu/~yal

For more information, contact:
Dan Laubacher, 312-563-7134

“Excellent book. Wonderful presenters. I’m so glad I was able to participate.”
Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe by Benjamin Alire Sáenz
This is a story about two boys, Aristotle and Dante, who are learning how to live. Through a bond that grows over time, we are privy to the process of discovering authentic self and finding the courage to share it with others. At the onset, Dante and Aristotle seem to have very little in common. As we proceed, we understand the wealth that true friendship provides and the importance of sharing secrets that never seem to surface in everyday conversations. Through the emotionally accessible writing of Benjamin Alire Sáenz, it is clear to see that digging deeper to ask difficult questions is the key to getting to the truth about where we come from, who we are or who we want to be. Discovering the secrets of the universe is no small undertaking, but a mission that bonds us all, regardless of age, ethnic background or sexual orientation. Grade 9 and up.

My Beloved World by Justice Sonia Sotomayor
Sonia Sotomayor has written a memoir that captures her childhood growing up in projects in the Bronx up to her current appointment to Supreme Court Justice. In her early years, she recounts her close relationship with her grandmother, yearly trips to Puerto Rico, life with an alcoholic father and distant mother, and management of child diabetes. With resourceful intelligence and self-reliance, she excels in school and goes on to graduate from Princeton and then Yale Law School. She worked as an assistant district attorney, at a top law firm, as a judge of the U.S. District Court and then in the U.S. Court of Appeals. In 2009 Barack Obama nominated her as an Associate Justice of the Supreme Court. She says, “I’ve spent my whole life learning how to do things that were hard for me.” Grade 9 and up.

The Fault in Our Stars by John Green
Commonly called a young adult romance (with young lovers facing cancer), this phenomenal best seller has also been described as “an elegiac comedy.” TiFIOS manages to juxtapose gritty details of living with cancer with poignantly hilarious commentary from those in the midst of it. This novel is elegantly plotted, with complex language, and characters so appealingly real that you may think of them as your friends. Millions of teens and adults name this as their favorite book and follow John Green’s blog with dedicated fervor. A few critics complain that the wit of teens Hazel and Augustus is unrealistic, but these are not average kids. Their circumstances and love of reading lead them to casually reference existential questions and great writers, but they also play crazy video games and worry about what to wear. My advice? Go with the flow and fall in love with this book. Its rewards outweigh any faults. Grade 9 and up.

Neurocomic by Hana Roš & Matteo Farinella
“I think everyone draws as a kid...some people stop. I just kept drawing,” muses neuroscientist Ph.D. and illustrator Dr. Matteo Farinella. In joyful collaboration they have created Neurocomic, a book that compels as object first, then as adventure, and finally as a heaping plate of hard science. Between deep blue covers imprinted with gold and silver (leaving your fingertips sparkly) lie comic panels wherein cosmic black ink soaks into creamy white space. Ride along with our hero as he enters the brain through the optic nerve, befriends a granule cell, explores morphology, pharmacology, electrophysiology, plasticity, and synchronicity, battles alongside neurotransmitter super heroes, resists Dr. Pavlov and his conditioning, and walks into the horizon with the girl.

The 2014-15 Conference Books

### PAIRED BOOKS: The Time Machine by H. G. Wells and Voices by Ursula K. Le Guin
The Time Machine by H. G. Wells. This classic by Wells is thought to be the first story of time travel ever written. The novella begins when the principal character, known only as Time Traveler, addresses his friends at a dinner party, astonishing them with an unbelievable account of his travels within a future world. The rest of this 1895 tale deals with Time Traveler's journeys as he uses his invention to investigate several time periods until he is unable to return, lost in time to those who knew him when the tale began. This novella is considered one of the Great Books of the English language and is a must read for any college-bound student.

Voices by Ursula K. Le Guin. Ansul was once a peaceful town filled with libraries, schools, and temples. But that was long ago, and the conquerors of this coastal city consider reading and writing to be acts punishable by death. Oracle House is the last hiding place for the last few undestroyed books. Seventeen-year-old Memer, a "sieghe brat" resentful of the invaders who raped her mother and left her hometown in ruins, dreams of one day delivering vengeance. Oracle House is the only place where she feels truly safe. Then Omec and Gry arrive, spinning tales that begin to erode the boundaries between the conquered and the conquerors, confronting Memer with decisions that change her dreams and enable her to develop a deeper understanding of her mystical birthright. This world will inform your views of our own complex world. Grade 8 and up.

The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier & Clay by Michael Chabon

Joe Kavalier and Sam Clay reimagine and redefine the comic book hero and in the process force us to grapple with questions about heroism: what does a hero look like, why do we need heroes, what makes one a hero—these are only some of the questions with which we struggle alongside Joe and Sammy as they create The Escapist, their greatest comic book superhero.