

# Curriculum Idea: “Current Beats”

**Description:** This is a introduction to a possible semester-long curriculum for teaching current literary forms/works in order to engage students in practicing discernment, participation, critical thinking and writing as they become literate in the literary and media trends that are shaping America.

**Rationale:** In *Education* (1952), Ellen White challenges educators to help students move beyond reflecting others' ideas and to become critical thinkers. More often than not, current literature in the form of books, magazines, TV, movies, and more are influencing our children. Even if they do not directly engage in these forms of literature, they are usually surrounded by children—and their community—who are, and therefore are at the very least, indirectly influenced.

Seventh-day Adventists want to teach their youth and young adults to be conscious of the influences around them, to think critically about them; to use the Bible to rightly divide truth from error. Furthermore, we want our young people to become discerning, compassionate agents for change as they seek to reveal to their communities and the world that the true needs in the hearts of humanity can only be met by a relationship with Jesus Christ and by following His teachings. To do this, it is important that they have a basic understanding of how societal values are being shaped, and what those values currently are. Just as John the Baptist, Jesus, and later Paul, knew and understood the beliefs and values of their times—and how literature of that day reflected and perpetuated them—so should we be aware and discerning and intelligent as we seek to connect with others and lead them to the true fountain of living water.

*Note:* As always, caution should be taken when selecting literature to be featured in classroom instruction. In addition, as the class reviews and reflects on various genres, much of what falls under each category does not need to be read, watched, or listened to; the teacher should carefully choose literary selections that reflect the genre, but do not cross the boundaries that are in place to protect students and teacher alike from engaging in literature that is dangerous and deceptively addicting. For example, neither the teacher nor the students do not need to read a Harry Potter book in order to teach/learn about this trend in literature, what it's themes are, and how it is influencing the world today. There is a great deal of credible summary, commentary and analysis already “out there” to draw upon.

## Potential Journey to Excellence Connections

- ✓ Acceptance of God
- ✓ Commitment to the Church
- ✓ Interpersonal Relationships
- ✓ Responsible Citizen
- ✓ Healthy Balanced Living
- ✓ Intellectual Development
- ✓ Communication Skill
- ✓ Personal Management
- ✓ Aesthetic Appreciation
- ✓ Career and Service

**This semester leads students through current literary trends stemming from the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.**

### **Goals include:**

- Acquaint students with current popular trends in the most popular forms of literature
- Study how these forms of literature developed over the last century
- Establish awareness of how literature both reflects and shapes society
- Engage students in literary criticism of current literary and media trends
- Engage students in examining how literary trends reflect the values and moral of the society and culture from which they emerge
- Engage students in identifying truth found in current literature
- Engage students in identifying biblical distortions and twisted truths in current literature
- Engage students in an exploration of literature and media still needed in today's already packed literary storehouses
- Engage students in connecting principles found in Ellen White's prophetic messages with the reality of literary movements today.
- Engage students in understanding how these trends participate with and impact the eschatological (i.e. end-time) movements prophesied about in the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy
- Train students to think critically about current literary trends with Adventist Christian eyes
- Engage students in identifying major individual and societal needs as reflected in current literature (i.e. What are people searching and starving for nowadays?)
- Engage students in seeking ways to use current literary and media trends and products to teach truth and lead others to sense their need of Jesus Christ in practical and eternal ways
- Reflect needs of...

## Current Major Literary Themes:

- Self-help
- Sexuality
- Spirituality
- Spiritualism
- Social Justice
- Celebrity Lives

## Suggested Genres for Content Focus:

- Books
  - Bestsellers (Autobiographical and Fiction)
  - Self-Help
  - Series
  - Spiritual/Devotional
  - Social Understanding
  - Celebrated Contemporary Authors
- Film
  - Romantic Comedy
  - Book Adaptations to Screenplays
  - Supernatural/Spiritualistic
  - Sophomoric Comedy
  - Epics
  - Documentaries, mocumentaries, dracumentaries
- TV
  - News
  - Talk Shows
  - Reality Shows
  - Top Dramatic Series
  - TV Evangelism
  - Advertising
- Magazines
  - Women's
  - Men's
  - Celebrity Obsession
  - Self Help

- Music
  - Rap/Hip-Hop
  - R&B/Soul
  - Country
  - Pop/Folk
  - Alternative/Rock
  - Christian/Gospel
  - Soundtracks to Movies
  
- Internet
  - MySpace, Facebook, etc.
  - YouTube
  - Blogs
  - Urban Legends
  - ETC.

**Areas for literary study including analysis and writing are endless. Here are a few of them:**

Plot  
Character development  
Poetry  
Expository Writing (persuasion, informational, descriptive, etc.)  
Theme  
Literary devices (suspense, foreshadowing, imagery, motif, etc.)  
Research  
Drama  
Short Story  
Novel  
Fiction/Non Fiction  
Historical Fiction  
Autobiography  
Biography  
ETC.!

**Values and issues to discuss within any or all of the above genres are also endless, and include:**

Honesty  
Integrity  
Communication  
Gender confusion  
Global Concerns  
Friendship  
Purity  
Dating  
Marriage & Family  
Coming of Age  
Dependence on God  
Grace  
Law & Justice  
Personal/Collective Responsibility  
Personal/Collective Influence  
Crime  
Addiction  
Deception  
End-Time Events  
Idolatry

Sexuality  
Human Needs  
Sacrifice  
World Religions  
New Age Movement  
Church  
Compassion  
Poverty  
Creation/Evolution  
Politics  
Human Suffering  
Missions  
Cross-cultural communication,  
mission, etc.  
Integrated Cultures  
Education  
Evangelism  
Health, Nutrition, Exercise,  
Wellness  
Salvation