

Olentangy Local School District Literature Selection Review

Teacher: Bachman	School: Olentangy Liberty Middle School
Book Title: Scythe	Genre: Dystopian Young Adult
Author: Neil Shusterman	Pages: 448
Publisher: Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers Copyright: 11/22/2016	

In a brief rationale, please provide the following information relative to the book you would like added to the school's book collection for classroom use. You may attach additional pages as needed.

Book Summary and Summary Citation: (suggested resources include book flap summaries, review summaries from publisher, book vendors, etc.)

Two teens must learn the “art of killing” in this Printz Honor–winning book, the first in a chilling new series from Neal Shusterman, author of the *New York Times* bestselling *Unwind* dystology. A world with no hunger, no disease, no war, no misery: humanity has conquered all those things, and has even conquered death. Now Scythes are the only ones who can end life—and they are commanded to do so, in order to keep the size of the population under control. Citra and Rowan are chosen to apprentice to a scythe—a role that neither wants. These teens must master the “art” of taking life, knowing that the consequence of failure could mean losing their own. *Scythe* is the first novel of a thrilling new series by National Book Award–winning author Neal Shusterman in which Citra and Rowan learn that a perfect world comes only with a heavy price.

Provide an instructional rationale for the use of this title, including specific reference to the OLSD curriculum blueprints and/or State standards.

As a high interest read, the novel brings up thematic issues involving identity and social roles. It challenges young readers to consider future systems of government and technology. The book is rigorous and requires sustained and careful reading.

Reading this novel fulfills many common core state standards. We will have students analysis author's craft and plot development, in addition to studying the craft creating dramatic scenes.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.7.2

Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text; provide an objective summary of the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.7.3

Analyze how particular elements of a story or drama interact (e.g., how setting shapes the characters or plot).

Include two professional review of this title: (a suggested list of resources for identifying professional reviews is shown below. Reviews may be “cut and pasted” (with citation) into the form or printed reviews may be attached to the form). Reviews should suggest an appropriate grade-level or grade-band.

Review #1

Publishers Weekly

★ 10/03/2016

In the future Earth of this grim novel from National Book Award–winner Shusterman (Challenger Deep), the digital cloud has transformed into the self-aware Thunderhead, whose benevolent totalitarian rule has turned the planet into a utopia. There’s no poverty or crime, and everyone is guaranteed immortality. Well, almost everyone. Because babies are still being born, population growth must be limited. Thus evolved the Scythes, an organization whose members are charged with “gleaning” citizens at random. Sixteen-year-old Citra and Rowan are chosen by a Scythe named Faraday to train as apprentices. Neither likes the idea, but they’re given no choice. Later, Citra becomes an apprentice to Curie, a legendary Scythe, but Rowan is apprenticed to Goddard, who kills for sadistic pleasure. Calling to mind Le Guin’s “The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas,” Shusterman’s story forces readers to confront difficult ethical questions. Is the gleaning of a few acceptable if it maximizes the happiness of all? Is it possible to live a moral life within such a system? This powerful tale is guaranteed to make readers think deeply. Ages 12–up. Agent: Andrea Brown, Andrea Brown Literary. (Nov.)

Review #2**Kirkus Review**

★ 2016-07-26

Two teens train to be society-sanctioned killers in an otherwise immortal world. On post-mortal Earth, humans live long (if not particularly passionate) lives without fear of disease, aging, or accidents. Operating independently of the governing AI (called the Thunderhead since it evolved from the cloud), scythes rely on 10 commandments, quotas, and their own moral codes to glean the population. After challenging Hon. Scythe Faraday, 16-year-olds Rowan Damisch and Citra Terranova reluctantly become his apprentices. Subjected to killcraft training, exposed to numerous executions, and discouraged from becoming allies or lovers, the two find themselves engaged in a fatal competition but equally determined to fight corruption and cruelty. The vivid and often violent action unfolds slowly, anchored in complex worldbuilding and propelled by political machinations and existential musings. Scythes’ journal entries accompany Rowan’s and Citra’s dual and dueling narratives, revealing both personal struggles and societal problems. The futuristic post–2042 MidMerican world is both dystopia and utopia, free of fear, unexpected death, and blatant racism—multiracial main characters discuss their diverse ethnic percentages rather than purity—but also lacking creativity, emotion, and purpose. Elegant and elegiac, brooding but imbued with gallows humor, Shusterman’s dark tale thrusts realistic, likable teens into a surreal situation and raises deep philosophic questions. A thoughtful and thrilling story of life, death, and meaning. (Science fiction. 14 & up)

What alternate text(s) could also fulfill the instructional requirements?

Title: Uglies

Author: Scott Westerfeld

Title:

Author:

Title:

Author:

Document any potentially controversial content:

As a dystopian novel there are themes of totalitarian control and identity within a ridge system. It also brings up issues involving the purposeful killing of members of social deemed obsolete. The violence in the novel is treated clinically and details are implied.

Keeping in mind the age, academic level, and maturity of the intended reader, what is the suggested classroom use: (check all that apply)

Gifted/Accelerated Regular At Risk

GRADE LEVEL(S): 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

Reading Level of this Title (if applicable):

830L

Suggested Professional Literacy Review Sources:

School Library Journal

Horn Book

Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books

VOYA (Voice of Youth Advocates)

Library Journal

Book Links

Publisher's Weekly

Booklist

Kirkus Review

Wilson Library Catalog

English Journal (and other resources of the National Council of Teachers of English)

The Reading Teacher (International Reading Association)

Literature for Today's Young Adults

Signatures:

Teacher: _____

Date: _____

Department Head: _____

Date: _____

Building Administrator: _____

Date: _____

Curriculum Supervisor: _____

Date: _____