

Talking about crises: a literary approach

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Introduction

- ◇ Why have you chosen this workshop?
- ◇ What titles would you associate with crisis/apocalypse/dystopia?
- ◇ Which of those do you use in your classroom?
- ◇ Which of those would/wouldn't you use?
- ◇ Other books you would/wouldn't use?



Crisis and literature

“Postapocalyptic fiction is political theory in fictional form.”

Mark Payne, *Flowers of Time* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 2020), p. 2.

“[I]f we look more closely at the way we tell our stories, we can see that *how* we portray the end can also tell us much about how we understand the world and the people around us, not just about how we think about our mortality.”

Adam Roberts, *It's the End of the World: But What Are We Really Afraid Of?*
(London: Elliott and Thompson, 2020), 16, 183.

Teaching crisis

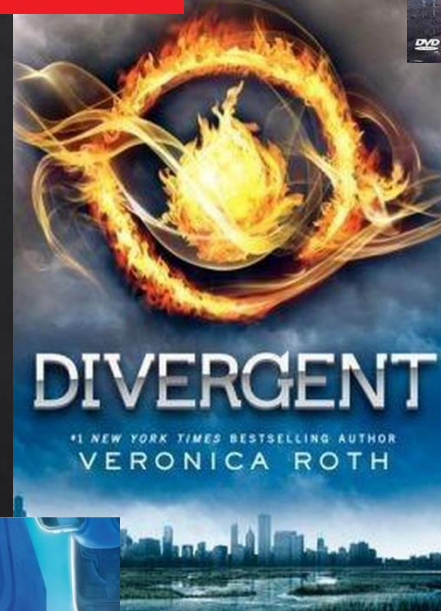
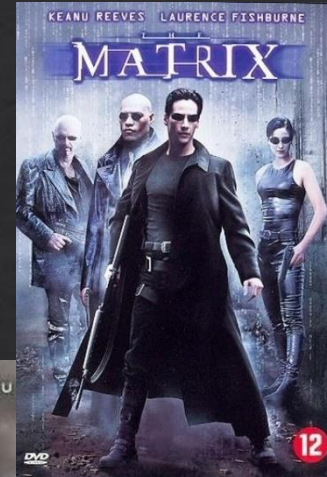
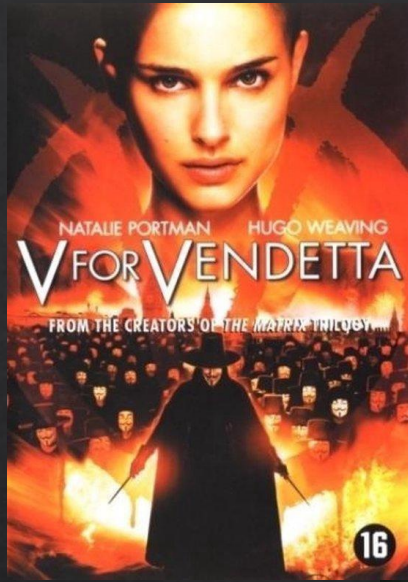
“We describe climate change as not a purely scientific issue, but one that is critical for English language arts in that it raises social, moral, and ethical questions. Climate change requires essential language arts skills: understanding experiences of others, rethinking values, critically analyzing arguments and media representations, and reflecting on the past to better imagine alternative futures. Moreover, English teachers can help students to develop messaging skills and persuasive arguments that can contribute to change at local, national, and global levels.”

Richard Beach et al., *Teaching Climate Change to Adolescents: Reading, Writing, and Making a Difference* (New York: Routledge, 2017), p. 17.

Teaching crisis

Through literature, teachers “can harness the imagination of students in the classroom for learning about crisis in ways that go beyond doom and gloom scenarios whilst also being realistic in outlook.”

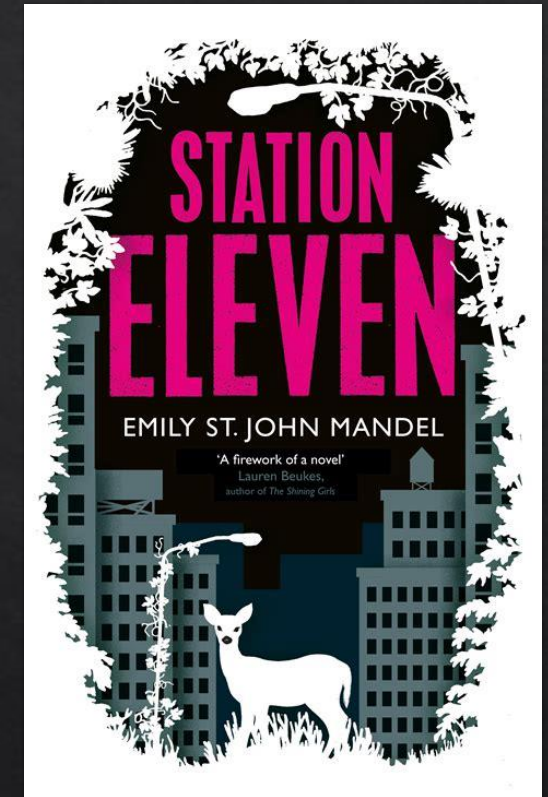
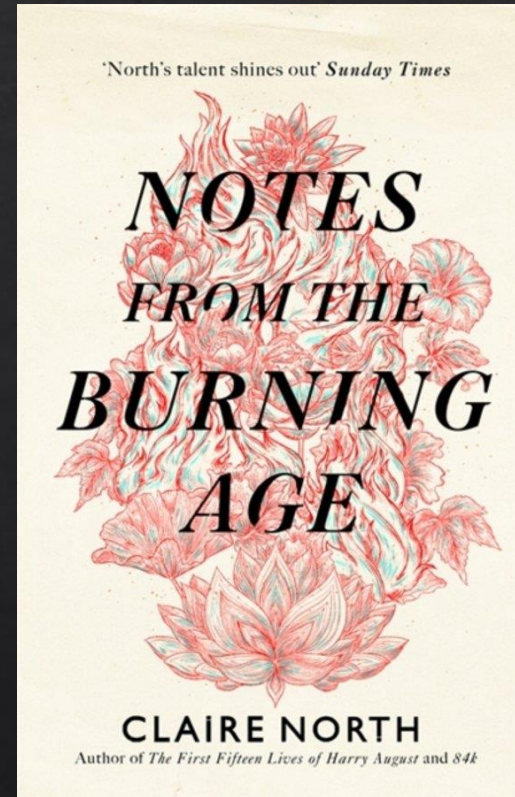
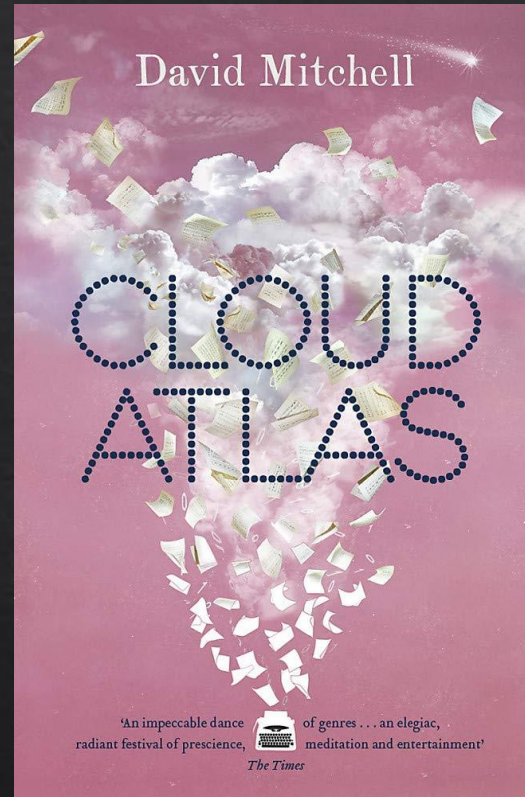
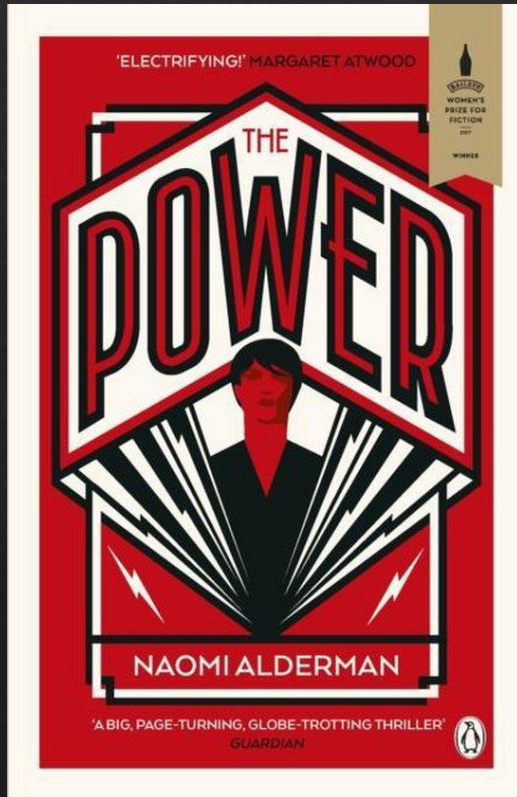
Sofia Ahlberg, *Teaching Literature in Times of Crisis* (New York: Routledge), p. 1.



Poetry

- ◇ “the stores may be closed for quite some time, the trucks may not enter your section of the city for weeks, you can cool it indefinitely”
- ◇ “remember we are all used to eating less than the ‘average American’ and take it easy before we ever notice we’re hungry the rest of the folk will be starving”
- ◇ From “Revolutionary Letter #3” – Diane di Prima

Which books would you use?



Workshop

- ◇ What would/could you do with dystopia/apocalypse in your classes?
- ◇ Why would you use literature for this purpose?
- ◇ First formulate at least two learning objectives you would work towards.

Workshop part II

- ◆ Select a work of literature on which you might base a lesson (series).
- ◆ In your group, brainstorm about that lesson/series of lessons. Consider the following:
 - ◆ What could this work say about our current society/people and how does it connect to current affairs?
 - ◆ How do this work and the themes connect to your students?
 - ◆ What activities could you do to get them to think about these themes?
 - ◆ What would you need from colleagues/school/students to make the lessons work?

Exchange a few ideas

- ◇ Inspiration?
- ◇ Any issues?

Fill in your list of recommended books