

Gardner-Webb University

## Digital Commons @ Gardner-Webb University

---

Gardner-Webb NewsCenter Archive

Gardner-Webb Publications

---

4-30-2014

### GWU Professor Discusses Popularity Surge of Young Adult Literature

Office of University Communications

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.gardner-webb.edu/gardner-webb-newscenter-archive>


---

#### Recommended Citation

Office of University Communications, "GWU Professor Discusses Popularity Surge of Young Adult Literature" (2014). *Gardner-Webb NewsCenter Archive*. 1450.  
<https://digitalcommons.gardner-webb.edu/gardner-webb-newscenter-archive/1450>

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by the Gardner-Webb Publications at Digital Commons @ Gardner-Webb University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Gardner-Webb NewsCenter Archive by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ Gardner-Webb University. For more information, please contact [digitalcommons@gardner-webb.edu](mailto:digitalcommons@gardner-webb.edu).

# GWU Professor Discusses Popularity Surge of Young Adult Literature

 [webpublish.gardner-webb.edu/newscenter/gwu-professor-talks-surge-in-popularity-of-young-adult-literature/](http://webpublish.gardner-webb.edu/newscenter/gwu-professor-talks-surge-in-popularity-of-young-adult-literature/)

Office of University Communications

April 30, 2014

## *Dr. Shana Hartman Shares Insight on Age-Specific Genre*

BOILING SPRINGS, N.C. – “The Hunger Games.” “Harry Potter.”

“Divergent.” Those titles all share status as blockbuster film franchises, but they’re also linked as products of the resurgent genre of Young Adult (YA) literature, according to Dr. Shana Hartman, assistant professor of English at Gardner-Webb University.

As “Divergent,” the latest such franchise, completes a box office run that grossed \$250 million worldwide, Hartman discusses the popularity of YA literature in current culture, specifically in books with supernatural aspects, like J.K. Rowling’s “Harry Potter.”

“I think the reason it’s so popular is kids like to see themselves in these characters, even if it’s not exactly what we see in our daily life today,” Hartman said. “Government, racial, gender issues – it’s sort of a safe place to be able to comment on social issues today that are really heavy and meaty but to do it in a way that isn’t too close to home.”

The term YA literature first appeared soon after World War II, Hartman says, to describe works written for readers 12 to 18 years old. Libraries then began tailoring their offerings under the same genre title to reach readers who aren’t young children and aren’t yet adults.

Many YA books include elements of controversy, such as the use of magic in “Harry Potter” and the hunting and killing of teenagers in “The Hunger Games” series. Hartman said Young Adult works tend to frequent banned-book lists.

“Sometimes, I think that’s a test of how good the book is,” she said. “If it’s been banned, it’s probably really good and you’ll want to read it. These books can be great conversation for families. Sometimes things we think kids can’t handle are not as big an issue for them as they are for us. Doing a little research, a little homework, can be the way to approach that. If a kid’s reading, that’s a bonus, and we don’t want to shut that down.”

Click [here](#) to hear the full WGWG.org interview with Dr. Hartman:

*Located in Boiling Springs, N.C., Gardner-Webb University is home to more than 4,300 students from 37 states and 21 foreign countries. Founded in 1905, Gardner-Webb provides exceptional educational opportunities within a Christian environment.*