

## First Contact and Fame: Hank Green's *An Absolutely Remarkable Thing*

ID2930: 26796

Thursdays, 5:10-6:00 (Period 10)

Location: Little 117

Fall 2021

### Welcome!

Please call me Melina. I prefer *she/her* pronouns. Thank you for signing up for this class! I have read this book a few times and love it, which is why I wanted to create a course and chat with others who might (or might not) love it too. Throughout the course, we'll be talking about big topics like fame, polarization, and first contact. We'll also be discussing small topics like word choice, character development and love. As we go through the course, I encourage you to push yourself and your peers to think deeply about the topics we encounter together. If you disagree with me or your peers, please share that with us! Our disagreements help us grow as critical thinkers.

If you are struggling with this course, with your other courses, or with life outside of the university, I invite you to talk to me or someone that you trust. If this is your first semester at UF, or your first semester back since the pandemic started (like it is for me), it can be overwhelming. Just talking about those feelings can help. If just talking with your instructors, your friends, or your family isn't enough, there is a list of campus resources on the last page of this syllabus to help you. I am happy to help you understand how these can be helpful for you.

### COVID-19 and Our Classroom

We are still in a global pandemic. Each of us have been affected differently by the past 18 months. I ask that we not make assumptions about others' experiences with the virus and that we are more compassionate with each other and ourselves. I hope that together we will strive to make this semester safe, insightful, and fun.

Until we have a better sense of the virus and its variants, I plan to wear my mask in class. I invite you to do the same. If you are sick, particularly with any symptoms of COVID-19, please do not come to class. You never own me personal information about your mental or physical health. However, you are always welcome to talk to me about whatever you're going through. If you tell me that you're having trouble, I'm not going to judge you or think less of you. If you need extra help or if you need to miss a class or need more time with an assignment, please ask. I will work with you to make sure you have the opportunity to learn the material you may miss because of an illness or other life issues.

IDH2930: 26796 is designated as a face-to-face class and will be held in that format unless the University makes changes to course modalities. Students are not able to attend class via Zoom. If you will miss an extended amount of time because of illness, please contact me to discuss options.

### Students Requiring Accommodations

Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the disability Resource Center. [Click here to get started with the Disability Resource Center](#). It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs, as early as possible in the semester.

Now on to the required and absolutely important information!

**Instructor** Melina Jimenez

mpjimenez@ufl.edu

(352) 392-3354 ext. 236

**Student hours** Fridays, 12:00 to 1:00pm

**In-person visits:** Matherly 220B

**Online visits:** [Zoom link](#)

### Required Textbook

*An Absolutely Remarkable Thing* by Hank Green - It is available in hardcover, paperback, Kindle, and audiobook

### Course Description & Goals

We will read *An Absolutely Remarkable Thing* during the semester and explore questions of internet fame, polarization, power, and first contact. We will participate in meaningful dialogue centered on the text and we will make connections to other texts provided in class, life experiences, and events in the world, both currently and historically. We will engage in weekly online posts and in-class discussions. You will work with a partner to respond to the text with a video (and I might make one, too).

### Course Objectives

- *Content and Critical Thinking:* Students will read about, identify, explain, and analyze the ideas of fame, influence, and power in the context of the internet and their connections to first contact.
- *Communication:* Students will articulate their thoughts, reflect their personal feelings, and communicate with others about their responses to the required text.

### Evaluation of Grades

Assignments		Points
Weekly online discussion posts and replies	13 posts	20 points each = 260
In-class Discussion	13 meetings	20 points each = 260
Group Video Response	1 video	80 points
Total		<b>600 points total</b>

### Weekly online discussion posts and replies

You will be responding to questions based on the week's readings by Wednesday. The questions are open-ended but do require that you've read the 20-40 pages for that week. You can find the rubric for these on each post.

After our class discussions on Thursdays, you will return to the week's post and reply to your peers by Sunday. As I noted earlier, in these posts, I want us to think deeply about the topic, so I will be pushing you to make connections and perhaps disagree because of your interpretations or experiences. A simple, "I agree! Your response is great" won't be enough. We will also be sharing phrases, sentences or quotes that stand out to us.

### Attendance and Class Expectations

Attendance is required for class discussions. If you need to miss class, please email or message me on Canvas so that we may discuss options. During class, I ask that you do not use cellphones or laptops as they are not necessary for the in-class activities unless otherwise stated. I also ask that we are respectful during class discussions, especially since I'm asking you to share your experiences and disagreements. I believe thoughtful discussions will lead to better understandings of the text and each other.

### Group Video Response

As you read the book (perhaps again), make note of the places where you have a strong reaction. If you lived in the world of April May and the Carls, what would make you record a video reaction? As you interact with your peers, find someone who has a strong reaction to that same point. You'll be responding to the characters, the situation, or even the author using video in a format that you're most comfortable with (TikTok, YouTube, Reels).

You will NOT be required to post your reaction on these sites; they will be posted on Canvas. However, if you and your partner both agree to post it outside of our class (and tag Hank Green), that is encouraged!

### Make-Up Policy

If you miss or do not complete an in-class assignment or online module, I will send you a gentle reminder to make sure that you are doing ok. I prefer late engagement than no engagement at all. But timely engagement is the best! The final video response has a stricter deadline because it will be our last assignment. But as with everything else, if you are struggling with that assignment, please talk to me.

### Grading Scale

Percentage	94 - 100	90 - 93	88 - 89	84 - 87	80 - 83	78 - 79	74 - 77	70 - 73	68 - 69	64 - 67	60 - 63	59 - 0
Letter Grade	A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	D-	F

### Materials and Supplies Fees

None

### University Student Honor Code

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: “On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.” The Conduct Code specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. [Click here to read the Conduct Code](#). If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor in this class.

### Course Evaluation

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/>. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via <https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/>. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>

### Course Recording

Students are allowed to record video or audio of class lectures. However, the purposes for which these recordings may be used are strictly controlled. The only allowable purposes are (1) for personal educational use, (2) in connection with a complaint to the university, or (3) as evidence in, or in preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding. All other purposes are prohibited. Specifically, students may not publish recorded lectures without the written consent of the instructor. [Click here to read the In-Class Recording policy](#).

## Semester Schedule

Wk	Date	Readings & Discussion Homework By Wednesday of each week	Class Topic & Further Homework By Sunday of the next week
1	8.23 - 8.26	<b>Reading:</b> Syllabus <b>Discussion 1:</b> Online introductions	Introductions Syllabus
2	8.30 - 9.2	<b>Reading:</b> Chapters 1-2 <b>Discussion 2:</b> Getting to know April, Andy and Carl	Draw Carl and one of the human characters
3	9.6 - 9.10	<b>Reading:</b> Chapters 3-4 <b>Discussion 3:</b> What is power?	What is monetization?
4	9.13 - 9.16	<b>Reading:</b> Chapters 5-6 <b>Discussion 4:</b> What is branding?	Where are the other Carls?
5	9.20 - 9.23	<b>Reading:</b> Chapters 7-8 <b>Discussion 5:</b> What is April's responsibility?	Focus on a secondary character's story = what do you want to know about them?
6	9.27 - 9.30	<b>Reading:</b> Chapters 9-11 <b>Discussion 6:</b> What is fame?	Who is Peter Petrawicki?
7	10.4 - 10.7	<b>Reading:</b> Chapter 12 (until April 24 <sup>th</sup> tweet) <b>Discussion 7:</b> What is the social internet?	Who is your celebrity crush or hate?
8	10.11 - 10.14	<b>Reading:</b> finish Chapter 12 <b>Discussion 8:</b> What is polarization?	Imagine the story in a different place or time, or without the internet
9	10.18 - 10.21	<b>Reading:</b> Chapters 13-15 <b>Discussion 9:</b> What is passionate belief?	Who is Carl?
10	10.25 - 10.28	<b>Reading:</b> Chapters 16-17 <b>Discussion 10:</b> What is April's responsibility?	Choose a scene and draw it
11	11.1 - 11.4	<b>Reading:</b> Chapters 18 <b>Discussion 11:</b> What is the Carls' plan for humanity?	What is the President's responsibility?
12	11.8 - 11.11	<b>Reading:</b> Chapters 19-21 <b>Discussion 12:</b> The role of individuals vs the group?	<b>Thurs: No class</b> Veteran's Day
13	11.15 - 11.18	<b>Reading:</b> Chapters 22-end <b>Discussion 13:</b> What do you think happens next?	Work on video responses with a partner
14	11.22 - 11.26	No readings or discussion posts this week Happy break!	<b>Wed to Fri: No class</b> Thanksgiving
15	11.29 - 12.2	<b>Wed:</b> Video response due <b>Thurs:</b> Last day of this class	Discuss sequels and video responses
--	12.6 - 12.9	<b>Wed:</b> Last day of your other classes	None!
F		Final Exam	None!

## Campus Resources

### Health and Wellness

**U Matter, We Care:** <https://umatter.ufl.edu/>

If you or a friend is in distress, please contact [umatter@ufl.edu](mailto:umatter@ufl.edu) or 352-392-1575 so that a team member can reach out to the student.

**Counseling and Wellness Center:** <http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc>,

*Peabody Hall 4<sup>th</sup> floor or 3190 Radio Road, 352-392-1575*

The CWC provides short-term counseling, group, and couples' therapy as well as consultation, crisis services, outreach, referrals, self-care, and more.

**Sexual Assault Recovery Services:** <https://umatter.ufl.edu/helping-students/sexual-violence-response/>

*Student Health Care Center, 352-392-1161*

**UF Gator International Focus Team (UFGIFT):** <https://counseling.ufl.edu/outreach/international/>

UFGIFT provides workshops and support to international students.

**University Police Department:** <http://www.police.ufl.edu/>

*352-392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies)*

### Academic Resources

**E-learning technical support:** <https://elearning.ufl.edu/student-help-faqs/>

*352-392-4357 (select option 2) or e-mail to [Learning-support@ufl.edu](mailto:Learning-support@ufl.edu)*

Browse through the frequently asked questions, call the number or email for E-learning (Canvas) tech support.

**Career Connections Center:** <https://career.ufl.edu/>

*Reitz Union First floor, 352- 392-1601*

The C3 team helps students gain career experience, write resumes, find clothing for interviews and more.

**Ask-A-Librarian,** <http://cms.uflib.ufl.edu/ask>

The UF libraries provide various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources. They love questions!

**Teaching Center:** <https://teachingcenter.ufl.edu/>

*Online, 352-392-2010 or 352-392-6420*

The Teaching Center provides free tutoring services for courses within the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. They also offer supplementary instruction (for CHM 2211 for Fall 2021) and general study strategy workshops.

**Writing Studio:** <https://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/>

*302 Tigert Hall, 352- 846-1138*

The Writing Studio provides free one-on-one consultations with specific papers or writing generally.

### Complaints

**Student Complaints Campus:** [https://www.dso.ufl.edu/documents/UF\\_Complaints\\_policy.pdf](https://www.dso.ufl.edu/documents/UF_Complaints_policy.pdf)

**On-Line Students Complaints:** <http://www.distance.ufl.edu/student-complaint-process>