



ENG 305: Children's Literature
COURSE SYLLABUS:
Spring 2013

Instructor: Mary Couzelis
Office Location: HL 126
Office Hours: MWF 10am-11am and 1pm-2pm, and by appt.
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COURSE INFORMATION

Catalogue Description: A survey of children's literature. The course includes various authors and illustrators in such genres as the oral tradition, fantasy, realistic and historical fiction, poetry, and the picture book. Prerequisite Eng 1302.

Course Description: Students in this course will read several classics in children's literature as well as a number of contemporary children's books. This course will explore a variety of children's literature through various genres. These genres include contemporary novel, classic novel, historical fiction, and realistic fiction, picture books, and folk and fairy tales. This course has several goals. You will become familiar with the genres listed above, but together, we'll also explore various ideas conveyed in the texts, the historical development and context of children's fiction, how novels for young readers have changed and/or stayed the same, and the intersections among language, theory, politics, ideology, and children's fiction. Most important, however, we will be examining the ideologies embedded in the texts as well as the ideologies that guide our culture, particularly in terms of children and the literature they read. We'll also be tackling several questions throughout the semester. What IS children's literature? What is its purpose, how does it function, and why? Is it successful in its function? What are adult expectations of children as set forth in these texts? What might these novels say about our culture? Why study children's literature in the first place?

Please note: We will be discussing children's literature critically and theoretically. I ask that you refrain from discussions about what is appropriate or inappropriate for children, what they might like or dislike, or comprehend. While some of you may have children and will be tempted to use them as an example of what children will/won't understand or like, please remember that those are your children—we cannot base our analysis and observations on one or two children. The texts we will discuss will be contemplated the same way you would Shakespeare, Steinbeck, or any other piece of literature. In addition to critically analyzing race and culture when we discuss the historical fiction texts, we will also discuss possible ways to teach these texts. Teaching literature to children will NOT be the focus of the semester, nor will it be the only focus when discussing the two historical fiction texts; it will just be one more aspect we cover during that class period. You will learn over the course of the semester how to approach texts from cultural and historical perspectives, which includes considering feminism and gender studies, Marxism, whiteness and critical race theory.

Course Goals/Objectives: By the end of the semester, students will be able to analyze and clearly articulate interpretations of the various meanings of the texts we read, with particular reference to relevant contexts and subtexts. “Texts” include written and spoken language, visual, pictorial, kinetic, multimodal, and in general “semiotic” artifacts. (Just about everything is a text—even your professor! The most successful students can generally “read” their professors). Ultimately, I want you to be able to read the assigned texts closely, critically, creatively, intellectually, and theoretically, and articulate that ability.

Student Learning Outcomes:

To be successful in this class, students will:

1. Demonstrate their familiarity with the terminology identified in the class. This outcome will be assessed by one or more of the following: quizzes, exams, discussion boards or written analyses.
2. Demonstrate their ability to recognize, identify and communicate the role of ideology in children’s texts. This outcome will be assessed by one or more of the following: quizzes, exams, discussion boards or written analyses.

Materials – Textbooks, Readings, Supplementary Readings:

- Louise Fitzhugh, *Harriet the Spy* [Yearling 0440416795]
- Art Spiegelman’s *Maus* [Pantheon 0394747232]
- Julia Alvarez, *Before We Were Free* [Knopf 0375815449]
- Sherman Alexie, *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part Time Indian* [Little Brown 0316013692]
- Lois Lowry, *The Giver* [Laurel Leaf 0440237688]
- David Almond, *Skellig* [Laurel Leaf 0440229081]
- Regular internet access (additional readings available online)
- Understanding of eCollege
- Notebook for in-class work and homework
- Flash drive or other means (dropbox.com account, for example) of storing digital versions of the essays and other written material you generate (always, always keep a backup of everything you turn in!)
- A valid, working university email address that you check often (everyday)

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Assignments:

Responses: These will be one page, single spaced, 500 words analytical essays (not personal opinions on whether you liked or disliked the book or article). You will be given a prompt to address.

Reading Quizzes: Expect a quiz on the same date a text is to be read. These will generally consist of content based questions that demonstrate you read the text. No make-ups.

Midterm: This will be an exam on what we have studied up to the midterm point in the semester. The exam will have definitions, matching, and short answer.

Final Exam: Your final exam will cover what we have read since your midterm. Your final exam will include definitions, matching, short answer, and your final response essay.

Participation: You will be graded on participating in class discussion. Talking in class in an intelligent way shows you have read the homework assignments.

Grading

Here’s a breakdown of how your grade will be calculated:

30 pts Participation
30 pts Responses
30 pts Reading Quizzes
50 pts Midterm
60 pts Final
200 pts Total

Grading Scale: 100%-90% A; 89%-80% B; 79%-70% C; 69%-60% D; 59%-0 F.

Your grades will be posted for you to see throughout the semester on eCollege. The great thing about eCollege is that it calculates your total grade for you as we go so you always know where you stand in the class. Only you and I can see your grades on eCollege.

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

You will need:

- Flash drive or other means (dropbox.com account, for example) of storing digital versions of the essays and other written material you generate (always, always keep a backup of everything you turn in!)
- A valid, working email address that you check often (everyday)
- Regular internet access (additional readings available online and eCollege)
- Access to a computer with a word processing program and a printer (assignments must be typed and printed)
- Ability to print 30-50 pages throughout the semester (funds, ink, paper, etc.)

ACCESS AND NAVIGATION

Some texts for this course exist exclusively online, so you must have Internet access to read and/or view these texts. You must have an understanding of eCollege.

COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT

Interaction with Instructor Statement:

Please contact your instructor with any questions you may have. Your instructor's communication preference is e-mail, and my address is: mcouzelis@leomail.tamuc.edu. Also, each instructor in the department of literature and languages is required to keep at least three office hours per course per week.

Grievance Procedure:

Students who have concerns about their writing course or instructors should speak *first* to the instructor about those concerns. If the student is unsatisfied with the outcome of that conversation,

the next person in the chain of command is the Dr. Susan Stewart. Students should contact her via e-mail at susan.stewart@tamuc.edu

COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES
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Course Specific Procedures:

Attendance Policy

Students may miss up to **five** times without penalty. After the **sixth** absence, the student's final grade will drop by one letter. After the **eighth** absence, the student cannot pass the course.

There is no such thing as "partial attendance"—students are either present for the entire course or they are absent.

Excessive tardiness will be penalized as an absence. If you come to class late 3 times that will count as an absence. "Late" is when I have completed calling roll and class has begun. It is your responsibility to make sure your presence is accounted for accurately; therefore, if you do come in late, then it is your responsibility to make sure I have you marked as late instead of absent.

The university has no policy for "excused absences" except for university sanctioned events, so please save your absences for illness, court appearances, child care arrangements, and other situations when you must miss class.

You are responsible for obtaining the information you missed when you are absent. Do not email me and ask what you have missed; refer to the calendar on Ecollege or email a peer from class.

Academic Honesty

The official departmental policy: "Instructors in the Department of Literature and Languages do not tolerate plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty. Instructors uphold and support the highest academic standards, and students are expected to do likewise. Penalties for students guilty of academic dishonesty include disciplinary probation, suspension, and expulsion. (Texas A&M University-Commerce Code of Student Conduct 5.b [1,2,3])

If you ever have any questions about a particular use of a source, always ask your instructor. They want you to avoid plagiarism, too, so they will help you do so whenever and wherever they can. Do what you can to take advantage of this support—to look innocent in addition to being innocent when it comes to charges of plagiarism.

Students guilty of academic dishonesty of plagiarism can expect to fail the assignment in question or the entire course depending on the nature of the incident. See your *Texas A&M University-Commerce* Code of Student Conduct for more information.

University Specific Procedures:

Statement on behalf of students with disabilities

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this

legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

Office of Student Disability Resources and Services
Texas A&M University-Commerce
Gee Library 132
Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835
Fax (903) 468-8148
StudentDisabilityServices@tamu-commerce.edu
[Student Disability Resources & Services](#)

Student Conduct

All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. (See *Code of Student Conduct from Student Guide Handbook*).

Other Course Policies:

Cell Phone policy – using your cell phones, including texting, while in class is disrespectful and disruptive to me and those around you. If you text during class, you will be asked to leave and you will not earn participation points for that day. Your cell phones should be turned OFF and PUT AWAY.

Calendar

Week 1

M Jan 14 – Intro.

HW: Read PDF version of John Newbery, *Little Pretty Pocket Book* (1767), available in DocSharing.

W Jan 16 – Discuss Newbery.

HW: Read Red Riding Hood tales found in DocSharing. OR Bluebeard tales at pitt.edu

F Jan 18 – Fairy Tales: Discuss Red Riding Hood.

HW: Read Grimms' "Rumpelstiltskin" <http://www.pitt.edu/~dash/grimm055.html>

Week 2

M Jan 21 – MLK Holiday = University Closed.

HW: Read Grimms' "Hansel and Gretel," England's "Molly Whuppie," Perrault's "Little Thumb." <http://www.pitt.edu/~dash/type0327.html>

W Jan 23 – Fairy Tales: Discuss Hansel & Gretel.

F Jan 25 – No class. Online Discussion due (**R1 due.**).

HW: Hans Christian Andersen's "The Little Mermaid" http://hca.gilead.org.il/li_merma.html

Hans Christian Andersen's "The Little Match Girl" http://hca.gilead.org.il/li_match.html

Oscar Wilde's "The Happy Prince" <http://www.online-literature.com/poe/177/>

Week 3

M Jan 28 – Fairy Tales: Andersen & Wilde **QUIZ**

HW: Read any three you want: Cinderella tales: Perrault's "The Little Glass Slipper," Grimms' "Cinderella," Ireland's "Fair, Brown, and Trembling," Scotland's "Rashin-Coatie," Russia's "The Baba Yaga," Native American "The Turkey Herd." <http://www.pitt.edu/~dash/type0510a.html>

W Jan 30 – Fairy Tales (Cinderella) into Picture Books.

F Feb 1 – Picture Books: Art.

HW: bring one picture book to class, preferably one with an award sticker. Make sure you have read it before class.

Week 4

M Feb 4 – Picture Books.

HW: Read from DocSharing Hollindale_ Ideology and the Children's Book. Pick one of these from DocSharing and read it: Rainbow Fish, In Our House, GirlBoy, Swimmy.

W Feb 6 - Picture Books: Ideology. **QUIZ**

HW: Read in DocSharing HiroshimaNoPika.

F Feb 8 – Picture Books: Trauma. (**R2 due.**)

HW: George MacDonald's *The Light Princess* Chap 1-4 available at:
<http://www.gutenberg.org/files/697/697-h/697-h.htm>

Week 5

M Feb 11 – MacDonald 1-4

HW: *The Light Princess* Chap 5-8

W Feb 13 – MacDonald 5-8. **QUIZ**

HW: *The Light Princess* Chap 9-12.

F Feb 15- MacDonald 9-12

HW: *The Light Princess* Finish

Week 6

M Feb 18 – MacDonald Finish. **(R3 due*)**.

HW: Kenneth Grahame's *The Wind in the Willows* Chap 1-3 available at:

<http://www.gutenberg.org/files/289/289-h/289-h.htm>

W Feb 20 – Grahame: Discuss chapters 1-3. **QUIZ**

HW: *The Wind in the Willows* Chap 4-5.

F Feb 22 – Grahame: Discuss chapters 4&5.

HW: *The Wind in the Willows* Chap 6-10

Week 7

M Feb 25 – Grahame: Discuss chapters 6-10.

HW: *The Wind in the Willows* Finish.

W Feb 27 – Grahame: Discuss ending. **(Alternate R3 due)**.

F Mar 1 - *Harriet the Spy* chap 1-5 **QUIZ**

Week 8

M Mar 4 - *Harriet the Spy* chap 6-13

HW: Finish reading the book. Bring to class one question you think would be a good short answer question to have on the exam, covering any text we have read so far.

W Mar 6 - *Harriet the Spy*

F Mar 8 – Midterm.

Week --

M Mar 11 – Spring Break

W Mar 13 – Spring Break

F Mar 15 – Spring Break

Week 9

M Mar 18 - *Before We Were Free* Chap 1-3 **QUIZ**

W Mar 20 - *Before We Were Free* chap 4-6

F Mar 22 - *Before We Were Free* chap 7-9

Week 10

M Mar 25 – *Before We Were Free* Finish **(R4 due)**.

W Mar 27 – *Maus* 1-3

F Mar 29 – *Maus* 4-5 **QUIZ**

Week 11

M Apr 1 – *Maus* Finish.

W Apr 3 - *Maus* Trauma **(R5 due)**.

F Apr 5 - *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part Time Indian* pages 1-47

HW: Alexie pages 48-117

Week 12

M Apr 8- *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part Time Indian*

HW: Alexie pages 118-178

W Apr 10 - *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part Time Indian*

HW: Alexie finish.

F Apr 12 - *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part Time Indian* QUIZ

Week 13

M Apr 15 - **(R6 due)**. *The Giver*. 1-7

W Apr 17 - *The Giver* 8-13 QUIZ

F Apr 19 - *The Giver* 14-17

Week 14

M Apr 22– *The Giver* finish.

HW: Read *Skellig* chap 1-13

W Apr 24– *Skellig*.

HW: Read *Skellig* chap 14-23

F Apr 26 – *Skellig*.

HW: Read *Skellig* chap 24-34

Week 15

M Apr 29 – *Skellig*

HW: Read *Skellig* finish

W May 1 - *Skellig*

F May 3 –Review.

M May 6-10 Finals.