

LIT 4332 (17C0) Spring 2016
Tuesdays 7/Thursdays 7-8

Instructor: John Cech (V)
Turlington 2350

Literature for Young Children

The child is all that is abandoned and at the same time divinely powerful; the insignificant, dubious beginning and the triumphal end. The "eternal child" in [each of us] is an indescribable experience, an incongruity, a handicap, and a divine prerogative.

Carl Jung

This course is meant to be an introduction to and an exploration of the child's earliest experiences with literature, from birth until her/his first years in school. We will be interested in the relationships between children's books and oral literature and the imaginative, aesthetic, moral, and psychological growth of their young audiences. The course is designed to involve you actively, analytically, and creatively in the study of this subject. You will be encouraged to develop a first hand sense of how some forms of children's literature are created; you will be asked to look at works for children with a critical eye; and you will be urged to do your own field work, testing assertions, questions, and ideas that are raised in the course. Literature for Young Children is intended for the children in your classrooms, the children in your home, and the child who still lives somewhere within you.

Readings

A variety of readings will be assigned during the course: some will be available at local bookstores, others will be accessed online. The following books have been ordered for the course — be sure to purchase them in the editions that have been specified. Additional titles, keyed to our weekly discussions, will be assigned from lists of recommended books. These works are available at local public, school, and university libraries.

Bang, Molly. *Picture This*.

Gag, Wanda. *Tales from Grimm*.

Grimm, J + W. *Snow White* (Nancy Burkert, illus.)

Hamilton, Virginia. *Her Stories*.

Lehman, Barbara. *The Red Book*.

Lowrey, Janette. *The Pokey Little Puppy*.

Dr. Seuss. *Green Eggs and Ham*.

Muth, Jon. *Zen Shorts*

Mother Goose's Melodies.

Potter, Beatrix. *The Tale of Peter Rabbit*.

Scieszka, John. *The Stinky Cheese Man ...*

Sendak, Maurice. *Where the Wild Things Are*.

The Nutshell Library.

Assignments

6 weekly projects of your choice (out of an assigned 10) and one in-class presentation (40 points).

A final exam on course readings, lectures, and discussions (30 points).

A term project — a picture book (20 points).

Active, punctual, courteous attendance and participation (5 points).

Office Hours

Tuesdays 12:00 -1:30, Thursdays 12:45 -1:30, and by appointment
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Literature for Young Children

Schedule

- January 12 The Dynamics of Childhood. Historical, Psychological, Critical Perspectives.
13 Kathleen Benson, speaking on African American Children's Literature
4:00 p.m. Smathers East Room 100.
14 Baldwin Visit, Smathers East, second floor, enter through Special Collections
Project #1.
- 19 Reading Picture Books. Starting points. Read: *Red Book*, Potter, *Wild Things*.
21 Picture Books II. Read: 10 books from A/I list. **Project #2.**
- 26 Picture This. Read: Bang, Grimm/Burkert
28 Read: 10 books from A/I list and others TBA. **Project #3.**
- February 2 The Rhythms of Life. Read: Mother Goose, Nutshell Library.
4 Readings: 10 books from A/I list. **Group 1. Project #4.**
- 9 Out of the Mouths of Myths: Oral Literature and Folklore.
11 Readings: 10 books from A/I list. **Group 2. Project #5.**
- 16 Nicole Dreiske -- "Global Girls" 5:00 - 7:00 p.m. Smathers East Room 100.
18 Fables and Fairy Tales: The "Uses" of Enchantment.
- 23 Read: *Tales from Grimm* and *Her Stories*.
25 10 Books from A/I list. Fairy Tales Continued. **Group 3. Project #6**
- March 1/3 **Spring Break.**
- 8 Fantasy: Light and Shadows. Read: *Zen Shorts*, *Stinky Cheese Man*.
10 Readings: **15** books from A/I list. **Group 4. Project #7.**
- 15** First Books. Read: *Pokey Little Puppy*, *Green Eggs and Ham*.
17 Readings: **15** books from A/I list. **Group 5. Project #8.**
- 22** Concept Books.
24 Readings: **15** books from A/I list. **Group 6. Project #9.**
- 29 Issues. Books about problems, controversial subjects.

31 Readings: 15 books from A/I list. **Group 7. Project #10.**

April 5 The Media: films, television, the internet, and music.

7 Media II. **Group 8.**

12 Picture Book Workshop.

14 The Proof of the Pudding: **Term Projects due.**

19 **Final Exam. Readings Journal due as part of final.**

Please note: These assignments are subject to change during the course of the semester. Be sure to check your email regularly for updates on the assignments, class discussion points, and other information. You need to have an active university email account in order to receive these messages.

Readings Journal (Annotated Bibliography)

To keep track of the 150 books that you are expected to read for the course, you should keep a readings journal — an annotated, bibliographic record of your readings. You will be asked to turn in this bibliography with your final exam. Your entries should be typed, alphabetized, and given some kind of organizational structure and rating system for the books. You should follow standard bibliographic form:

Last Name, First. Title (underlined!). Illustrated by (if different from the author). Place of publication: Publisher, date.

The paragraph that you write about each book should include a few sentences about the basic plot and content of the book. It should also include an evaluative statement about the book, a statement that goes beyond generalizations or clichés like “cute,” “charming,” or “fun.” Be specific about what makes the book undistinguished, good, or truly unique.

Weekly Projects

You will be asked to do six of the ten assigned writing projects for the course. Unless otherwise specified, you choose the ones that you wish to do. The assignments will be given the week before each of the projects is due, and it is your responsibility to get the assignment when it is assigned or from a colleague in class if you are absent - so be sure to network. Instructions for these assignments will not be repeated. With each project, you will have a 24-hour grace period to turn in the assignment which you can make use of without having to ask me. If you don't turn the project in during the class, just make sure that it is in my mailbox or safely slid under my office door by 4:00 p.m. on the day following the class when the project was due. No further extensions are offered beyond the grace period.

Presentations

During the semester, you and a small group of your colleagues will be asked to make a presentation for the class on an aspect of literature for young children relevant to that week's readings. Your group should provide a brief overview of the genre or subject of your presentation, remarking on any key ideas, points of discussion, controversies, and important or unique works in this area. Your presentation may be creative, critical, or interactive and it should reflect the enthusiasm for the subject, your research abilities, and/or your creative powers. Pedagogical presentations (e.g. “How to teach children a b o u t . . .”) are not acceptable. Rather, look for the unusual, intriguing facets of your topic. You should also provide the class with a one-page bibliography of works from this area that your group thought were essential.

Final Project

The final project for the course will be a picture book for which you will handle every aspect of production - writing, illustrating, binding, etc. In other words, you will make all of the creative and

material choices. This project may be based on a “dummy” book that you have done earlier in the course, or it may be a fresh, new idea. Either way, it should reflect your creative understanding of this literary form that will be central to our discussions throughout the semester. This project is due on April 12th, with a grace period to the 13th if necessary.

Final Exam

The final exam will involve your writing an essay or essays in class that draw on your readings for the course (those that we have specifically discussed and those which are included in your readings journal), the class lectures and discussions, and the additional reading and research that you have done during the semester. Most especially, the exam will ask you to synthesize and apply general ideas and aspects of our discussions during the semester. You will need to bring your annotated bibliography with you to hand in with your exam, and you will be able to refer to the materials covered in your bibliography in your essay(s). There will not be a grace period for the exam.