

LIT 4332-1D20: Literature for the Young Child

Wednesdays, periods 9-11 (4.05-7pm)

Turlington 2336

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Office Hours: Mondays and Wednesdays, 2-3pm

Course Description:

The picture book is not an especially well-recognized or respected form in literary studies; its value is conventionally determined as merely educational or recreational. The purpose of this class, however, is to question and possibly undermine conventional assumptions about the picture book. During the course of the semester, we will read a number of picture books alongside Jonathan Culler's handbook, *Literary Theory: A Very Short Introduction*, in order to interrogate the literary value of picture books – and in order to question how we define “literary value” in the first place. Moreover, we will place theory into practice by conducting research in UF's Baldwin Library, one of the largest and most widely-respected collections of children's books in the nation.

Assigned Materials:

Required (Some of these books are available at the University Book Store; others are available for purchase at local bookstores and at vendors such as Amazon.com)

Jonathan Culler, *Literary Theory: A Very Short Introduction*

Barbara Lehman, *The Red Book*

Scott McCloud, *Understanding Comics*

Raymond Briggs, *The Snowman* (FULL PICTUREBOOK VERSION, WITHOUT WORDS)

Shel Silverstein, *Where the Sidewalk Ends*

Leon and Diane Dillon, *Rap-a-Tap-Tap: It's Bojangles – Think of That*

Maurice Sendak, *In the Night Kitchen*

Shel Silverstein, *Where The Sidewalk Ends*

John Scieszka and Lane Smith, *The Stinky Cheeseman and Other Fairly Stupid Tales*

Ian Falconer, *Olivia*

Jean de Brunhoff, *The Story of Babar: The Little Elephant*

Philip Nel, *The Annotated Cat*

Mary Liddell, *Little Machinery: A Critical Facsimile Edition* (editors Nathalie Op de Beeck and John Stilgoe)

Essays (Will be posted online via the Library West database)

Chapter from Herbert R. Krohl and Jack Zipes's *Should We Burn Babar?: Essays on Children's Literature and the Power of Stories*

Roger Sale, "Child Reading and Man Reading: Oz, Babar, and Pooh"

Annie Pissard and Giles Gelernt, "Long Live Babar!"

Recommended

The MLA Handbook of Style

Course Requirements

Attendance/Participation: 15%

Quizzes and Takehomes: 15%

Baldwin Picture Book Analysis: 35%

Baldwin Research Project: 35%

Attendance/Participation

Although I will be giving lectures in this class, I will also be posing questions which I expect will generate lively discussion. You will be responsible for responding to my questions and asking critical and thought-provoking questions of your own.

You will also be responsible for attending each class and demonstrating clear attention and preparation. Please keep in mind that each class session is worth an entire week's amount of work. Therefore, I will lower your grade by one letter for each unexcused absence.

Excused absences include documented illnesses (please provide me with a doctor's note), university events (please provide me with a letter from a coach, academic supervisor, etc.), and religious holidays. If you foresee missing class (e.g., for a religious holiday), please let me know in advance, so that we can make arrangements for the work you'll be missing.

Texting Policy: *Each instance of texting in class counts as an absence.* When you text in class, your body might be present, but your mind is not. And ultimately, your mindful presence and attendance is what counts in this class.

Laptop Policy: Unless you have documentation for a learning disability or you are using an e-reader, I would prefer you do not use a laptop in class. Since this is a discussion-based course, laptops really aren't

necessary; if you'd like to take notes (and you should) you can always do so in a notebook. If you do use a laptop, I expect you to sit in the front row of the classroom.

Quizzes and Takehomes

During each class period, I will give a quiz that tests your reading of the day's assigned text as well as your reception of previously discussed material. These quizzes will allow me to gauge your critical comprehension of the assigned texts; moreover, they will often include questions that lead into and/or frame the following lecture and discussion.

Occasionally, I will ask you to compose brief, one-page, responses to questions I pose to you at the end of a session. You will email me your responses before the deadline I assign.

Baldwin Picture Book Analysis

In the early part of the semester, we will take a tour of the Baldwin Special Collection in Library East to learn about this internationally-renowned collection of children's books (one of the largest in the nation). After this tour, you will return individually to the Baldwin to identify one (1) picture book that particularly intrigues you. Then, you will compose a 5-10 page analytical paper in which you will draw on your reading of the text, as well as on your understanding of key concepts we've discussed in class, in order to address the book's use of visual rhetoric, its production and construction, its historical context, etc.

I will give you specific instructions for this paper on the day we tour the Baldwin Collection.

Baldwin Research Project

Later in the semester, you will produce a more extensive research project that draws on your individual work in the Baldwin Collection. Your paper should respond to one (1) of the prompts below:

- Analyze the paratextual elements of one or several books contained in the archive.
- Develop a "controversial argument" about one of the books you've read in the archive (in the manner of Kohl's *Should We Burn Babar?*)
- Compose an annotation of one of the picture books you've discovered (in the manner of Philip Nel's *The Annotated Cat*)
- Write a scholarly introduction to a picture book you'd like to see re-published in a critical edition (in the manner of Op de Beeck's essay in *Little Machinery*).
- Propose a public exhibit of a specifically-themed collection of books at the Baldwin.

I will give you more specific instructions immediately after you hand in your first analytical paper. In the meantime, if you have any questions or ideas about this assignment, please do not hesitate to ask me.

Grading

I will grade your papers based on the following criteria: clarity and correct use of academic prose; presentation of a clear, original, and convincing argument; persuasive and developed supporting arguments; effective use of textual support; and careful organization. Essays must be written according to MLA criteria, and thus they must include a list of works cited. *I will not grade papers that do not include a list of works cited.*

An “A” paper is one that not only meets these criteria but that demonstrates the kind of critical and creative thinking demanded of students in an upper-level literature course in a top-ranking research university. **Please do not expect an “A” in this class.** “A’s” are earned, not given: they signal extraordinary achievement.

I will provide you with a detailed list of my grading criteria when I give you instructions for assignments.

Disabilities

If you have a disability, I will accommodate your needs so long as you provide me with proper documentation. If you have any concerns about disability services, please contact the Disabilities Resource Center at 352.392.8565 or www.dso.ufl.edu/drc.

Evaluations

During the final weeks of the semester, you will receive an email inviting you to evaluate this course. Please respond to this invitation, since your input will allow me to develop my teaching and plan future classes. The website for evaluations is <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>.

Tentative Schedule

27 August: Course Introduction

Take-home assignment given – due via email (aulanow@ufl.edu) no later than 5pm,
Monday, 1 September.

3 September: What is Literary Theory and What Does It Have to Do With Picture Books?

Culler, Chapter 1: “What is Theory?”

10 September: What is Literature and What Does It Have to Do With Picture Books?

Culler, Chapter 2, “What is Literature and Does It Matter?”

Lehman, *The Red Book*

17 September: Reading the Wordless Book

McCloud, *Understanding Comics*

Briggs, *The Snowman*

24 September: Picture Books as Cultural Artifacts

Culler, Chapter 3 “Literature and Cultural Studies”

Leo and Diane Dillon, *Rap-a-Tap-Tap: It’s Bojangles – Think of That!*

1 October: Baldwin Tour: Meet on the second floor of Library East

Analysis Paper Assignment Given

8 October: Meaning?

Culler, Chapter 4, "Language, Meaning, Interpretation"

Sendak, *In the Night Kitchen*

15 October: Words, Pictures, Poetry

Culler, Chapter 5 "Rhetoric, Poetics, Poetry"

Silverstein, *Where the Sidewalk Ends*

22 October: Narrative and Metanarrative

Culler, Chapter 6 "Narrative"

Scieszka and Lane, *The Stinky Cheeseman and Other Fairly Stupid Tales*

29 October: Identity and Ideology

Culler, Chapter 7 "Performative Language"

Culler, Chapter 8 "Identity, Identification, and the Subject"

Falconer, *Olivia*

Analysis Paper Due

Research Assignment Given

5 November: Making Arguments About Picture Books

Culler, Chapter 9 "Ethics and Aesthetics"

Krohl and Zipes, from *Should We Burn Babar?*

Sale, "Child Reading and Man Reading"

Pissard and Gilernt, "Long Live Babar!"

De Brunhoff, *The Story of Babar*

12 November: Scholarly Recoveries of Children's Books

Liddell, *Little Machinery: A Critical Facsimile Edition*

19 November: Annotating Picture Books

Philip Nel, *The Annotated Cat*

26 November: Happy Thanksgiving!!!

3 December: Individual Conferences

10 December: Individual Conferences

Final Papers are due either in my email inbox (aulanow@ufl.edu), under my office door (Turlington 4362) or in my faculty mailbox (immediately across the hall from the Turlington fourth floor elevators) no later than 5pm on Wednesday, 17 December.