

Cradle and Grave: Childhood and Death in the Baldwin Archives

LIT 4930: 1 ICO (MWF Period 6 in Turlington Hall 2305)

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Course Description:

Both childhood and death are fraught concepts entangled in shifting ideologies and pervasive cultural anxieties. Literary explorations of these subjects offer us valuable insights into our history and reveal the powerful effects of death and childhood on the cultural imagination. This class will focus specifically on the presence of death in literature about and for children. These texts are particularly interesting for our study because of modern Western society's impulse to protect childhood from death.

In *Western Attitudes Toward Death*, Philippe Aries notes that both the individual dread of death and the desire to keep children ignorant of death are relatively recent phenomena. It was not until the eighteenth century that adults started to shelter children from the moment of death, and the desire to keep children ignorant of death entirely is a nineteenth- and twentieth-century impulse. This is reflective of shifting attitudes towards death and towards the child. Aries argues that the eighteenth century marks a moment of transformation in Western cultural attitudes towards death. Prior to the eighteenth century, death was a collective, natural process that was not to be feared; afterwards it became the end of an individual's existence, a cause of anxiety. By the twentieth century, death has become shameful and forbidden. At the same time that these shifts in attitudes towards death were occurring, our conceptualization of childhood also changed. In the nineteenth century, declining child mortality rates and the decreased need for child labor in the home led to a more sentimentalized view of childhood. In this modern conceptualization of childhood, children became emotionally valuable and vulnerable and childhood became a sacred space of protection. As death became fearful, shameful, and forbidden, childhood became protected and sacred, and thus death was forbidden access to the sacred realm of childhood.

This course will examine materials in the Baldwin Archive that bring the child in contact with death in order to explore this tension. We will draw from multiple cultures, time periods and genres. The Baldwin collection grants us access to both rare and popular eighteenth-, nineteenth-, and twentieth-century texts that grapple with childhood and death in interesting ways. Our readings will include fairy tales like "The Little Match Girl" and "The Almond Tree", cautionary tales for children including *The New England Primer* and *Der Struwwelpeter*, and young adult problem novels like *A Summer to Die*. In addition to our readings of primary texts from the Baldwin collection, we will also incorporate digitized historical documents, secondary scholarship, and supplementary literature.

We will work closely with the Baldwin curator, Suzan Alteri, throughout the semester. Alteri will introduce us to rare archival texts and guide us in discussions of manuscript history, preservation, and archiving. Students may also consult with Alteri for their various research projects. Students will conduct archival research in the Baldwin to work towards an individual text analysis and a group digital archive project. For the individual text analysis, each student will find a text in the Baldwin collection that is not on the class reading schedule and present on the text's representation of death. For the final project, students will work in groups to create a digital exhibit on the Baldwin site (<http://cms.uflib.ufl.edu/baldwin/studentprojects4>) which explores a specific research question. Detailed descriptions of each assignment can be found on pages three and four of this syllabus.

Course Materials:

Required Texts

Aries, Philippe. *Western Attitudes toward Death from the Middle Ages to the Present*. Baltimore:

Johns Hopkins U P, 1974. Print. ISBN: 0-8018-1762-5

Barrie, J.M. *Peter Pan*. New York: Penguin, 2004. Print. ISBN: 978-0-14-243793-3

Lowry, Lois. *A Summer to Die*. New York: Delacorte Press, 1977. Print. ISBN: 978-0385734202

Required Secondary Texts Available on Canvas (in order that we will read them)

Kidd, Kenneth. "The Child, The Scholar, and The Children's Literature Archive."

Excerpts from Steedman, Carolyn. *Dust*.

Excerpts from Pyles, Marian. *Death and Dying in Children's and Young People's Literature*.

Tatar, Maria. "Sex and Violence: The Hard Core of Fairy Tales."

Excerpts from Stannard, David. *The Puritan Way of Death*.

Gainer, Diana. "Eeny, Meeny, Miney Mo: Violence and Other Elements in Children's Rhymes."

Wiseman, Angela. “Summer’s End and Sad Goodbyes: Children’s Picture Books About Death and Dying.”

Faivre, Celine-Albin, “The Legacy of the Phantoms, or Death as a Ghost-Writer in Peter and Wendy.”

The rest of our texts will come from the Baldwin Collection and digital archives

Course Outcomes:

By the end of the semester, students should be able to unpack the ideologies and anxieties that surround death and childhood in Western culture. Students should be able to make historical, literary, critical or theoretical statements about the texts we’ve read and should be able to support those statements. Students should be able to think critically about literature and culture, synthesize literature with relevant scholarship, and construct cohesive, convincing arguments. Students should become familiar with archival research and be able to design—and explain their organization of—a digital archival exhibit. Additionally, students should have refined their basic writing skills, including MLA documentation style, drafting, proofreading, editing, and composing a polished final product.

Assignments and Participation:

Text Feature (1000 words)

10%

Students will work with a partner to select a text from the Baldwin Collection that we will not read as a class and that fits the theme of the course. Each student will prepare a 1000-word review of the text which connects the text to the secondary scholarship and theories discussed in class. Students may need to include scans or images from the document to support their analysis. While each student will write their own analysis, partners will work together to prepare a 10-minute presentation of their text for the class. We will sign up for these texts in the first week of class and essays will be due on the assigned presentation day.

Midterm Exam

20%

The midterm exam will consist of a take-home essay prompt and an in-class short answer section. Students will receive two essay prompts to choose from in advance of the exam. The essay questions and short answer prompts may cover any of the materials read in the first half of class, including selected scholarship on archives, Aries, fairy tales, and the cautionary tales. Students will be asked to synthesize scholarship with our primary texts and make connections between primary texts, keeping in mind questions of genre, period, audience, and cultural context.

Collaborative Digital Exhibit

30%

Throughout the semester, students will work in groups towards the creation of a digital archival exhibit. This project asks students to explore the relationship between genre, audience, historical context, or visual rhetoric and representation of death. For example, a

group may construct an exhibit about the role of death in satirical children’s literature looking at the relationship between satire and death, or a group may examine the visual representation of death in children’s picture books. Each group will propose their own unique subject and the final products will be published on the Baldwin site. In addition to offering the valuable experience of collaborative scholarship, this project also allows students to be credited as researchers and authors on the site

<http://cms.uflib.ufl.edu/baldwin/studentprojects>.

Project Showcase **10%**

Groups will prepare a presentation to showcase their digital exhibit. This presentation will give students the chance to share their work with their peers and receive feedback before the final edits are due.

Final Exam **20%**

The final exam will consist of an analytical review and reflection on the digital exhibits produced by the class.

Classwork and Participation **15%**

This class depends on lively and informed class discussions, which means that students are expected to come to class having read the texts and prepared to contribute talking points or raise questions in the discussion. If I ever notice a lull in class participation that suggests students are not prepared to discuss the readings, then I will begin assigning pop quizzes over the reading.

Grades:

Grading Scale							
A	93-100%	B	83-86.9%	C	73-76.9%	D	63-66.9%
A-	90-92.9%	B-	80-82.9%	C-	70-72.9%	D-	60-62.9%
B+	87-89.9%	C+	77-79.9%	D+	67-69.9%	E	0-59.9%

General Assessment Rubric

A	Insightful: You did what the assignment asked for at a high quality level, with care and precision, and your work shows originality and creativity. Work in this range shows all the qualities listed below for a “B,” but it also demonstrates that you took extra steps to be original or creative in developing content and style. Work in the “A” range is not only convincing and intriguing, but also illuminating. Since careful editing and proofreading are essential in writing, papers in the A range must be free of typos and grammatical or mechanical errors.
B	Proficient: You did what the assignment asked of you at a high quality level. Work in <u>this range is competent, thoughtful, and considered, but it needs revision. To be in the</u>

	“B” range, an essay must be complete in content, be well organized, and show special attention to style.
C	Satisfactory: You did what the assignment asked of you and demonstrated that you have a generalized comprehension of the ideas/films/essays you’re working with. Work in this range needs significant revision, but it is complete in content and the organization is logical. Diction may be imprecise or unclear. The style is straightforward but unremarkable.
D	Poor: You did what the assignment asked of you at a poor quality level. Work in this range needs significant revision. The content is often incomplete and/or the organization is hard to discern. Support is irrelevant, overgeneralized, lacks validity, and/or is absent. Ideas/texts are oversimplified. Work in this range may have no thesis statement, or may stray significantly from the thesis throughout the essay. Attention to style is often nonexistent or uneven.
E	An E is usually reserved for people who don't do the work, or don't come to class, or those who have plagiarized. However, if your work shows little understanding of the needs of the assignment or demonstrates that you put little effort in completing it, you will receive a failing grade.

Course Policies

Participation and Attendance

Regular attendance and active participation are crucial. Class participation includes contributing to class discussions; coming to class on time, prepared with books and homework; preparing for in-class activities; providing adequate drafts for group work; collaborating and participating in group activities; and overall working and paying close attention to the lectures and activities of the classroom. In general, students are expected to contribute constructively to each class session. **Because this class depends on student-led discussion, you must bring copies of assigned readings to each class and be prepared with notes and questions to contribute to the class.**

In this course we will follow a strict attendance policy that is consistent with UF’s policies on excused and unexcused absences. **If you miss more than three periods during the term, you will receive a 3% deduction from your final grade for each absence after the third. If you miss more than 6 classes, you will fail the entire course.** The university exempts from this policy **only** those absences involving university-sponsored events, such as athletics and band, and religious holidays. Absences related to university-sponsored events must be discussed with me prior to the date that will be missed.

Please Note: If you are absent, it is your responsibility to make yourself aware of all due dates. If absent due to a scheduled event, you are still responsible for turning assignments in on time. **Tardiness:** Tardiness creates a problem for the entire class since it can disrupt work in progress. Tardiness will be reflected in lost points.

Classroom Conduct

Please treat your classmates and myself with respect. Keep in mind that students come from diverse cultural, economic, and ethnic backgrounds. Some of the texts we will discuss and write about engage controversial topics and opinions. Diversified student backgrounds combined with provocative texts require that you demonstrate respect for ideas that may differ from your own. Disrespectful behavior will result in dismissal, and accordingly absence, from the class. Any use of electronic devices not related to classroom learning: phones, personal data assistants, iPods, etc. are disruptive and will not be tolerated. Please turn them on silent and keep them out of sight.

Assignment Maintenance Responsibilities

You are responsible for maintaining copies of all work submitted in this course and retaining all returned, marked work until the semester is over. Should the need arise for a resubmission of papers or a review of marked papers, it is your responsibility to have and to make available this material.

Late Work Policy and Mode of Submission

I do not accept late work. All papers will be submitted as MS Word (.doc) or Rich Text Format (.rtf) documents to E-learning. I may consider extenuating circumstances, but you must contact me at least twenty-four hours before the assignment is due. All drafts should be polished and presented in a professional manner. All papers must be in 12-point Times New Roman font, double-spaced with 1-inch margins and numbered pages.

Final Grade Appeals

Students may appeal a final grade by filling out a form available from Carla Blount, Program Assistant in Department of English. Grade appeals may result in a higher, unchanged, or lower final grade.

University Policies

General Education

This is a General Education course providing student learning outcomes listed in the Undergraduate Catalog. For more information, see

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/advising/info/general-education-requirement.aspx>

Students with Disabilities

The University of Florida complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act. The Disability Resource Center in the Dean of Students Office provides information and support regarding accommodations for students with disabilities. For more information, see:

<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/>. The office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the instructor when requesting accommodation.

Statement of Harassment

UF provides an educational and working environment that is free from sex discrimination and sexual harassment for its students, staff, and faculty. For more about UF policies regarding harassment, see: <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/sexual/>

Statement on Academic Honesty

All students must abide by the Student Honor Code. For more information about academic honesty, including definitions of plagiarism and unauthorized collaboration, see:

<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/scctr/honorcodes/honorcode.php>

Tentative Class Schedule

Readings should be done by the day on which they are scheduled

	Monday	Wednesday	Friday
Week One (1/6-1/8)	No Class	Course Overview	Student introductions
Week Two (1/11-1/15)	Archives and Childhood Read: Kidd, "The Child, The Scholar, and the Children's Literature Archive"	Archives and Death Read: Steedman, "Something She Called a Fever"	Baldwin Archive Tour w/Suzan Alteri
Week Three (1/20-1/22)	Holiday-No Class	Tamed Death Read: Aries	Forbidden Death Read: Aries
Week Four (1/25-1/29)	Death and Childhood Read: Pyles' introduction	Death in Fairy Tales Read: Tatar's "Sex and Violence;" "The Little Mermaid (Anderson);" "Little Snow White (Grimm)"	The Brothers Grimm Read: "The Almond Tree;" "The Godfather Death;" "The Child's Grave"
Week Five (2/1-2/5)	Hans Christian Andersen Read: "The Angel;" "The Little Match-Girl,"	Group Case Studies- Fairy Tales	Puritan Attitudes toward Death Read: Stannard "Death and Childhood"
Week Six (2/8-2/12)	<i>The New England Primer</i>	<i>A Token for Children</i>	Group Case Studies- Puritan Texts
Week Seven (2/15-2/19)	Violence and the Absurd Read: "Eeny, Meeny, Miney Mo"	Read: <i>Der Struwwelpeter</i> and "Tale of a Good Little Boy and Tale of a Bad Little Boy"	Deathly Decisions in CYOA books for kids
Week Eight (2/22-2/26)	Group Case Studies- Absurd Child Deaths	Final Project Overview w/ Alteri	Midterm Exam
Week Nine	Spring Break-No Class	Spring Break-No Class	Spring Break-No Class
Week Ten (3/7-3/11)	The Bereaved Child	Losing a Pet	Losing Someone

	Read: Wiseman, "Summer's End and Sad Goodbyes"	Read: Pyles, "The Death of a Pet"	Read: Lowry, <i>A Summer to Die</i>
Week Eleven (3/14-3/18)	Losing Someone Read: Lowry, <i>A Summer to Die</i>	Group Case Studies: Bereaved Children	The Immortal Child Read: Falvre, "The Legacy of the Phantoms"
Week Twelve (3/21-3/25)	Read: <i>Peter Pan</i>	Read: <i>Peter Pan</i>	Group Case Studies: Immortal Children
Week Thirteen (3/28-4/1)	Curating an Exhibit w/ Lourdes Santamaria-Wheeler	Creating moving GIFS for digital exhibits w/ Emily Sneed	Group Research
Week Fourteen (4/4-4/8)	Group Conferences	Group Conferences	Group Research
Week Fifteen (4/11-4/15)	Presentations	Presentations	Presentations
Week Sixteen (4/18-4/20)	Course Review	Course Conclusion	No Class-Reading Days