

## Writing Childhood

To understand our attachment to the world, it is necessary to add a childhood, our childhood to each archetype. We cannot love water, fire, the tree without putting a love into them, a friendship which goes back to our childhood. We love them with childhood. . . . we love them in a new found childhood, in a childhood that is reanimated with that childhood which is latent in each of us.

Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Reverie*

### Course Objectives

Through a number of genres of writing for young people as well as through works intended for adults, this seminar will explore some of the ways that we write about childhood. In a sense, this creative process is an act of memory, of recovering those feelings and experiences -- real, imagined, archetypal -- that guide each of us in our construction and reconstructions of our own childhoods as well as in our larger, cultural understanding of childhood. These readings are meant to inspire your own journeys into that past that still lingers within each of us and that may find expression through narrative, poetry, drawing, music, autobiography, drama, film, photography, and other acts of the imagination. The focus of the seminar will be on the wide-ranging creative works that you will produce during the semester. Participants will need to bring to the course an open, creative spirit, an energized work ethic, and a commitment to producing exceptional writing.

### Readings

In the interests of cost, many of the works that we will read in the course are available at local public and university libraries. I'd also urge you to shop around for used copies online. Feel free to share your books (and their costs) with others in the class.

Barry, Lynda. *What It Is*.  
Block, Francesca. *Weetzie Bat*.  
Hesse, Karen. *Out of the Dust*.  
Hughes, Richard. *A High Wind in Jamaica*.  
Krauss, Ruth. *A Very Special House*.  
----- . *A Hole is to Dig*.  
Sendak, Maurice. *Where the Wild Things Are*.  
Dr. Seuss. *Green Eggs and Ham*.

**Highly Recommended:**  
Anderson, M. T. *Feed*.  
Kallman, Maira. *The Principles of Uncertainty*.  
Larsen, Reif. *Selected Works of T. S. Spivet*.  
Hoban, Russell. *A Bargain for Frances*.  
van Allsburg. *Mysteries of Harris Burdick*.  
Julia Cameron. *The Artist's Way*.

### Some key works (available at local libraries, online, and the media libraries on campus) for additional reading and viewing and for inspiration.

Carl Orff's *Music for Children*  
*Experience*  
*Mozart's The Magic Flute*  
*Peter and the Wolf*, Bono, Gavin Friday, et al  
*Struwwelpeter*, The Tiger Lillies  
*Kindertotenlieder*, *Des Knabens Wunderhorn*, Mahler

William Blake, *Songs of Innocence and*  
*E. B. White, Charlotte's Web*  
Louise Fitzhugh, *Harriet the Spy*  
Virginia Wolff, *Make Lemonade*  
The novels of Kate DiCamillo

Early Mickey Mouse cartoons and his Silly Symphonies  
Early Disney features: *Snow White, Pinocchio, Dumbo, Bambi, and Fantasia*  
The animated films of Faith and John Hubley  
Winsor McCay's comic Little Nemo

The Grimm's *Household Tales*  
The tales of H. C. Andersen  
Ursula Le Guinn, *A Wizard of Earthsea*

The works of Wanda Gág, Margaret Wise Brown, Dr. Seuss, Maurice Sendak, and William Steig

The photographs of Jacques Henri Lartigue  
The photographs of Lewis Hine  
Wendy Ewald's Secret Games

The children's books of Randall Jarrell  
The sculpture and circus of Alexander Calder  
The paintings of Philip Otto Runge, Caspar David Friedrich, Miro.

### Films

<i>True Grit</i>	<i>Man on Wire</i>	
<i>My So-Called Life</i>	<i>Walkabout</i>	
<i>Our Gang</i> comedies	<i>Come and See</i>	<i>Me and Earl and the Dying Girl</i>
<i>Shirley Temple</i> movies	<i>Cross Your Heart</i>	<i>Wild Boys of the Road</i>
<i>Jackie Cooper</i> in <i>The Kid</i>	<i>Paper Moon</i>	<i>Where the Wild Things Are</i> (movie)
<i>AI, ET, and Empire of the Sun</i>	<i>Pixote</i>	<i>The Spirit of the Beehive</i>
<i>City of God</i>	<i>Eighth Grade</i>	<i>The White Balloon</i>

### Assignments

— Over the course of the semester, create a book of your weekly writings of various lengths and forms. Along with the texts of these writings, you should feel free to add any images, drawings, or other visual material that serve to amplify your written. This is generally called an “artist’s book.”

These short weekly projects will include such project possibilities as:

- A series of “snapshots”
- A suite of poems
- A map of a childhood space
- A toy or stuffed animal
- A group of photographs that tell a story
- A short narrative
- A comic/graphic story or picture book
- A blog entry (a review, commentary, or cultural observation)

— Weekly readings, viewings, and discussion.

— A final, longer, creative term project.

### Grading Policy

All writings are due in class on the day assigned. You have a 24-hour grace period to turn in these individual assignments if you miss that deadline.

Weekly writing assignments = 70 points

Final project = 25 points

Class participation = 5 points

TOTAL = 100 points

All your work should be typed, unless it is in graphic form. You should come prepared to read your weekly writings for the seminar and to discuss the reading and viewing assignments.

If you do all the assignments, make a good, sincere effort on each of them, actively participate in the class discussions, and are willing to grow creatively through this experience, you should do well in the course.

Grading Scale A = 94-100; A- = 90-93; B+ = 87-89; B = 84-86; B- = 80-83; C+ = 77-79; C = 74-76; C- = 70-73; D+ = 67-69; D = 64-66; D- = 60-63; E = 0-59

UF Grading Policies for Assigning Grade Points

<http://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>

Final Grade Appeals: If you want to appeal the final grade you receive for this course, you should contact Professor Kenneth Kidd, Associate Chair and Undergraduate Coordinator of the English Department. You will submit your course materials for evaluation by a committee assembled by Professor Kidd. The committee may decide to raise, lower, or leave unchanged your final grade for the course. Its decision is final.

### **Attendance Policy.**

You may miss one weekly meeting, no questions asked. If you miss more than one weekly meeting, you will lose 5 points (from a total of 100) for each of these absences.

Please let me know immediately, via phone or email, if there is an emergency, illness, or other circumstances that are keeping you from being in class so that we can make any necessary adjustments.

### **In the Classroom.**

Classroom discussion should be civil and respectful to everyone and relevant to the day's topic. Some of the issues raised in the class may be controversial and have no easy solutions, and everyone is entitled to their opinion. While you may disagree with each other and (the instructor!), you should express your viewpoint in a polite and constructive manner. But any rude, coarse, or offensive remarks based upon race, gender, ability, or sexual identity, in written assignments or in class discussion will not be tolerated and will result in dismissal from class.

In the interests of protecting the privacy and academic and individual freedoms of everyone in the course, ours will be a cell-phone and computer/pad-free seminar. Please bring pen and paper for your notes. It is important that you are fully present in the class, without the distractions of multi-tasking. We will take regular breaks during our 3-hour seminar so that you will be able to catch up on your text and phone messages.

As you may have heard, there is a new state law concerning recording classes. (See UF's guide to course syllabi, section C.4 at the following link: [http://www.syllabus.ufl.edu/media/syllabusufledu/syllabi\\_policy\\_8\\_5\\_2021.pdf](http://www.syllabus.ufl.edu/media/syllabusufledu/syllabi_policy_8_5_2021.pdf). The wording of this policy seems to apply to lecture courses, since any recording of class discussions would require the permission from other members of the class. These recordings are generally meant for personal use and cannot be "published" online or in other public forums.

If you have a disability that requires that you record the class, you should be in touch with the disabilities office, and they will provide you with a letter for me concerning the individual requirements you may need. Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the Disability Resource Center at: <https://disability.ufl.edu/get-started/>. 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.

Here is the latest advisory from the UF administration concerning Covid procedures and information:

All people inside of UF facilities are expected to wear masks in community spaces in buildings, including common areas in our office suites, when we are not in our individual offices or workspaces, even if you are vaccinated.

Instructors may ask their students to wear a mask, but they may not require nor ask a student to leave the classroom. Because it is a medical campus, UF Health does require masks while inside any area of its academic health center buildings across its Gainesville, Jacksonville, and Central Florida campuses and in its clinical facilities statewide. Appropriate mask use and voluntary vaccinations have allowed UF Health to create a safe workplace for over 10,000 faculty, staff, and trainees to work and learn in a high-risk COVID environment.

As in previous semesters, instructors may review through their course rosters on Canvas if a student has been withheld from campus by UF Health Screen, Test & Protect due to COVID-19 exposure, symptoms, or a positive test result. If an employee is withheld from campus, his or her supervisor will be notified.

Students who must miss class due to quarantine will be treated as though they are absent from class because of any other illness. The instructor and student should think of it as such and arrange for the student to make up classwork.

As a reminder, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, “vaccines in the U.S. UF will continue to promote vaccines and make them easily accessible for all members of the community. If you have not been vaccinated, we urge you to do so as soon as possible. A list of vaccination sites and their schedules is available at <https://coronavirus.ufhealth.org/vaccinations/vaccine-availability/>.

COVID-19 testing will also continue to be available, and a list of testing sites and schedules is available at <https://coronavirus.ufhealth.org/screen-test-protect-2/how/screen/#locations> and is strongly encouraged for anyone who is experiencing symptoms or is concerned about possible exposure.

Continue to regularly visit [coronavirus.UFHealth.org](https://coronavirus.UFHealth.org) and [coronavirus.ufl.edu](https://coronavirus.ufl.edu) for up-to-date information about COVID-19 and vaccination.

### **Honesty and Definition of Plagiarism.**

UF students are bound by The University of Florida 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 Honor Code (<https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-code-studentconduct-code/>) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Plagiarism can occur even without any malicious intent to deceive if you fail to understand and employ proper documentation techniques. When in doubt, ask for help!

### **Other Concerns**

Wellness/Counseling: Students who are in distress or who are in need of counseling or urgent help: please contact [umatter@ufl.edu](mailto:umatter@ufl.edu) or 352-392-1575 so that a team member can reach out to you. UF’s Counseling and Wellness Center offers additional support: 352-392-1575, or contact them online: <https://counseling.ufl.edu/>

UF’s Policy on Sexual Harassment: The University of Florida is committed to providing a safe educational, working, and residential environment that is free from sexual harassment or misconduct directed towards any and all members of the community: <https://titleix.ufl.edu/about/title-ix-rights/>.

Course Evaluations. Toward the end of the semester, you will receive email messages asking you to go online and evaluate this course: <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/evals/Default.aspx>

### **Office hours and contact information**

Mondays and Wednesdays 3:00 – 4:00 p.m. and by appointment in 4364 Turlington.

Phone: (352) 294-2861

Email: [jcech@ufl.edu](mailto:jcech@ufl.edu)

Please feel free to explore the website for our Center for Children's Literature and Culture.

You can access the Center online at <https://cclc.english.ufl.edu>

## Schedule

- |           |    |                                                                                                                                                          |
|-----------|----|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| August    | 23 | We will be meeting for the first three weeks of class online at the scheduled time of the course. Introductions. Ideas about/constructions of childhood. |
|           | 30 | Zoom Meeting: Memory: Personal and Collective. Writings: Snapshots.                                                                                      |
| September | 6  | Labor Day Holiday.                                                                                                                                       |
|           | 13 | Beginnings: Playing with Words. Readings: Krauss, Seuss.<br>Writing: A Poem (based on word list)                                                         |
|           | 20 | Memory, Graphic. Writing: A map of your childhood.<br>Reading: <i>What It Is</i> .                                                                       |
|           | 27 | Memory, Tactile. Creation: A dirty Wow-wow.                                                                                                              |
| October   | 4  | Childhood's Inner Journeys. Reading: <i>Where the Wild Things Are</i> .<br>Writing: A journey or other fantasy.                                          |
|           | 11 | Research Day at the Baldwin Library.                                                                                                                     |
|           | 18 | Finding a Voice. Reading: <i>Out of the Dust</i> . Writing: A narrative poem.                                                                            |
|           | 25 | Beginnings and Endings. Reading: <i>Weetzie Bat</i> .<br>Writing: A story a la Weetzie.                                                                  |
| November  | 1  | Drawing on Memory. Readings: TBA.<br>Writing/Graphic: A Narrative Poem.                                                                                  |
| November  | 8  | Picturing Childhood. Reading: <i>Boy With a Camera</i> .<br>Writing/Graphic: Photo Journal Narrative.                                                    |
|           | 15 | Memory, Fictional. Reading: <i>A High Wind in Jamaica</i> .<br>Writing/Graphic: Blessed Amnesia, Acts of Forgetting.                                     |
|           | 22 | The Child in Images II. Readings/Viewings: TBA.                                                                                                          |
|           | 29 | The Child in Images III. Readings/Viewings: TBA.                                                                                                         |

December            6        Final Projects Due. Your final project may be an entirely new work or a further development of one of your earlier, weekly projects.

This schedule is subject to change, refinement, modification, and elaboration ... as we go. So please make sure that you have an active ufl.edu email and that you regularly consult it so that you will know of any changes in the class schedule, assignments, and readings.