

LIT 4331 (13FF)  
Turlington 2354

Instructor: John Cech (√)  
Wednesdays 4:05 – 7:05

## Children's Literature

"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 reanimated with that childhood which is latent in each of us."

- Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Reverie*

### Course Objectives

Children's literature has become, in recent years, one of the most dynamic areas of publishing and media production. Currently, one of the wealthiest people in the world is a writer of children's books, and each year films drawn from stories for children or adolescents are among the biggest box office hits. There is even a television channel devoted to the entertainment of babies. Children's literature has, of course, been with us from the beginning and is the oldest and first form of literature that we experience. This course is meant to take you on a journey through this essential part of our literature -- its history, genres, major figures, and some of its more familiar and celebrated works.

### Readings

Blake, William. *Songs of Innocence*.  
Blume, Judy. *Are You There, God?...*  
DiCamillo, Kate. *Because of Winn Dixie*.  
Dr. Seuss. *Green Eggs and Ham*.  
Fitzhugh, Louise. *Harriet the Spy*.  
Hamilton, Virginia. *The People Could Fly*.  
Hesse, Karen. *Out of the Dust*.  
LeGuin, Ursula. *A Wizard of Earthsea*.  
Colfer, Eoin. *Artemis Fowl*.

Milne, A. A. *Winnie-the-Pooh*.  
*Mother Goose's Melodies*.  
*Perrault's Fairy Tales*.  
Potter, Beatrix. *The Tale of Peter Rabbit*.  
Barry, Lynda. *The Greatest of Marlys*.  
Saint-Exupery, Antoine. *The Little Prince*.  
Sendak, Maurice. *Where the Wild Things Are*.  
----- *The Nutshell Library*.

Most of these books are available at campus and local bookstores, through Amazon.com, and (often) in free, online editions. Other readings may be assigned during the course.

### Requirements

Active, engaged, enthusiastic, punctual participation in the course (5 points). Please note: you will lose points for every unexcused absence after the one "free" absence in the course.  
A Family Folklore book (30 points).  
Two reading quizzes and several short writing assignments (40 points).  
A final exam (25 points).

### 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>

### **Grading Policy**

All writings are due in class on the due date (see syllabus). You have a 24-hour grace period to turn in these individual assignments if you miss that deadline.

Quizzes and writing assignments = 40 points

Final Exam = 25 points

Family Folklore Book = 30 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 in the class 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 points for each additional, unexcused absence.

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. Of course, 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.

In the interests of protecting and respecting the health of everyone in the classroom, given the current spike in cases of the Covid virus, you are urged to wear a mask while in the classroom and to get a Covid-19 vaccine if you haven't already done so. The vaccines are available for free on campus and in the wider Gainesville community.

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

Effective immediately, in light of new guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, we expect everyone to wear a mask at all times when inside any UF facility, even if you are vaccinated. This includes our students, faculty, staff, vendors and visitors. Recent studies and guidance from the CDC state that both unvaccinated and vaccinated individuals can transmit the current COVID-19 variant to unvaccinated persons.

If you are not vaccinated, get vaccinated. If possible, students should aim to be fully vaccinated but if unable, should strive to have at least one shot of the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine no later than August 22. Vaccines are readily available at no cost and have been demonstrated to be safe and effective against the COVID-19 virus. Our UF Health experts tell us that even if you've had COVID-19, you still need to get vaccinated. Having had COVID does not provide nearly as much protection as the vaccine. Visit this link for details on where to get your shot, including options that do not require an appointment: <https://coronavirus.ufhealth.org/vaccinations/vaccine-availability/>. Students who receive the first dose of the vaccine wherever they are currently can still receive their second dose on campus.

COVID-19 testing remains available both on and off campus. Testing locations and schedules are available at <https://coronavirus.ufhealth.org/screen-test-protect-2/how/screen/#locations>. In addition, please complete the Weekly COVID-19 Symptom Screening you receive via email. This will help our UF Health Screen, Test & Protect team identify and contain any potential COVID-19 outbreaks.

If you are sick, stay home and self-quarantine. Please visit the UF Health Screen, Test & Protect website about next steps, retake the questionnaire and schedule your test for no sooner than 24 hours after your symptoms began. Please call your primary care provider if you are ill and need immediate care. UF Health Screen, Test & Protect offers guidance when you are sick, have been exposed to someone who has tested positive or have tested positive yourself. Visit the UF Health Screen, Test & Protect website for more information

Please continue to follow healthy habits, including best practices like frequent hand washing.

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 Honor Pledge: “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the 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**

Students with disabilities who are requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, <https://disability.ufl.edu/>), which will provide appropriate documentation to give the instructor early in the semester.

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>

## Schedule

August	25	Introductions to the course and to each other. What is Children's Literature?
September	1	Historical, Cultural, Psychological and Critical Perspectives. Read: Blake's <i>Songs of Innocence</i> .
September	8	Images of the Child, "The uncarved block." Read: <i>Winnie-the-Pooh</i> . <b>Project #1:</b> Maps of childhood.
	15	The Oral Tradition and the Rhythms of Life. The Sense of Nonsense. Read: Mother Goose, Dr. Seuss, <i>The Nutshell Library</i> .
	22	Myth, Folklore, and the Archetypes of the Imagination. The Uses of Enchantment. Read: Hamilton, Perrault. <b>Project #2.</b>
	29	The Ethics of Elfland and the Shadows of Fantasy. Read: <i>Wizard of Earthsea</i> . <b>Quiz #1.</b>
October	6	Dynamics of the Picture Book. Read: <i>Where the Wild Things Are</i> . Picture and Other Visual Curiosities. <b>Project #3.</b>
	13	Research Day at the Baldwin Library.
	20	Archetypes: The Questioning Child. Read: <i>Are You There God?</i> The Child as Observer. Read: <i>Harriet the Spy</i> .
	27	Archetypes: The Philosophical Child. Read: <i>The Little Prince</i> . Short Films. <b>Quiz #2.</b>
November	3	Archetypes: The Good Bad Boy. Read: <i>Artemis Fowl</i> , <i>Peter Rabbit</i> . Twain, Penny Novels, <i>Little Women</i> , and <i>Bildung</i> . <b>Project #4.</b>
	10	Archetypes: The Child as Healer. Read: <i>Because of Winn Dixie</i> . New Directions: The Novel as Poem. Read: <i>Out of the Dust</i> .
	17	New Directions. Graphic Novels. Readings: <i>The Greatest of Marlys</i> .
	24	Thanksgiving Vacation.
December	1	Family Folklore books due in class.
	8	Final Exam.

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.

### **Family Folklore Book**

Your final, term project in the course is to collect, transcribe, and edit a book of family folklore -- the lore that belongs to the unique, oral tradition of your family. While the book that you ultimately create may include written material that you have "inherited" (e.g. a family tree, an important document, photos of or clippings about family members), it should be based on what you gather from your family's **spoken** tradition -- that is, what it talks tells, and sings about itself, and what it passes along about itself by word of mouth. Collect those important stories of origin -- how your family came to be (in this country, region, state, town). Collect those stories about noteworthy family members or unusual family characters. Collect any stories or fragments of stories about family residences, occupations, skills and talents, prized features, hobbies, habits, or pets. Don't forget the ghosts, if there are any, and be sure to include any unusual or prized recipes, jokes, songs, sayings, cures, or games. While your book may include some contemporary material (about yourself and your immediate family), it should focus on the lore that is passed along by your grandparents and the other, older members of your family. So you should be sure to interview them and record these interviews for the family archives. Ask them about their parents and grandparents, how they met and courted their spouses, how they made it through the Depression, what they ate, wore, did for work or fun. And be sure to ask them about what wisdom they have gained in their lives that they would like to pass along to future next generations. What is their advice?

Your book should be typed, and it should be at least twenty pages long. You can use any kind of format that works best to present the material you have collected (e.g. a scrapbook or a photo album). Feel free to experiment with size and shape and graphics (pictures, drawings, layout). Please, do not include original photographs in the version you hand in -- Xerox or digital copies are just fine. The purpose of the project is to produce a book that you would be proud to pass along to your other family members and, ultimately, to your children.

