

# LIT4332: Literature for Young Children

*Section 8SR1, Class # 26282, Fall 2025*

**Course meetings:** T P8-9 (3:00pm-4:55pm); R P9 (4:05pm-4:55pm) on Zoom -- link available on Canvas

**Course website:** Canvas E-Learning

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## FACULTY CONTACT INFO:

**Instructor Name:** Sophia Pan

**Email:** [sp101girl@ufl.edu](mailto:sp101girl@ufl.edu)

**Office Location:** TBD

**Office Hours:** Thursdays 2PM-4PM on Zoom; and by appointment

The best way to communicate with me is via email and/or through Canvas messages. Please be aware that I check my email frequently on Mondays-Fridays from 9AM to 6PM but *sparingly* on weekends. Therefore, you should not expect quick responses from me if you email after 6PM on a weekday or during the weekend.

Communication is key when it comes to any issues or challenges you may be having that prevent you from participating in class weekly, turning in an assignment on time, or impact your overall performance in class. Communicating with me as early as possible when confronted with an issue will ensure that I can work with you to maximize your success in the course.

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## COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course explores literature for young children through the lens of bilingualism, diaspora, identity, and intergenerational relationships. Beginning with oral traditions and storytelling, we will examine picture books, storybooks, and poetry that reflect the experiences of migration and marginalization, both within America and across global contexts. Through close reading and discussion, we will analyze how these different kinds of texts navigate themes of language, cultural memory, displacement, and belonging. Texts such as *The Arrival* by Shaun Tan, *Where's Halmoni?* by Julie Kim, *Julián is a Mermaid* by Jessica Love, and *Tar Beach* by Faith Ringgold will provide opportunities to explore how children's literature shapes young readers' understanding of self, home, and community.

## PREREQUISITES:

3 credits of ENC or CRW or AML or ENG or ENL

## COURSE OBJECTIVES:

Throughout the semester, we will refine our skills as literary critics by engaging with biographical, historical, and theoretical approaches to textual analysis. Please note that this is an upper-division course requiring active daily participation. By engaging deeply with these texts and resources, students will contribute to scholarly conversations about the canon, interrogate its limitations, and reimagine its boundaries through critical inquiry and innovative scholarship.

For more support to improve your writing, reach out to the University Writing Studio, where you can get one-on-one consultations and participate in workshops.

<https://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/>

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## REQUIRED TEXTS & MATERIALS:

### Primary Texts

- *Lon Po Po* by Ed Young
- *Anansi the Spider* by Gerald McDermott
- *The Proudest Blue* by Ibtihaj Muhammad & S.K. Ali
- *Where's Halmoni?* by Julie Kim
- *The Arrival* by Shaun Tan
- *Drawn Together* by Minh Lê
- *A is for Asia* by Cynthia Chin-Lee, illustrated by Yumi Heo
- *Malaika's Costume* by Nadia L. Hohn
- *Dreamers* by Yuyi Morales
- *Tar Beach* by Faith Ringgold
- *We Are Water Protectors* by Carole Lindstrom
- *Julián is a Mermaid* by Jessica Love

### Articles & Essays

Additional required readings will be available through Canvas. These assigned readings are required.

## Grading Scale

A	1000-940	C(S)	760-730
A-	930-900	C-(U)	720-700
B+	890-870	D+	690-670
B	860-830	D	660-630
B-	820-800	D-	620-600
C+	790-770	E	590-0

See the UF Catalog's "[Grades and Grading Policies](#)" for information on how UF assigns grade points.

## Assignments (1000 total points)

### Attendance and Participation (100 points)

- You are expected to read the assigned materials prior to class. Consistent participation in class discussions; clear engagement with in-class activities; and demonstrated knowledge of the assigned materials will contribute to this portion of the final grade.

### Introductory Paper (400-600 words; 100 points)

- Reflect on your experiences with books from early childhood to now. What picture books, storybooks, poems, or oral tales stood out to you, and why? Choose one childhood text you still remember fondly and explain what makes it meaningful—whether its language, illustrations, characters, or themes. How have your reading habits or interests changed over time, and what role have culture, language, or family played in that shift? What aspects of children's literature interest you most today—storytelling, visual design, cultural representation, or emotional resonance? Lastly, what do you hope to learn or explore in this course, especially in relation to themes like bilingualism, diaspora, identity, or intergenerational connection?
- 400-600 words
- Please write in full sentences/paragraphs – no bulleted points
- MLA, Times New Roman 12-pt font, double-spaced
- This assignment does not require a Works Cited page

### Quizzes (3 total; 150 points)

- There will be three quizzes to assess your familiarity with course concepts, texts, and terminology. Quizzes will include multiple-choice questions covering authors, key themes, and literary/visual elements discussed in class. Each quiz will focus on material from the previous five weeks. These are designed to reinforce core ideas and ensure you are keeping up with readings and discussions.

### Discussion Leader (1x during the semester; 150 points)

- Once during the semester, you and a partner will help initiate our Tuesday discussion by introducing the assigned picture book with a few key insights and open-ended questions. Your goal is to spark conversation, not lead the entire session—I will guide and expand the discussion as needed. Each pair will submit a 1-page prep sheet the day before class with your discussion questions, brief analysis, and any key elements (visual or textual) you plan to highlight. This assignment is designed to deepen your engagement with the text and foster collaborative conversation.

### Mini Response Papers (2 x 500 words = 1000 words total; 250 points)

- You will complete two short response papers (500 words each) over the semester. Each response should offer a focused analysis of one assigned picture book, paying close attention to either a visual or textual element. You should connect the book to one or more course themes—such as bilingualism, diaspora, intergenerational relationships, or identity—and reflect on why this story matters for young readers. These are opportunities to practice close reading and deepen your understanding of individual texts.
- MLA, Times New Roman 12-pt font, double-spaced

### Picture Book Research Paper (1500 words; 250 points)

- For your final assignment, you will write a 1500-word research paper on a picture book not assigned in this course but one that could meaningfully belong on the syllabus. Your selected book should engage with themes we've explored—such as bilingualism, diaspora, intergenerational relationships, identity, or migration—and your paper should argue for the book's literary and cultural significance in the context of literature for young children. You will analyze both text and image, consider the author and/or illustrator's background and intent, and explain why this story matters—especially for readers who may see themselves reflected in its pages. Three scholarly sources are required.
  - MLA, Times New Roman 12-pt font, double-spaced
  - Works Cited page needed
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## Course Policies

- **You must complete *all* assignments to receive credit for this course.**
- **Attendance:** This is a lecture and discussion-based course -- therefore, attendance is mandatory.

- Missing the **equivalent of two weeks of class (i.e., 4 class meetings)** may result in automatic failure of the course, unless documentation or prior communication is provided.
- Absences that are exempted will be due to university-sponsored events, such as athletics and band, religious holidays, quarantine, illness, or serious family emergencies. For absences due to illness, I require a copy of a signed doctor's note.
- Absences related to university-sponsored events must be discussed with the instructor prior to the date that will be missed. Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this class are consistent with university policies that can be found at <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>.
- **Should you miss a class for any reason, you are responsible for informing yourself as to what was covered in class.**
  - No matter what -- send me an email before class, letting me know that you'll be missing class and stating why you'll be missing class.
  - If you're ill, and you feel like you'll have to miss multiple classes, **please send me a doctor's note.**
- **Tardiness:** I will excuse tardiness if a student is either a few minutes late or if they let me know in advance that they will be late (i.e. sending me an email).
- **Participation:** You are responsible for actively attending and participating in class discussions and workshops, whether in person or on Zoom. This includes staying engaged with your camera on (when possible), using the chat or voice features to contribute, and responding thoughtfully to peers. **Points WILL BE deducted if you are frequently inactive or disengaged during Zoom sessions.**
- **Classroom Behavior:** Please 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.
- **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/>
- **Mode of Paper Submissions:** Papers are due at the beginning of class or online at the assigned deadline. All papers will be submitted as MS Word (.doc, .docx) or PDF (.pdf) documents to Canvas. Final drafts should be polished and presented in a professional manner. All papers must be in MLA, 12-point Times New Roman font, double-spaced with 1-inch margins and pages numbered.
- **Late Papers/Assignments:** Unexcused late papers will not be accepted. Failure of technology is not an excuse. Assignments that are submitted late will lose **10%** off their

final grade for each day that they are late. Any assignments that require peer interaction (i.e. discussion post responses) may not be submitted late.

- **Academic 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-student-conduct-code/>) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. A student must not represent as the Student’s own work all or any portion of the work of another. Plagiarism includes but is not limited to:
  - Stealing, misquoting, insufficiently paraphrasing, or patch-writing.
  - Self-plagiarism, which is the reuse of the Student’s own submitted work, or the simultaneous submission of the Student’s own work, without the full and clear acknowledgment and permission of the Faculty to whom it is submitted.
  - Submitting materials from any source without proper attribution.
  - Submitting a document, assignment, or material that, in whole or in part, is identical or substantially identical to a document or assignment the Student did not author.>
- **Students requiring accommodation** who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the Disability Resource Center by visiting <https://disability.ufl.edu/students/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.
- **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/>
- For information on UF Grading policies, see: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>
- **Course Evaluations.** Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at <https://gatorevals.ua.ufl.edu/students/> Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via <https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/> Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.ua.ufl.edu/public-results/> .

## Schedule

*This schedule is only a guide and is subject to change. Unless otherwise indicated, assignments and readings are due the day they are listed on the syllabus, not the following day. Deadlines will be posted on Canvas. Late work will not be accepted. Failure of technology is not an excuse.*

Date	Readings	Assignments Due
<b>Week 1: Introduction and Syllabus Overview</b>		
<b>Thurs. 8/21</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introduction to the course</li> </ul>	
<b>Week 2: Oral Traditions &amp; Folktales</b>		
<b>Tues. 8/26</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lecture: what is oral tradition? What is cultural memory?</li> <li>Read <i>Lon Po Po</i> by Ed Young</li> <li>Discuss folktales and cultural transmission</li> <li>Introduce concept of oral storytelling and adaptation</li> <li>Group activity: compare different versions of a folktale</li> </ul>	
<b>Thurs. 8/28</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Read <i>Anansi the Spider</i></li> <li>Discuss trickster figures</li> </ul>	
<b>Week 3: Challenging the Canon</b>		
<b>Tues. 9/2</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Read <i>The Proudest Blue: A Story of Hijab and Family</i> by Ibtihaj Muhammad, illustrated by S.K. Ali Hatem Aly</li> <li>Lecture: Introducing the concept of the canon and visibility</li> </ul>	<b>Introductory Paper due by 11:59PM</b>
<b>Thurs. 9/4</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Read excerpts from Lee &amp; Low's "Diversity in Children's Books" report (Available on Canvas)</li> <li>Discuss underrepresentation in publishing</li> </ul>	
<b>Week 4: Bilingualism and Language as Identity</b>		

<b>Tues. 9/9</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read <i>Where's Halmoni?</i> by Julie Kim</li> <li>• Analyze multilingual visual cues, humor, and narrative structure</li> <li>• Discussion: How is bilingualism framed as both tension and play?</li> </ul>	
<b>Thurs. 9/11</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read article excerpt "Code-Switching in Children's Literature" (Available on Canvas)</li> </ul>	<b>Quiz #1 due Friday (9/12) by 11:59PM</b>
<b>Week 5: Migration &amp; Wordless Storytelling</b>		
<b>Tues. 9/16</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read <i>The Arrival</i> by Shaun Tan</li> <li>• Visual literacy: metaphors of alienation, architecture, borders</li> <li>• Discussion: How do we read when there are no words?</li> </ul>	
<b>Thurs. 9/18</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Watch Shaun Tan interview clip or read excerpt on visual metaphor</li> </ul>	
<b>Week 6: Intergenerational Memory and Everyday Life</b>		
<b>Tues. 9/23</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read <i>Drawn Together</i> by Minh Lê</li> </ul>	
<b>Thurs. 9/25</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read excerpt from Rudine Sims Bishop's "Mirrors, Windows, Sliding Glass Doors" (Available on Canvas)</li> </ul>	<b>Mini Response Paper #1 due by Friday (9/26) 11:59PM</b>
<b>Week 7: Caribbean Childhoods</b>		
<b>Tues. 9/30</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read <i>Malaika's Costume</i> by Nadia L. Hohn</li> <li>• Discussion: What does joy look like under postcolonial conditions?</li> </ul>	
<b>Thurs. 10/2</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read short reading on Caribbean migration &amp; economic precarity (Available on Canvas)</li> </ul>	
<b>Week 8: Latinx Migration</b>		
<b>Tues. 10/7</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read <i>Dreamers</i> by Yuyi Morales</li> <li>• Analyze dream motifs, bilingual narration, and art collage</li> <li>• Discussion: How does <i>Dreamers</i> teach resilience?</li> </ul>	
<b>Thurs. 10/9</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read excerpt: "Immigration and the Visual Child" (Available on Canvas)</li> </ul>	



Week 9: African American Storytelling		
Tues. 10/14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Read <i>Tar Beach</i> by Faith Ringgold</li> <li>Explore flight as metaphor, urban Black girlhood, quilt imagery</li> </ul>	
Thurs. 10/16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Read “Quilting and Black Feminist Art” (Available on Canvas)</li> </ul>	Quiz #2 due Friday (10/17) by 11:59PM
Week 10: Indigenous Stories, Land, and Resistance		
Tues. 10/21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Read <i>We Are Water Protectors</i> by Carole Lindstrom</li> <li>Analyze relationship between land, community, and future</li> <li>Discussion: How are children portrayed as agents of change?</li> </ul>	
Thurs. 10/23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No class – Instructor Pan is away</li> </ul>	
Week 11: No class		
Tues. 10/28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No class – Instructor Pan is away</li> </ul>	
Thurs. 10/30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No class – Instructor Pan is away</li> </ul>	
Week 12: Gender and Self-Expression		
Tues. 11/4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Read “Julián Is A Mermaid” by Jessica Love</li> <li>Visual choices in gender expression and softness</li> <li>Discussion: How does the story honor difference without explanation?</li> </ul>	
Thurs. 11/6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Read article excerpt: “Queer Childhoods in Picture Books”</li> </ul>	Mini Response Paper #2 due by Friday (11/7) 11:59PM
Week 13: Preparing for Final Research Papers		
Tues. 11/11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No class – Veterans Day</li> </ul>	
Thurs. 11/13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introducing the Final Research Paper</li> </ul>	Quiz #3 due Friday (11/14) by 11:59PM
Week 14: Preparing for Final Research Papers (ctd.)		
Tues. 11/18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Writing Day</li> </ul>	

<b>Thurs. 11/20</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wrap-up and reflection</li> </ul>	
<b>Week 15: Break</b>		
<b>Tues. 11/25</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No class – Thanksgiving Break</li> </ul>	
<b>Thurs. 11/27</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No class – Thanksgiving Break</li> </ul>	
<b>Week 16: Wrap-Up</b>		
<b>Tues. 12/2</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No class – asynchronous writing day</li> </ul>	<b>Picture Book Research Paper due by 11:59PM</b>

<b>Score</b>	<b>Key Traits/ Qualities of an Essay</b>
<b>“A-level” Paper</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Substantially goes beyond analyses and ideas already discussed in class</li> <li>• The thesis (or argument) is creative, clearly articulated, original, and well-supported. Does not rely on summary; offers a nuanced interpretation, not a statement of fact, and is beyond the obvious</li> <li>• Subsequent paragraphs build on and support the paper’s central thesis or argument</li> <li>• Examples and evidence from the texts back up (but do not overtake) your own critical analysis</li> <li>• Each body paragraph follows the claim, evidence, analysis model; every paragraph has a clear function; transitions between paragraphs are smooth and build the argument effectively; the papers reads as a cohesive argument – not a collection of thoughts or bullet-points.</li> <li>• The paper is free of most grammatical and spelling errors.</li> <li>• MLA formatting is uniformly (and correctly) followed throughout.</li> <li>• Should have a distinct and strong conclusion that does not simply rehash the paper’s original thesis</li> <li>• Uses appropriate and effective organization</li> <li>• Tone is academic, not moralistic or evaluative</li> </ul>
<b>“B-level” Paper</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Follows and meets most of the requirements in the assignment guidelines</li> <li>• Has a good thesis, but the wording might be less clear and/or fluid or weaker in its argumentation</li> <li>• Relies heavily on ideas introduced in class without significant expansion</li> <li>• Does not analyze textual evidence as critically or as in depth as the “A” paper</li> <li>• Puts forth a solid argument but may have unclear language, spelling, or grammatical errors and superficial or vague analysis in a few places</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MLA formatting is uniformly (and correctly) followed throughout</li> <li>• Organization of sentences/paragraphs might be a bit weak</li> <li>• Conclusion might be a bit unclear and/or weak with repetition of the intro's wording</li> <li>• Tone is academic, not moralistic or evaluative</li> </ul>
<b>"C-level" Paper</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Follows and meets some of the requirements in the assignment guidelines</li> <li>• Does not clearly articulate or fully develop thesis; offers only broad intro</li> <li>• Does not offer new insight into a text, just repeats ideas from class discussion or other sources</li> <li>• Does not wholly engage with or defend the paper's key argument throughout</li> <li>• The writing is largely incoherent and disorganized but may have instances of proper analysis and clear argumentation</li> <li>• Does not incorporate sufficient textual evidence to support the main argument and claims</li> <li>• MLA formatting is not uniformly (nor correctly) followed throughout</li> <li>• Lacks a clear conclusion</li> <li>• Tone might not be academic; more moralistic or evaluative</li> </ul>
<b>"D-level" Paper and below</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does not address the text or does not follow assignment guidelines</li> <li>• Expresses no critical thought about a text, providing only summary and/or contextual information</li> <li>• Lacks a clearly articulated and well-developed thesis</li> <li>• Does not engage with or defend the paper's key argument throughout</li> <li>• Does not successfully incorporate any textual evidence to support the main argument and claims</li> <li>• Shows blatant disregard of proper grammar and punctuation</li> <li>• The writing is vague and has several errors in analysis and argumentation</li> <li>• Does not follow MLA formatting guidelines</li> <li>• May have serious organizational problems</li> <li>• Tone is definitely not academic</li> </ul>