

Florida Children's Literature



Dr. Kenneth Kidd; kbkidd@ufl.edu

LIT 4331 Section 13FF (15330)

Synchronous Zoom Class Meeting Times: MWF 6 (12:50-1:40pm)

<https://ufl.zoom.us/j/97797489448?pwd=OE5vMVZoZUIRWmdyWHhKMdYzclpKQT09>

Zoom Office Hours: MWF 7 (1:55-2:45pm; same link as above) and by appointment

Our syllabus is also posted on kbkidd.org and on our Canvas site.

Texts (by year of publication; not necessarily the order in which we'll read)

- *F. R. Goulding, *Robert and Harold, or, The Young Marooners* (1856)
(<https://ufdc.ufl.edu/AA00058495/00001?search=robert+=harold>)
- Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings, *The Yearling* (1938)
(Free here: <http://gutenberg.net.au/ebooks03/0301541h.html>)
- *Lois Lenski, *Strawberry Girl* (1945)
- *Marjorie Stoneman Douglas, *Freedom River* (1953)
- Jean Craighead George, *The Missing Gator of Gumbo Limbo* (2000)
- Carl Hiaasen, *Hoot* (2002)
- Ridley Pearson, *Kingdom Keepers: Disney After Dark* (2005)
- Betsy Carter, *Swim to Me* (2007)
- Enrique Flores-Galbis, *90 Miles to Havana* (2010)
- Victoria Bond and T. R. Simon, *Zora and Me* (2011)
- N. D. Wilson, *The Boys of Blur* (2014)
- Hope Larson et al, *Goldie Vance, Volume 1* (2016)
- Meg Medina, *Merci Suárez Changes Gears* (2018)
- Celia Pérez, *Strange Birds* (2019)
- Jarod Rosello, *Red Panda and Moon Bear* (2019)

*Provided in Canvas Files or available online.

There are also some critical readings in Canvas Files.

Overview and Objectives

“Florida children’s literature” is less a description and more a proposition. Considering Florida children’s literature means considering two persuasive and intransigent ideas, namely Florida and children’s literature, and seeing what happens when they’re conjoined. This class will attempt two things simultaneously. We will trace the history of Florida children’s literature to the extent that we can define the category and construct things like chronology, themes, genre sequences, and so forth. We’ll consider materials written about, in, and for Florida as well as materials by Florida authors. That’s the usual approach to literary history: define your terms and tell the story of emergence and evolution over the decades. At the same time, we’ll consider what Florida children’s literature has not yet been and/or might still be. That is, we will try not to get too settled in our sense of the category but instead push at its boundaries or margins. In addition to studying what’s been published, we will also ask: what hasn’t yet been written or published for children? What else might fall into the category of children’s literature if we think expansively about the possibilities? In terms of materials, we will generally sample things in chronological order (involving both date of publication and date of setting), although some contemporary texts are recursive, returning to earlier or ongoing themes. We’ll begin with some early adventure stories and then move into the twentieth century and then into our contemporary moment. Assignments will be descriptive as well as analytical, depending on the options you choose to explore. You’ll have the option of designing a creative project of your own.

No lesson is intended to espouse, promote, advance, inculcate, or compel a particular feeling, perception, viewpoint or belief.

Class Format and Participation

We will conduct class as a seminar, so participation is vital. Please attend class having read the assigned material and ready to discuss. See below for more info on participation requirements. Please complete the reading on the first day it’s listed on the reading schedule unless otherwise specified. I will not be lecturing and I do not anticipate making video lectures. I may sometimes speak for a while but usually we’ll be talking together.

I recognize that some of you may have audio and/or video or other accessibility challenges. I ask you to keep video on where possible, and to mute audio unless you are speaking, especially if there’s background noise. To be honest, I appreciate your video being on because I’m hearing-impaired and read lips, plus it’s helpful to see affect when communicating. I would recommend using gallery view so you can see as many people as possible. Obviously if you need to put your video on mute for a while, that’s ok, as long as you are participating.

It is possible that class sessions may be audio visually recorded for students in the class to refer back and for enrolled students who are unable to attend live. If that happens you will be notified in advance. Students who participate with their camera engaged or utilize a profile image are agreeing to have their video or image recorded. If you are unwilling to consent to have your profile or video image recorded, be sure to keep your camera off and do not use a profile image. Likewise, students who un-mute during class and participate orally are agreeing to have their voices recorded. If you are not willing to consent to have your voice recorded during class, you will need to keep your mute button activated and communicate exclusively using the "chat" feature, which allows students to type questions and comments live. The chat will not be recorded

or shared. As in all courses, unauthorized recording and unauthorized sharing of recorded materials is prohibited.

The temptation online is to multitask. Resist.

Attendance Policy

Your participation is vital, and attendance is mandatory. You may miss three class sessions (i.e. one week) without explanation or excuse. For each subsequent unexcused missed class I reserve the right to reduce your final course grade one-half of a letter grade. I will check attendance at either end of class. Generally I'll open the class session about five minutes before our start time. If you are not present when I take attendance -- usually at the beginning of class, but sometimes at the end -- you will be counted absent. If late, you may be marked absent.

For the UF attendance policies, see <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/>

Academic Honesty

All students are required to abide by the Academic Honesty Guidelines which have been accepted by the University. The academic community of students and faculty at the University of Florida strives to develop, sustain and protect an environment of honesty, trust and respect. Students are expected to pursue knowledge with integrity. Exhibiting honesty in academic pursuits and reporting violations of the Academic Honesty Guidelines will encourage others to act with integrity. Violations of the Academic Honesty Guidelines shall result in judicial action and a student being subject to the sanctions in paragraph XIV of the Student Conduct Code. The conduct set forth hereinafter constitutes a violation of the Academic Honesty Guidelines (University of Florida Rule 6C1_4.017). For more information about academic honesty, including definitions of plagiarism and collusion, see: <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/judicial/academic.php>.

Accessibility

The Disability Resource Center in the Dean of Students Office provides students and faculty with information and support regarding accommodations for students with disabilities in the classroom. Staff at the Disability Resource Center will assist any student who registers as having a disability. Official documentation of a disability is required to determine eligibility for appropriate accommodations. For more information about Student Disability Services, see: <http://www.ufl.edu/disability/>

Course Evaluation

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. 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 ufl.bluer.com/ufl/.

Assignments and Grading

Active participation

10%

Discussion posts and responses	20%
Panel paper presentation	20%
Essays 1 and 2	25% each

We will use Canvas for the submission and evaluation of essays, panel papers/presentations, and discussion posts, but we will not use the Canvas Gradebook function. All grades will be letter grades; there's no point system (see grade scale below). Please let me know if you have any questions about evaluation policies or your standing.

Active participation

Participation includes speaking during class discussions, commenting on the Zoom chat (totally fine to chat instead of speak), contributing to group activities, and engaging with panel presentations. I reserve the right to call on you and to give quizzes if I feel preparation is lagging. I welcome visits during the online office hours and hope you'll come chat about assignments, the class, readings, whatever. That is optional, however, and not part of the participation grade. Good participation earns an A.

Discussion posts and responses

In some online classes with asynchronous days or elements, discussion posts function as a form of class discussion. Because we are meeting each class day, they will not assume that heavy role for us, but they will supplement and help us prepare for discussion. Our discussion posts will focus on each week's assigned reading and topics, but instead of responding to prompts you can write about whatever engages you in/from that week's reading. In this sense, the posts are more like reading responses. You might talk about a plot point or theme, or comment on the author's seeming strategies or intentions, or link the text to other texts or contexts. Because people sometimes appreciate some guidance, I have suggested some topics in the discussion box, but you can go in other directions.

You will post on the class discussion board in Canvas 8 times during the semester, including the first week (bios) and then 7 more times in the weeks of your choice (1 per week). Ideally you will respond to all readings for the week, but at minimum you must engage with the literary text under discussion. You also need to respond at least 3 times to the posts of others, in a paragraph or so (also 1 per week). More posts and responses are welcome but do not amount to extra credit. The discussion board will be open for 13 discussions. Each week the board will open Saturday morning and stay open until noon the following Friday, ahead of Friday's meeting.

Posts should run about 2 paragraphs, a little longer than your typical discussion board post. I encourage ongoing conversations whenever they are generative. Posts can be speculative and do not need to be as focused or beautifully worded as papers, but please do proof and try to give them some kind of shape. Your responses to the posts of others should run at least a paragraph and take up some specifics of that post, following up, extending, making a related observation. It's not enough to say "I agree!" – agreement is great, but try to build on or extend ideas. Discussions each week will be letter-graded, with the grade based more on engagement than polish. If you do the 7 posts, and 3 responses, and engage thoughtfully with the texts and issues, you will receive an A for this category.

If you like, you may do 2 of posts in the forms of memes with explanation. Create a meme that captures/reflects the text in question, perhaps a central relationship or theme or dynamic. The

meme should feature the image, adapted as necessary, along with an appropriate caption. You must also include at least one paragraph of explanation with the meme.

Panel paper presentation

You will write and present a short panel paper to share ideas and help guide class discussion on texts we are reading collectively. Each panel will have 4 students presenting on different aspects of the assigned text. Panel papers should be about 3 double-spaced pages and will be read out loud to the class during synchronous sessions. Alternatively you can make a short video or visual presentation which should run the same amount of time. Your presentation can provide historical information on a text or issue; explore one theme in the text; or perform a close reading of a specific scene, passage, or image. Secondary research is not required but encouraged when appropriate, as when providing historical context. Presentations should be around 6 to 7 minutes and presented in a style meant to engage their audience. After each panel, we will have a brief Q&A session in which panelists should be prepared to discuss their papers. I am happy to help with ideas or formats.

Each student will share their topic with the instructor and their panel the class session before their presentation to avoid repetition. Papers will be due by noon on the presentation day. After the presentation, students will have until 11:59pm that evening to submit a final version, should they choose to revise after class discussion. In Week 1, students will sign up for panels. Due to limited time, presentations cannot be rescheduled.

2 Essays. In each of the below options, your paper should run 5 d-s pp., with 12-point font. You may choose each of these options only **once**. You need an argument and supporting evidence for most of these options, but there is some flexibility (see below). You are welcome to draw on scholarly material such as articles or academic books as appropriate.

Papers are due by the specified due dates but you can turn drafts in earlier, and if you do so I will respond and make suggestions for revision. Please submit both drafts and the final version to Canvas in the form of a Word Document. Identify the option undertaken, and indicate if a draft or the final version.

Option 1. Open topic and approach, using any book(s) about or set in Florida for children or young adults that we are NOT reading together. An analysis attentive to historical context and engagement might be productive. You may discuss the author but the focus should be on the book. Consider looking into local or regional authors and feel free to draw on interview or other material, if relevant. You can also examine another book by a writer we are reading together. If you're interested in Baldwin materials, remember we have many historical titles set in Florida.

Option 2. Open topic and approach, on one or more of the texts we ARE reading together. The only requirement is that you must go beyond what we said in class, examining issues we didn't consider much or at all. This option may be easier in the sense that you've read the work already, but it may be more challenging in the expectation that you must find an angle we didn't discuss at length. You may certainly build from panel presentation papers or discussion posts as appropriate.

Option 3: Pick a Florida topic that's not yet been addressed in a work for children or teenagers, and then develop a treatment for younger readers. You will need to explain and contextualize the topic and explain how you will go about designing and carrying out a creative work for children. One option is to look at adult-oriented works set in or about Florida or Florida topics and plan to adapt them, as it were. For instance, what would Colston Whitehead's *The Nickel Boys*, about the infamous boys' reform school where so many kids were abused and even killed – look like as a children's book? This paper can be combination of analysis and creative outlining.

Option 4. Book award winners. Analyze one or more “Sunshine State Young Readers Award” winners in terms of the criteria of that Award or book list: <https://www.floridamediaed.org/ssyra.html>. SSYRA titles do not have to be set in or about Florida, you will notice. But think about why winning titles might be of interest to Florida readers (or of concern to Florida librarians). Or, analyze one or more “Florida Book Award” winners (children's literature, older children's literature, young adult literature are the possible categories) in terms of the criteria. This award is designed not to honor Florida content but Florida *authors*: <http://floridabookawards.lib.fsu.edu/about.html>. How does the award promote that author and his or her work? And how does “Florida” figure into the scene?

Option 5. Write an analysis of the adaptation or translation of a Florida children's or young adult book into another medium such as film or television. This should not be a simple comparison – the book does X, the film does Y; even if you think the newer form is lacking, focus on what's gained and lost with the adaptation or transfer.

Option 6. Creative project. Begin to plan and write at least one chapter of a children's or young adult book set in or concerned with Florida in some way. Provide a full outline or table of contents, a description of what you are trying to do and why, and at least one chapter of the work itself. This project may run longer than the others. I will grade it primarily on vision and labor and time, rather than on artistic achievement. You need to give it some thought – this is not something to undertake in a couple of days.

Option 7. Visit a site that figures into one or more of our readings, and reflect on that site and its relation to the book and your experience of such. This essay can run a little more informal. You might think about how that site has changed or developed since its depiction in the book; you might speculate about newer connections to childhood or children's literature. Some candidates for site visits would include places like the Castillo de San Marcos in St. Augustine, the Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Historic State Park just outside Gainesville, the Gumbo Limbo preserve, a research or conservation center mentioned in the books, etc.

Grade Scale. A essays use an original and spirited argument to illuminate complexities of language and theme. B essays are well-organized, well-developed, relatively error-free essays with sparks of originality or daring, and B-'s are competent essays needing more complex development and/or clearer focus. Lower grades mean greater problems with development, structure, and grammar. Recurrent grammatical errors lower the grade; occasional spelling errors and typos don't. Proof your essays. The best essays sustain complex and or audacious arguments; a good B essay capably summarizes and compares themes.

I assign all assignments letter grades, but will calculate grades numerically. To determine your grade, I use the following point equivalences:

A+ 100
A 95

A-	90
B+	87
B	85
B-	80
C+	77
C	75
C-	70
D+	67
D	65
D-	60
E	0

For information on UF grading policies, see
<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>

WK	Date	Topic and Readings	Due
1	W 8/24	<p>Introductions</p> <p>“Everything Went Wild”: https://www.oxfordamerican.org/item/1520-everything-went-wild</p> <p>“The Problem with Writing About Florida”: https://lithub.com/the-problem-with-writing-about-florida/</p>	
	F 8/26	<p>“A Requiem for Florida”: https://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2017/09/08/hurricane-irma-florida-215586</p> <p>“Here’s What UF Historian...”: https://www.tampabay.com/opinion/2020/06/27/heres-what-ufl-historian-says-about-the-gator-bait-history-and-controversy-column/?fbclid=IwAR2eqqsWN8e6UTySRzdV0pEJH47jLpntdfZU</p> <p>https://www.ereferencedesk.com/resources/state-history-timeline/florida.html</p> <p>O’Sullivan, “Interpreting Florida, its Nineteenth-Century Literary Heritage” (Canvas Files)</p>	
2	M 8/29	<p>Robinsonades, Series Fiction, and Racism</p> <p>“<i>Robinson Crusoe</i> at 300”: https://www.theguardian.com/books/2019/apr/19/robinson-crusoe-at-300-its-time-to-let-go-of-this-toxic-colonial-fairytale</p> <p><i>Robert and Harold, or, The Young Marooners</i>:</p>	

		https://ufdc.ufl.edu/AA00058495/00001?search=robert+=harold , through Chapter 19	
	W 8/31	<i>Robert and Harold</i> continued (finish)	
	F 9/2	<i>Robert and Harold</i> continued. Peruse the website of The Jim Crow Museum of Racist Memorabilia: https://www.ferris.edu/jimcrow/ Kidd, “Boy Chums and Beyond” paper and slideshow (Canvas Files)	
3		Labor Day	
	W 9/7	Whose Frontier? Marjorie Stoneman Douglas, <i>Freedom River</i> , Chs. 1-8 (Canvas Files)	
	F 9/9	<i>Freedom River</i> continued. Davis, “Green Awakening” (Canvas Files)	
4	M 9/12	Florida Crackers Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings, <i>The Yearling</i> , Chs. 1-14	
	W 9/14	<i>The Yearling</i> , Chs. 15-24. Tarr, “Preserving Southern Culture” (Canvas Files) “On Location: The Central Florida of ‘The Yearling’: https://www.npr.org/2011/07/21/138561573/on-location-the-central-florida-of-the-yearling	
	F 9/16	<i>The Yearling</i> cont.; Tribunella, “A Boy and His Dog” (Canvas Files)	
5	M 9/19	Lois Lenski, <i>Strawberry Girl</i> (finish; it’s short!)	
	W 9/21	<i>Strawberry Girl</i> cont; Pond, “The Rub Between Fact and Fiction” (Canvas Files)	
	F 9/23	<i>Strawberry Girl</i> continued	Panel 1
6	M 9/26	Zora Neale Hurston for Kids Browse UF’s digital collection of the Hurston Papers: https://ufdc.ufl.edu/znhors Victoria Bond and T. R. Simon, <i>Zora and Me</i> (finish)	
	W 9/28	<i>Zora and Me</i> continued Alice Walker, “Looking for Zora” (Canvas Files)	
	F 9/30	<i>Zora and Me</i> continued; Kidd, “Zora Neale Hurston for Kids” and powerpoint (Canvas Files)	Panel 2
7	M 10/3	Before and After Disney	

		<p>“Vintage Florida Films 1942”: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GCgA9Z7oQzQ</p> <p>“Florida Hot Spots 1957”: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P5dWxjihyGE</p> <p>“All Us Kids Love Florida (1962)”: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mrpBbyg4KO4</p> <p>“Walt Disney Presents the Plans for the ‘Florida Project’” [1965]: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MGEKE5JZQV8</p> <p>“60 Minutes: Florida Before Disney”: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=msN1mPdGonI;</p> <p>“Outside the Kingdom – The World Beyond Disney”: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bkBn4AIj3l8</p> <p>“The Mouseketeers at River Country (1977): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vRgJOSWq-Hs</p> <p>Pearson, <i>Kingdom Keepers</i> (finish)</p> <p>Recommended: Revels, “Magic Kingdoms” (Canvas Files) Recommended: <i>The Florida Project</i> (film), 2017</p>	
	W 10/5	<i>Kingdom Keepers</i> continued	
	F 10/7	UF Homecoming	Essay 1 due
8	M 10/10	Celia Pérez, <i>Strange Birds</i> (first half)	
	W 10/12	<i>Strange Birds</i> continued	Panel 3
	F 10/14	Class visit with Celia Pérez	
9	M 10/17	Before and After Disney Redux Mormino, “Tourist Empires and the Invention of Florida” (Canvas Files)	
	W 10/19	Betsy Carter, <i>Swim to Me</i> , Chs. 1-12 (Part One)	
	F 10/21	<i>Swim to Me</i> continued	Panel 4
10	M 10/24	Activist Kids and the Real (?) Florida Jean Craighead George, <i>The Missing ‘Gator of Gumbo Limbo</i> (finish; it’s short)	
	W 10/26	<i>The Missing Gator</i> continued; Sigler, “Wonderland to Wasteland” (Canvas Files)	
	F 10/28	<i>The Missing Gator</i> continued	Panel 5

11	M 10/31	Carl Hiaasen, <i>Hoot</i> , Chs. 1-12	
	W 11/2	<i>Hoot</i> continued (finish) Aitchison, "Little Saboteurs, Puerile Politics" (Canvas Files) https://www.fanfiction.net/book/Hoot/	
	F 11/4	<i>Hoot</i> continued	Panel 6
12	M 11/7	Wilson, <i>The Boys of Blur</i> (finish)	
	W 11/9	<i>The Boys of Blur</i> continued	Panel 7
		Veterans Day	
13	M 11/14	Flores-Galbis, <i>90 Miles to Havana</i> (finish)	
	W 11/16	<i>90 Miles to Havana</i> continued	
	F 11/18	<i>90 Miles</i> continued; Kidd, "Ninety Miles from Havana" (Canvas Files)	Panel 8
14	M 11/21	Hope Larson et al, <i>Goldie Vance</i> http://www.sparklyprettybriiiight.com/comics-review-goldie-vance/	
		Thanksgiving Holidays	
15	M 11/28	Medina, <i>Merci Suárez Changes Gears</i>	
	W 11/30	<i>Merci Suárez Changes Gears</i> continued	
	F 12/2	<i>Merci Suárez Changes Gears</i> continued	Panel 9
16	M 12/5	Floribbean Lit? Rosello, <i>Red Panda and Moon Bear</i>	
	W 12/7	<i>Red Panda and Moon Bear</i> continued; Course wrap-up [last class day]	
	M 12/12		Essay 2 due