

**Course Syllabus – ENH291.8994/8995
Spring 2004**

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Required texts:

Mitchell, Diana. Children's Literature: An Invitation to the World. New York: Allyn and Bacon, 2002.

Course description:

Children's literature can be dream making. . .inspiring, captivating, and informing. This course provides an introduction to children's literature, from pre-school nursery rhymes and picture books that are read to children, to the stories, myths, legends, and other tales that children read on their own. Among the topics the course addresses are: origins and development of literature for children, major works, writers, and illustrators in its development, distinctive genres and their characteristics, nature and function of illustrations, social issues addressed in children's literature today, problematic aspects of contemporary children's literature, critical approaches to children's literature, and the uses of children's literature in the elementary curriculum.

Course objective:

The objectives of this course include:

- To provide an overview of the history of children's literature from its origins as oral literature intended for adults to a written literature encompassing all major genres;
- To indicate historical shifts in the purposes for children's literature: as didactic literature intended to provide moral instruction, or as literature intended to stimulate the imagination or provide useful information in interesting ways;
- To show how different purposes are related to different ways of viewing childhood;
- To examine the history and characteristics of the various genres of children's literature;
- To examine the work of major illustrators of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and the ways in which illustrations in a picture book convey meaning;
- To examine some of the social issues dealt with in contemporary works of children's literature;
- To explore the social, political, and literary issues raised by many contemporary works of children's literature;
- To describe possible uses of children's literature in the elementary classroom.
- To encourage an understanding and appreciation of the study of children's literature by experiencing, examining, identifying, and evaluating.

Grading:

Here is how your grade will be computed:

Book reviews (4): 25 points each

Midterm exam: 100pts

Genre/topic project: 100 pts.

In class work/assignments: 200 pts.

Class participation/ attendance/final project process: 100 pts

Literature and reflection log: 300 pts

Final project: 100 pts.

The course grade is computed as follows:

1000-900 – A
899.9-800 – B
799.9-700 – C
699.9-600 – D
599.9 and below--F

Attendance and participation:

Attending class is an important part of any college course, but it is more crucial in writing classes where much of the work is accomplished in groups and in conference with the instructor.

Let me know if you will be out of class before you miss the class, if possible. It is best to e-mail me with a message before or on the day of the absence.

- * Your participation in class is essential to your success in this course. I expect you to contribute relevant comments in class.
- * Keep up with readings – both in class text and outside readings. You may be called upon to give examples.
- * Remember that it is always better to come to class – with or without your work.
- * No matter how late, all major writing projects must be presented in order to pass the course.
- * You must take responsibility for getting copies of missed assignments or any announcements about project due dates when you are absent. If you can arrange it, ask a class member to pick up handouts for you. Talk to someone before you return to class so you know what is expected upon your return.
- * Always talk to me about problems; we may be able to fix the problem before your status in the class is endangered.
- * **Turn off cell phones during class.**

Late work:

I will not accept late work. In class work will include discussion, group assignments, and short writing assignments.

Assignments:

All assignments on your syllabus are to be completed by the date they appear on the syllabus. If you are absent the class period before an in-class assignment, an impromptu assignment, or any other assignment, you are still responsible for it upon your return.

All out of class writing assignments are to be typed and in MLA format – no exceptions.

In class work:

In class work cannot be made up, no matter the reason for your absence. In class work may include quizzes, short writing assignments, group work, and writing log entries.

Literature and reflection log:

Three times during the semester, you will be required to submit a literature and reflection log. In this journal you will reflect upon the required amount of reading for this course. The format of each entry will be discussed in class. However, in addition to this format, please use what we discuss in class to inform your entries. Use literary criteria to support your position. Be specific. Be sure to consider the quality of illustration for picture books. All reading must come from lists in our text, on the accompanying CD-ROM, or from books that I approve. You will also be required to read one or more books of the type that we will discuss in class during the week. These books do count toward your total pages and must be recorded in your reading log.

There will be reading assignments each week from our text. Bring your textbook to each class and come prepared to discuss some points from your readings. Frequently time will be given at the end of class to record a brief response to each the day's class. This will give you an opportunity to continue to take note of your ideas in your Reflection Log from your group's conversation and shared texts. What experiences did you have in class with the questions, comments, and input of others in the class? At times you will also be asked to read a book as a group. I will give at least 2 weeks notice so that each of you may find and read a copy of the book.

In class assignments count as 2 pages toward your total 2600 pages. In addition, Invitation homework assignments count as 2 pages toward your total.

Book reviews:

You will choose four (4) children's books, each from a different genre, and write a report for that book. The report will include a bibliography for the text, a summary of the text, and your own critique of the text. Two of the reports should include a professional review. The other two reports should include a review from an age appropriate child.

Writing Center:

You are encouraged to use the Writing Center. Tutors are available to help you with every step of the writing process. The Writing Center is located in the southeast corner (bottom floor) of the Elsner Library. Call to make an appointment 461.7513; do not just "show up" for help.

Plagiarism:

Plagiarism consists of submitting someone else's work as your own or of borrowing someone else's work without citation. Sometimes the line between borrowing and stealing is unclear. If you are ever uncertain, ask me to clarify the difference. Plagiarism is a serious offense with equally serious consequences: failure of the course and possibly dismissal from the college.

Special needs:

If you have a special educational or physical need that requires class accommodation, please feel free to discuss this with me or contact the Disability Resources and Services Office.

Course schedule

Note: This schedule may change; more than likely, it will. You are responsible for finding out what changes have been made. If you are absent the day a change is made, you are still responsible for it upon your return.

January:

21: Intro to course
Log – Reading autobiography (Invitation #1 in Ch. 1)

Assignment: Read Chap. 1

28: Log – self portrait in words and images
Chap. 1: An Introduction to Children’s Literature
Log – create do’s and don’ts list
Log – respond to Maurice Sendak’s Where the Wild Things Are
Discuss reading repertoires
Discuss establishing communities in the classroom

Assignment: Read Ch. 2
Log: invitation #4 (Ch. 1)
Log: invitation #1 (Ch. 2) – bring books to class next time

February:

4: Invitation #5 in Ch. 2.
Ch. 2: Evaluating and Selecting Children’s Literature
Discuss various types of art
Bring books from assignment – discuss
Share info from artist study assignment

Book review 1 due

Assignment: Ch. 3
Log – Invitation #4
Find 5 examples of books from each of the categories of books discussed in the chapter – bring books to class next time

11: Ch. 3: The World of Picture Books
Reading aloud strategies
Discuss criteria for evaluating types of books
Bring books to class
Discuss Genre project

Assignment: Ch. 4 and Ch. 5
Log – response to assigned book
Bring a collection of children’s poetry

18: Ch. 4: Responding to Books Through Talk, Art, and Writing
Discuss theoretical ideas
Share log responses

Log – List of good reading strategies
Discuss experiences with poetry
Ch. 5: The Delights of Poetry
Reading log due

Assignment: Ch. 6
Log: invitation #4

25: Ch. 6: The Context of Children’s Literature
Discussion of theoretical concepts in chapter
Book review #2 due

Assignment: Ch. 7
Log – Invitation #1
Log – Invitation #2

March:

3: Ch. 7: Multicultural and International Literature

Assignment: Ch. 8
Log – Invitation #10

10: Ch. 8: Traditional or Folk Literature
Discuss Genre project
Invitation #10
Genre presentations – Traditional or Folk literature
Introduction to Final project
Midterm exam due

Assignment: Ch. 9
Log – Invitation #1 or #2

17: No classes – Spring Break

24: Ch. 9: Realistic and Historical Fiction
Discuss and evaluate Realistic and Historical Fiction books in small groups
Censorship (Invitation #2 or #3)
Realistic and Historical Fiction Genre presentation
Bring in realia

Assignment: Ch. 10
Invitation #6

31: Ch. 10: Fantasy and Science Fiction
Log – freewrite about genre
Discuss the value of using genre
Submit proposal for final project

April:

- 7: Video – themes in fantasy literature
Genre presentation
Assignment: Ch. 11
- 14: **Book review 3 due**
Ch. 11: Nonfiction Books
Presentation of Nonfiction and Informational Genre Project
Assignment: Ch. 12
Log – Invitation #1
Log – Invitation #2
- 21: Ch. 12: Biography and Autobiography
Group work – sharing information on biography homework assignments
Presentation of Biography Genre
Present update on final projects
Assignment: Complete Final Projects
Prepare Reflection Log for final submission
- 28: **Reflection Log due**
Book review 4 due
Class wrap up
- May:**
5: Present final projects
Final projects due