

ENG 305: CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

SYLLABUS SPRING 2012

Teacher: Julie Ratliff

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Office Hours on NTCC Campus: M/W 1:00 – 4:00 p.m. T 1:00 – 3:30 p.m. Th 4:30 – 6:00 p.m.

Required Texts:

Giovanni, Nikki. *Spin a Soft Black Song*

Lofting, Hugh. *The Story of Doctor Dolittle*

McDonald, Megan. *Judy Moody Gets Famous*

Poblocki, Dan. *The Stone Child*

Pratchett, Terry. *The Amazing Maurice and his Educated Rodents*

Resau, Laura. *Red Glass*

Yolen, Jane, ed. *Favorite Folktales from around the World.*

Student Evaluation (Overview):

Participation	200 pts.	900 and above	A
Puppet Play	100 pts.		
Story Book	100 pts.	800-899	B
Picture Book Bibliography	100 pts		
Book Leadership	100 pts	700-799	C
Controversy Research	200 pts.		
Tests (mid-term and final)	<u>200 pts</u>	600-699	D
	1000 pts	Below	F

Course Description: This course is a survey of chapter books for children (EC-5), children's poetry and songs, the history of children's books, picture books and their illustrators, and traditional storytelling (fables, fairy tales, folktales, myths, and parables).

Student Objectives:

- 1) Define children's literature as exactly as possible.
- 2) Explore the timeline of children's literature.
- 3) Learn traditional storytelling motifs, symbols, and techniques.
- 4) Share strategies for using children's literature in the classroom to promote creative writing, lateral thinking, and dramatic play.
- 5) Discuss the major awards granted to children's literature.
- 6) Develop principles for combating the difficulties associated with reading, teaching, and writing children's literature.

Student-Learning Outcomes:

- 1) Develop awareness of the scope and variety of works in children's literature by reading the assigned literary works and completing the course requirements of exams, exercises, and projects.
- 2) Understand works of literature as expressions of individual and human values in historical and social contexts by evaluating the importance of literary contextual issues in exams and written reports.
- 3) Respond critically to works in the humanities by employing literary terminology and applying a critical approach to literature in analysis sessions and written reports.

- 4) Engage in the creative process and comprehend the intellectual demands required of an author by creating a children's book, children's poetry, and a puppet play.
- 5) Articulate informed personal reactions to works in the humanities in analysis sessions and written reports.
- 6) Build an appreciation for the aesthetic principles that guide or govern the humanities and arts by reading the assigned texts and completing analysis sessions and written reports.
- 7) Obtain and display knowledge of the influence of literature upon intercultural experiences by reading literary works representative of various cultures and discussing issues relating to cultural exchange during exams and exercises.

Requirements: This course features numerous readings and short exercises, two individual projects, three group projects, and two exams. Students must generate active class discussion during each class session. Submit each assignment by the appropriate due date printed on the syllabus. An assignment submitted after its due date has expired will not be graded.

Attendance: Class-oriented assignments and group work are essential for this course, so students should attend all class sessions. *Two absences* are allowed. According to the university's attendance policy, the instructor may drop from the course a student who misses more than two class sessions. The instructor may grant excused absences at his discretion.

Cellular Phones: Set all cellular phones to vibrate during class sessions. Text messaging is prohibited.

Academic Honesty: Academic honesty is expected of students enrolled in this course. Cheating on examinations, unauthorized collaboration, falsification of research data, and plagiarism (the copying or undocumented use of materials from any source) constitute academic dishonesty and may be grounds for a grade of *F* in this course and disciplinary action. Each student is responsible for reading and understanding the University Policy on Academic Integrity (UPAI).

ADA Statement: Students with disabilities may request reasonable accommodations through the Texas A&M University-Texarkana Disability Services Office by calling 903-223-3062.

E-Mail Statement: After applying to and being accepted into a program by Texas A&M University-Texarkana, an individual will receive an A&M-Texarkana e-mail account. Instructors and university officials will deliver official university correspondence to this account. Each individual is responsible for information sent and received via his or her university e-mail account, and each individual must check his or her official A&M-Texarkana e-mail account completely and frequently. Faculty members and students must use their university e-mail accounts when communicating about coursework.

Projects:

Bibliography: It is traditional for students in a Children's Literature to compile a bibliography that represents the finest of Children's Literature. For this project, you will write analytical reports focusing upon twenty-five picture books. Place all reports behind a title page and a table of contents. Provide the following basic information for each selected book: author, awards won, illustrator, medium for illustrations (acrylic, collage, oil, watercolor, and so forth), publication dates (earliest and most recent), publisher, title, and type (biography, counting book, fable, fairy tale, myth, and so forth). In addition to this basic information, provide a brief summary of each book's plot (fifty to two hundred words in length), an analysis of each book's child-captivating features (fifty to one hundred words in length), and suggestions for using each book in the classroom (twenty-five to fifty words in length). Explain the significance of each presented classroom activity. Select books from the instructor's collection or propose books for the instructor's approval. Start reading as soon as possible.

Book Leadership: Throughout the semester, while everyone will be expected to read all of the books, as a member of a group, you will be responsible for leading the discussion on one of the books required for the course readings, which range from a picture book through books appropriate for fifth- or sixth-

grade reading. The group will lead the class through an analysis and discussion of the piece's strengths and weaknesses. Each analysis session must last at least 20 minutes. The evaluation portion of the presentation should make use of the critical approaches discussed during class. Along with the presentation, the group will prepare a ten-minute writing activity that reinforces the main points of the analysis session, and guide the class discussion of the text that follows the writing activity. **All groups must meet with the teacher at least one week prior to their scheduled presentation to discuss the presentation's content.**

Controversy Research: As an individual, you will be responsible for researching a randomly selected controversy associated with children's literature. In an ideal world, many of these issues would be covered in-depth by the class as a whole, but due to time limitations, it is not possible to deal with all of them. In addition to a 5-10 page documented paper (MLA handbook style) on the matter, you will be expected to provide a 3-5 minute presentation on the issue or author for the class. (Depending on class numbers, it is possible you will work with a group on the presentation, but your paper is to be done individually.) **Anything said in the class presentation may find its way onto a test.**

Puppet Play: Prepare and perform a puppet-play script for four to six readers. This assignment is a group project for four to six students. The created piece should last for eight to ten minutes when performed. Adapt a *simple* fairy tale or folktale from *Favorite Folktales from around the World*. Incorporate kinesics, proxemics, and vocalics appropriately when performing the piece. Use four to six puppets (hand, rod, shadow, or string forms only). The script must be typed using the standard format for an unpublished script. Attach an analysis of each character and the physical features of the puppet representing each character (two hundred and fifty words per report) to the script.

Story Book: Create a picture story book for young children (ages through eight). This assignment is a group project for two to three students. The instructor must approve the chosen story concept. The completed book must satisfy the following requirements:

- a) Bind the book professionally.
- b) The number of pages must range between twenty-four and thirty-two.
- c) The book should not exceed ten inches from top to bottom or nine inches from left to right.
- d) Letters may be no larger than thirty-point font unless the group members desire a specific typographic effect.
- e) Use at least three different types of media.
- f) Include an illustrated half-title page, an illustrated title page, and an illustrated copyright page.
- g) Include endpapers; these endpapers may feature a frontpiece and a tailpiece.
- h) Use no more than three text-free two-page spreads.
- i) Use no more than one thousand words.

Tentative Schedule

- Week 1: Course Introduction/Topic Assignments
Early Children's Literature
- Week 2: Defining Children's Literature
Controversy: Why do we need "children's" literature?
- Week 3: Picture Books
Controversy: If it doesn't have words, is it literature?
- Week 4: A Timeline of Children's Literature
The Story of Doctor Dolittle
Controversy: Literature from the Child's Perspective (Sendak, et al)
- Week 5: Storytelling / Puppets and Puppetry
Red Glass
Controversy: Multiculturalism and Children's Literature
- Week 6: Myths and Legends, Selected Readings from *Favorite Folktales*
Controversy: Fantasy and Children's Literature
- Week 7: Fables and Parables, Selected Readings from *Favorite Folktales*
The Amazing Maurice and his Educated Rodents
Controversy: *Harry Potter*
- Week 8: **Spring Break**
- Week 9: **Puppet-Play Project Due**
Mid-Term "First Test"
- Week 10: Children's Poetry / Children's Songs
Controversy: Gender and Children's Literature
- Week 11: Writing Children's Poetry (Activities)
Spin A Soft Black Song
Controversy: Politics and Children's Literature
- Week 12: The Chapter Book
Judy Moody Gets Famous
Controversy: "Boy Books" vs "Girl Books"/Boys vs Girl readership
- Week 13: The Graphic Novel
Controversy: Children and Comics
Poetry Anthology Due
- Week 14: Awards for Children's Books / Illustrators of Children's Books
The Stone Child
Controversy: Children's Literature and the Internet
- Week 15: Controversy: Censorship and Children's Literature
Bibliography Due
- Week 16: "Final" Exam/Story Book Readings/ **Story Book Due**