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Spring 2020

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### ENG 3405-001: Children's Literature

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*Eastern Illinois University*

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**English 3405 Children's Literature** (3 credit hours) Spring 2020

Dr. Charlotte England Office: Coleman Hall 3775

Office Hours: T 1:00-2:00pm

R 3:15-4:30pm or by appointment

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**Course Description**

Children's literature is produced by one group (adults) for consumption by another (children), though it is often chosen and bought by adults. As a result it has to appeal to two distinct audiences. It is a literature strongly shaped by tradition and by the explicit and implicit assumptions that adults have about what kids need and like. At the same time, it has to engage children who are looking for good stories in which they can lose and ultimately find themselves. In addition to being good fun, children's literature is complicated, multilayered, interesting and thought provoking.

We will ask many questions this semester on the way to answering the big one that you will find yourselves returning to as a teacher: "What should children read?" The simple answer might be "good and useful books", but what constitutes "good" and how do we understand what might be useful to young readers? How do children's books appeal to and engage their audience? Is it enough for a book to entertain? How might books affect the development of children's imaginations, moral understanding, character, worldview, sense of self, etc.? Will a book do any of that if it is not also a very good read?

You should expect to encounter a range of different texts and to engage in class discussion on a regular basis. Consider this course a mutual journey through interesting landscapes during which we talk about what all of us see along the way, every day that we meet.

**Learning Goals**

1. Experience a wide range of literature produced for, or handed down to children.
2. Become familiar with the characteristics of key genres enjoyed by children: realistic and fantasy fiction, fairy and folk tales, fables and poetry.
3. Develop a capacity to read closely and comment cogently on children's literature.
4. Understand how tradition has shaped children's literature, even when current books depart from it.

**Course Texts and Materials**

In addition to the books from the Textbook Rental Center listed below, students are asked to download, print and bring to class selections from other works posted on D2L. Please check the schedule of readings and bring the relevant ones to class each day.

**Picture Books:** Matt de la Pena *Last Stop on Market Street* / Jon Klassen *This is Not My Hat* / Barbara Lehman *The Red Book* / Maurice Sendak *Where the Wild Things Are* / Dr. Seuss "And to Think that I Saw it on Mulberry Street" and "The Lorax" in *Six by Seuss*.

**Chapter Books:** Kate DiCamillo *The Tale of Despereaux* / Katherine Paterson *The Great Gilly Hopkins* / and Jeri Spinelli *Maniac Magee*.

**Text Books:** Jack Zipes et al *The Norton Anthology of Children's Literature* (NACL) and Kathleen Horning *From Cover to Cover*.

**Schedule of Readings and Assignment Due Dates** Subject to Revision as Needed

**Week One: Writing For Children**

**T Jan 14: Introduction**

**R Jan 16: Purpose and Pleasure: Examining our Assumptions and Considering the History of Children's Literature**

You're in luck – no reading for today.

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**Week Two: Fables – The Original Literature for Children**

**T Jan 21: Aesop and Friends**

**ONLINE:** <http://read.gov/aesop/027.html> (The Fox and the Crow)

**NACL:** James Thurber "The Fox and the Crow- Variations on a Theme" (1956) 408-9, W.H. Rouse "The Crocodile and the Monkey"(1897) 401-2

**D2L:** Extract from *Émile* 115-121 "The Raven and the Fox".

**R Jan 23: Modern Fables**

**NACL:** Ashley Bryan "Tortoise, Hare and the Sweet Potatoes"(1971) 410-12, Russell Hoban "The Sea Thing Child"(1972) 413-17

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**Week Three: Fairy Tales I**

**T Jan 28: From Court to Kitchen**

**NACL:** Charles Perrault's "Master Cat or Puss in Boots" (1697) 186-9, and "Little Red Riding Hood" 343-4; and Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm (1812) "Little Red Cap" 345-7

*Short Assignment 1 Due in class*

**R Jan 30 : Having a Go at Perrault**

**NACL:** Catherine Storr "Little Polly Riding Hood" (1955) 355-8, Roald Dahl "Little Red Riding Hood and the Wolf" 359-61, **D2L:** Patricia McKissak "Flossie and the Fox" (1986).

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**Week Four: Fairy Tales II**

**T Feb 4: Fairy Tales for the Older Set**

**NACL:** Francesca Lia Block (2000) "Wolf" 381-6, Jane Yolen "The Lady and the Mermaid" (1977) 325-7.

**R Feb 6: Victorian Sensibilities**

**D2L:** Charles Dickens "The Magic Fishbone" (1868)

**NACL:** Hans Christian Andersen "The Nightingale" (1843) 215-21

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**Week Five: From Fairy Tale to Fantasy**

**T Feb 11: New Directions**

NACL: Robert Munsch "The Paper Bag Princess" (1980) 328-9

Joan Aiken "The Faithless Lollybird" (1977) 292-301, Julius Lester "Jack and the Devil's Daughter" (1969) 318-24.

**R Feb 13 : Alice Down the Rabbit Hole**

on D2L Excerpts from Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865)  
Chapter I "Down the Rabbit Hole" and Chapter II "The Pool of Tears"

*Short Assignment 2 DUE in class*

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**Week Six: Fantastic Fictions I**

**T Feb 18: Alice and the Duchess**

on D2L chapter VI "Pig and Pepper"

**R Feb 20: High Fantasy in a Comic Vein**

NACL from Lloyd Alexander's *Book of Three* chapters I-VI 796-820.

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**Week Seven: In which we pause for a mid-term...**

**T Feb 25: Mid Term Exam – in class**

**R Feb 27: Of Mice, Rats and Men**

*The Tale of Despereaux* (2003) Book 1

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**Week Eight: Fantastic Fictions II**

**T Mar 3: *The Tale of Despereaux* Book 2**

**R Mar 5: *The Tale of Despereaux* Books 3 & 4**

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**Week Nine: Realistic Fiction**

**T Mar 10: A Controversial Heroine**

Katherine Paterson *The Great Gilly Hopkins* (1978) chapters 1-8  
"The One Way Ticket"

**R Mar 12: *Gilly Hopkins* continued**

Chapter 9 "Pow" to the end

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**MARCH BREAK**

## Week Ten: Realism and its Modifications

### T Mar 24: Realism Meets Tall Tale

Jeri Spinelli's *Maniac Magee* (1990) part 1 (chapters 1- 21)

### R Mar 26: *Maniac Magee* continued

Part 2 (chapters 22-32)

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## Week Eleven: From Tall Tale to Verse

### T Mar 31: *Maniac Magee* continued

Part 3 (chapters 33 – end)

### R Apr 2: Sound Sense – Nonsense Poetry

From Chapter 4 of Kathleen Horning's *Cover to Cover* 68-79.

NACL: Edward Lear "The Jumblies"(1870) 1156, Lewis Carroll "Jabberwocky"(1871) 1158-9; Margaret Mahy "Seventeen Kings and Forty-Two Elephants" ( 1972) 1161-2, Nancy Willard "The Wise Cow Makes Way, Room and Believe"(1981 ) 1160, Charles Causley "Mrs. McPhee" (1986) 1254-5 .

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## Week Twelve: Children's Poetry continued

### T Apr 7: English Studies Conference

Go to a session – write a report – receive extra credit.

### R Apr 9: Varieties of Poetic Imagination

NACL: Robert Louis Stevenson "Bed in Summer"(1885)1182, Lucille Clifton "Some of the Days of Everett Anderson" (1970) 1268-9, Pat Mora "Cloud Dragons" 1271 (1996), Robert Graves "The Alice Jean" (1960)1237 Charles Causley "I Went to Santa Barbara" (1986); Pat Mora "Colors Crackle, Colors Roar" (1996) 1271, 'Words Free as Confetti" (1996) 1273

*Final Paper outlines Due in Class*

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## Week Thirteen: Picture Books I

### T Apr 14: Text and Illustration

Horning's *Cover to Cover* 85-113.

Dr. Seuss *To Think that I Saw it on Mulberry Street* (1937) and *The Lorax* (1971).

### R Apr 16: Word and Image

Sendak *Where the Wild Things Are* (1963), De la Pena *Last Stop on Market Street* (2016), Klassen *This is Not My Hat* (2012), Lehman *The Red Book* (2004).

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## Week Fourteen: Picture Books II

### T Apr 21: Picture Book Evaluations

Class will meet at the Ballenger Teacher's Center – please bring pen and paper to work on a group project. If you missed reading Horning on Picture Books – look at it before class!

### R Apr 23: Picture Book Evaluation Project

We will meet in the classroom to finish picture book projects (worry not - project counts towards participation grade, no formal written work required)

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## Week Fifteen: Roads We Have Travelled

### T Apr 28: Exam Review

### R Apr 30: Exam Review

*Final papers are due at my office by 5 pm on Friday May 1.*

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**FINAL EXAM:** Thursday May 7 10:15-12:15

## Assignments and Grade Distribution

**NB:** About 35% of your grade will be determined before mid-term grades are posted on March 5. Exams and quizzes make up 45% of the grade, essay assignments 45% and class participation 10%.

### 1. Short Assignments 15% of grade

**In class Tuesday January 28 and Thursday February 13**

Two brief essays (500-750 words exclusive of quoted passages, 2-3 pages) that should be typed, present a coherent thesis and finish with a works cited list in MLA format. You should not need to consult sources beyond what the assignments specify. Prompts will be posted on D2L. Students will have the opportunity to revise 1 of these essays if they choose (revision must be handed in together with the graded original before you leave for March Break).

### 2. Midterm Exam 15% of grade

**1 hour, in class Tuesday February 25**

Students will choose 5 of 8 quoted passages from material we have read. For each passage supply the name of the author, the correct title of the piece and the date (decade is fine) it was written. Comment on the literary features of the specific passage. You may write about it from the point of view of the whole work from which it was taken, in relation to a genre or other texts we have looked at this semester or from the point of view of child readers. Each passage commentary is worth 6 points.

### 3. Outline for Final Essay 10% of grade

**Thursday April 9 in class**

This outline and bibliography will help you organize your thoughts and resources ahead of time so that you can write a meaningful paper. Consult the Final Essay Assignment handout for details about topics.

### 4. Final Essay 20% of grade

**Length: 1,500 – 2,000 words 6 - 8 pages plus Works Cited**

**Due: at my office on or before 5pm Friday May 1st**

A formal essay correctly cited in MLA format. Detailed advice and instructions available in the Final Essay Assignment Handout which will be posted in D2L after March Break.

### 5. Final Exam 25% of grade

The Final Exam is cumulative and challenging. It consists of two unequal parts. Section one requires identifying (author, title, date) and discussing the significance (e.g. to plot, theme, characterization, style or view of the child reader) of passages chosen from the semester's readings. It will be worth 60% of the test. The second half will be an essay question worth 40% of the test.

### 6. Pop Quizzes and Class Participation 15% of grade

Passage analysis quizzes will happen frequently to give you a chance to practice writing about texts in the way that you will need to on the exams. If you keep up with the reading, they should not be hard. I will not always announce them ahead of time. They cannot be re-taken if you fail, are late or are absent.

At Midterm I will give you an indication of this part of your grade "so far". At the end of the semester I will drop your two lowest quiz grades (which may be zeros if you are absent for quizzes) and average the remainder with a grade based on your active participation in class discussions and exercises. The quizzes will count for 5 and general participation for 10 of the 15% referenced above.

#### Grading and Late Papers

Please hand in printed copies of your work on the dates that assignments are due and turn in a backup copy to the appropriate dropbox on D2L. You are responsible for making sure your work is in on time and in the requested form. If you will be absent from class on the day that work is due, I will grade the online copy. Work is due at the hour specified in the syllabus (in class at 2pm or, in the case of the final paper, by 5pm). Work that does not appear on time is late and will be docked 10% per day (including Saturdays) unless you have a documented excuse.

#### Extensions:

If you need an extension on a paper or outline, you must request it in person (in class or during an office hour) at least one week before the assignment is due. I will not grant extensions by email.

#### Attendance Policy

Come to class. Talk about what you have read. Our experience this semester depends on good discussion. If you must be absent, contact me ahead of time by email. After your third absence you will lose 3% of your course grade each time you miss class.

## **Additional Policies and Resources**

### **Academic Integrity**

Students are expected to maintain principles of academic integrity and conduct as defined in EIU's Code of Conduct (<http://www.eiu.edu/judicial/studentconductcode.php>). Violations will be reported to the Office of Student Standards. Don't risk plagiarism, if in doubt - cite. I am always happy to talk to you about how to represent your sources properly, but once you have submitted an assignment for credit, it is too late to have that discussion without penalty.

### **Students with Disabilities**

If you are a student with a documented disability in need of accommodations to fully participate in this class, please contact the Office of Student Disability Services (OSDS). All accommodations must be approved through OSDS. Please stop by Ninth Street Hall, Room 2006, or call 217-581-6583 to make an appointment.

### **The Student Success Center**

Students who are having difficulty achieving their academic goals are encouraged to contact the Student Success Center ([www.eiu.edu/~success](http://www.eiu.edu/~success)) for assistance with time management, test taking, note taking, avoiding procrastination, setting goals, and other skills to support academic achievement. The Student Success Center provides individualized consultations. To make an appointment, call 217-581-6696, or go to 9th Street Hall, Room 1302.

### **The Writing Center**

EIU's Writing Center is in Coleman Hall 3110. There you can schedule one on one conferences to work through any stage of the writing process. Feedback as you work is invaluable so take advantage of this free service. To schedule an appointment, drop in (Monday to Thursday 9-3 and 6-9, Friday 9-1) or call 581-5929. You'll be glad you did.

### **Regarding Email**

For your sanity and mine – let's try to talk to one another in person. I will check email more frequently when you have an assignment due, but once a day is my customary habit and thus I may not see your question in time. If you have a pressing question or need to set up an appointment outside of office hours/after class quickly, please call me at home 217-345-4836.