

Fall 8-15-2011

ENG 3406-001: Literature For Pre-Adolescents

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3406-001

English 3406-001

Literature for Pre-Adolescents

TR 2:00-3:15 CH3170

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will introduce students to the diverse and ever-increasing body of literature that occupies a loosely defined zone between children's and young adult literature and is read by, written for, and/or deemed appropriate for that group designated variously as middle-schoolers, tweens or pre-adolescents. (Ages 8-12? 9-13? Grades 4-8) We will examine a rich variety of literature, both old and new, in such traditional genres as the novel, short fiction and poetry. Students will also be given the opportunity to explore newer, hybrid and experimental genres such as the comic book and graphic novels as well as works of dystopian science fiction, historical realism and romance, horror, and both comic and epic fantasy. Our discussions and writing will, among other things, explore social/historical contexts for the literature, examine questions of ideology, authority and censorship, race and gender representation, pedagogical approaches and current scholarly criticism. Students will write several short projects in such forms as book reviews and annotated bibliographies in addition to one longer and fully developed academic essay employing scholarly research.

TEXTS

Brian Selznick, *The Invention of Hugo Cabret*

Terry Pratchett, *The Wee Free Men*

David Almond, *Skellig*

Lynne Reid Banks, *The Indian in the Cupboard*

Roald Dahl, *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*

Christopher Paul Curtis, *The Watsons Go to Birmingham*

Mary Norton, *The Borrowers*

Philip Pullman, *I Was a Rat*

Laura Ingalls Wilder, *Little House on the Prairie*

Louis Sacher, *Holes*

Jack Zipes, et al, *The Norton Anthology of Children's Literature*

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Discussion: Active and consistent contribution to class discussion. (Needless to say, attendance is required and will affect your grade. You can't contribute to class discussion if you're not there)

Reading: You are expected to have all reading assignments done by day we'll begin discussing them. Keep up. Try to read ahead. If it looks like you are not doing the reading, I will have to implement reading quizzes the results of which will count as half of your final grade.

Writing: Two book reviews (4-5 pages) of pertinent material not on the syllabus. A final piece of researched writing (8-10 pages; topic possibilities to be announced). An annotated bibliography to precede the writing of this final paper (At least 15 entries). A final essay exam.

Group Presentation: During the final four weeks of class, assigned teams of three will be responsible for introducing and leading discussion on 1) group-selected and assigned readings from the *Norton Anthology of Children's Literature*, and 2) additional materials qualifying as "pre-adolescent" literature.

GRADES

Grades for the following count equally and will be averaged to determine the final course grade:

- 1) Two book reviews, 2) Annotated bibliography, 3) Final paper 4) Final essay exam, Group presentation, 5) Class attendance and participation.

Week I Aug 23-25 Introduction to the course. Problems of defining "pre-adolescent literature," What do "pre-adolescents" read and why? What did you read between the ages of 9-13?

Week II Aug 30-Sept 1

Fantasy: Pullman, *I Was A Rat*

Week III Sept 6-8

Fantasy: Norton, *The Borrowers*

Week IV Sept 13-15

Fantasy: Pratchett, *The Wee Free Men*

Week V Sept 20-22

Fantasy: Dahl, *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*

Week VI Sept 27-29

Fantasy: Banks, *The Indian in the Cupboard*

Week VII Oct 4-6

Realism: Wilder, *Little House on the Prairie*

Week VIII Oct 11-13

Realism: Curtis, *The Watsons Go to Birmingham*

Week IX Oct 18-20

Realism (The illustrated book): Selznick, *The Invention of Hugo Cabret*

Week X Oct 25-27

Fantastic Realism: Sacher, *Holes*

Week XI Nov 1-3

Fantastic Realism: Almond, *Skellig*

Week XII Nov 8-10

Group Presentations and Group –assigned class reading

Week XIII Nov 15-17

Group Presentations and Group-assigned class reading

Nov 22-24 Thanksgiving Break

Week XIV Nov 29-Dec 1

Group Presentations and Group-assigned class reading

Week XV Dec 6-8

Group Presentations and Group-assigned class reading

Final Papers Due (Dec 8)