

Spring 1-15-2007

## ENG 3405-003: Children's Literature

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3405-003

**Prof. Carol Stevens**  
**English 3405.003 Spring 2007 Children's Literature**

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**Class:** meets T-Th 2:00-3:15 p.m.  
**Office Hours:** 9:00-9:50, 10:00-10:50, 3:30-4 T-Th,  
W 9:30-11:30, and many other times by appt.

**Course description and objectives:** By the end of this course, you should have a working knowledge of various types of children's literature—poems, folk tales, realistic fiction (including problem fiction), and fantasy among them, specific knowledge of particular works and forms, and skill in evaluating them. With lively and thoughtful discussion, you'll enjoy them too.

**Texts:** Griffiths and Frey, *Classics of Children's Literature*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed.  
Coerr, *Sadako and the Thousand Paper Cranes*.  
Curtis, *The Watsons Go to Birmingham*  
Keats, *The Snowy Day*  
Keene, *The Secret of the Old Clock*  
Levine, *Ella Enchanted*.  
Lowry, *The Giver*.  
Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*  
Sendak, *Where the Wild Things Are*  
Wiesner, *Tuesday*  
Yolen, *The Devil's Arithmetic*

Other materials may be added, so stay tuned. Also, you are responsible for learning from each other, and exams etc. may include all handouts and materials such as picture books and poems presented in class, poems presented by students etc.

**Grading:** Unless otherwise specified in class, your grading will be based upon 100 points assigned as follows:

Mid-term exam 10 points

Final Exam 15 points

Paper and other assignments involving some research, and revision—45 points as follows:

Poem as assigned 10

Picture book as assigned 15

Chapter book as assigned 20

Group work and individual presentations 15 points

Participation (includes attendance, informal writings, class discussion, WebCT discussion) 15 points

**Grades:** I will use numbers rather than letters. This will convert into your final grade as follows: 91-100=A; 81-90=B; 71-80=C; 61-70=D. Grades will not be curved. All assigned writing and exams must be done for you to pass the course. Exams will be graded on the basis of 100 points, and changed to the appropriate number of course points using the appropriate multiplier—for example, an 80 on the midterm (80 x .10) becomes 8.0, or 8 points toward the course total. NOTE: We may add, cancel, or revise some assignments. In that case, point totals may be adjusted also. An announcement in class will be considered sufficient notification. Picture book or chapter book paper may be revised for inclusion in your Electronic Writing Portfolio.

**Responsibilities and Policies:**

1. Come to every class meeting, and keep the lines of communication open. Late work gets lowered grades unless we've come to a clear understanding BEFORE the due date. No laptops or cell phones in the classroom—period. They are a distraction.
2. Attendance is important, as is participating in the discussions and bringing your contributions to the class. More than three absences will result in your getting many fewer participation points. But there will be generous points for people who share their thoughts on the readings and issues through class discussion and the WebCT list.

3. The ethics of academic honesty dictate that students do their own work—always. Taking someone else’s words OR thoughts and using them in your own writing without giving credit is plagiarism. It can result in a failing grade for the paper and the course, must be reported to Judicial Affairs, and can receive other penalties as well. Students who have difficulty with the mechanics of documentation but make a good-faith effort to cite their sources will be required to rewrite their papers until satisfactory. The Writing Center has excellent tutors who can answer questions about documentation. The English Department’s Statement on academic honesty is as follows:

Any teacher who discovers an act of plagiarism—“The appropriation or imitation of the language, ideas, and/or thoughts of another author and representation of them as one’s original work” (*Random House Dictionary of the English Language*) has the right and the responsibility to impose upon the guilty student an appropriate penalty, up to and including immediate assignment of a grade of F for the course, and to report the incident to the Judicial Affairs office. Please cite all sources, including internet sources, and be sure the text of your paper makes it clear whether you are summarizing, paraphrasing, or quoting directly.

4. If you have a documented disability and wish to receive academic accommodations, please contact the Coordinator of the Office of Disability Services (581-6583) as soon as possible. Only properly documented disabilities can be accommodated.

5. Online discussion information: I will set up a WebCT discussion list for this class. Each student will be required to write and post five thoughtful responses to our reading assignments on the list. These responses must be done before we discuss the chapters or works in class, and should be 1-2 paragraphs long. I will sometimes suggest approaches in class, though a spontaneous response will usually be fine too. In each response, two things must be done: unless you are the first person posting on the assigned topic, respond to at least one other posting, and in making your point, quote from the work you’re discussing. Responses must be posted *at least 24 hours before the class for which the reading assignment is due*, so that they can be read by students and the instructor before the class discussion. I’ll record them week to week, and assign points at the end of the semester based on clarity, thoughtfulness, and completeness.
6. Papers should be typed, double-spaced with your name, the class, section number and date at the top, should have one-inch margins, and should use MLA style for citations.

**A reinforcing message: Attendance at and participation in every class meeting is not optional to your success. It is CRUCIAL. Missing class because your ride is leaving early for Spring Break, or because your group is sponsoring a special event, etc., are not excused absences, and will damage your class participation grade. Verification of absences may be required. Health service e-mails or slips are not acceptable unless documented emergencies since you get some choice in scheduling appointments—schedule them when you don’t have class.**

Syllabus English 3405.003 Spring 2007 Stevens

Please note: any policy statement or syllabus is, by its very nature, a tentative document. Changes in any part, including grading, are possible during the semester. An announcement in class will be considered sufficient notice of such change.

Important Dates:

Final revision of poetry paper Tues. Jan. 30

Mid-term Exam Thurs. Mar. 1

Final revision of picture book paper Thurs. Mar. 29

Final revision of novel paper Thurs. Apr. 19

Individual and group work and presentations will occur throughout the semester.

Final Examination Tuesday May 1 in our classroom 2:45-4:45

Tentative Schedule of Readings and Assignments:

For lots of great information and links on Children's Literature (including information on documenting papers) check out the website designed by Dr. Kory and contributed to by other instructors of Children's Lit:  
<http://www.eiu.edu/~childlit/index.html>

Week 1

Tuesday, Jan. 9 Introductions, preliminaries, first in-class writing

Thursday, Jan. 11 Begin *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* (Ch. 1-7); We'll also look at David Wiesner's picture book fantasy Tuesday. Stay tuned regarding a meeting in the Ballenger Teacher Center at Booth Library TBA—poetry assignment and reading dates may move up based on when this happens.

Week 2

Tuesday, Jan. 16 Begin Poetry with *Classics of Children's Literature*, pp. 766-773, selections from *A Child's Garden of Verses*. Be prepared to choose a book of poetry for children, and evaluate one poem from this book for the next class meeting (This assignment may be moved to the preceding week. STAY TUNED.) Everyone will be required to find a book from the Ballenger Center—no exceptions, please. Any poet for children except Jack Prelutsky or Shel Silverstein. We'll discuss classifying children's poetry books and poems, and you will be given the specifics of your poetry evaluation assignment.

Thursday, Jan. 18 Continue *Harry Potter* (Ch. 7-end) and discuss some basics about children's literature, fantasy genre

Week 3

Tuesday, Jan. 23 Bring your poetry book to class plus two typed or Xeroxed copies of the poem you chose, including a complete bibliographic citation, and a draft of your evaluation of the poem. Identify the type of poetry book and type of poem, using our classifications from the previous class, and be prepared to explain why it fits this classification and why you found the poem appealing. In *Classics*, we'll discuss the nursery rhymes collected by John Newbery, pp. 33-38.

Thursday, Jan. 25 Begin fairy tales by reading in *Classics* "Little Red Riding Hood," "Cinderella," "Aschenputtel," "Snow White."

Week 4

Tuesday, Jan. 30 Poetry paper due. Continue fairy tales with "East O' the Sun and West O' the Moon," "Three Billy Goats Gruff," "The Three Pigs," "Jack and the Beanstalk," and "Molly Whuppie." On handout, "Myth of Demeter," "Cupid and Psyche."

Thursday, February 1 Selection of picture books I will supply in class; bring *Where the Wild Things Are*, and principles of children's book illustration (on handout), and we'll conclude our discussion of folk Tales and myths.

Week 5

Tuesday, February 6 Multicultural picture books, selection to be supplied in class, and ideas for picture book paper; bring *The Snowy Day*.

Thursday, February 8 Begin *Ella Enchanted* (ch. 1-15) and discuss literary fairy tales and modern adaptations.

Week 6

Tuesday, Feb. 13 Finish *Ella Enchanted* (ch. 16-"Epilogue")

Thursday, Feb. 15 Self-selected picture books from the Ballenger Center in class, with writing assignment to form the basis of the picture book paper.  
Mid-term Exam

Week 7

Tuesday, February 20 Self-selected picture books from the Ballenger Center in class with writing assignment to form the basis for the picture book paper

Thursday, February 22 Begin Lois Lowry's *The Giver* (Ch. 1-12) and discussion of the "problem" fantasy. Review for exam.

Week 8

Tuesday, February 27 Finish *The Giver* (Ch. 13-end) and look at some "problem" picture books. Principles of selecting fiction for novel paper.

Thursday, March 1 Mid-term Exam

Week 9

Tuesday, March 6 Continue "problem" picture books. Bring your own selections.

Thursday, March 8 Problem books and multiculturalism. Continue student-selected books.

Week 10 SPRING BREAK

Week 11

Tuesday, March 20 Begin discussion of "realistic fiction" with *Classics, The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* (Ch. 1-17)

Thursday, March 22 Conclude discussion of *Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, (Ch. 18-35) First draft of picture book paper due.

Week 12

Tuesday, March 27 Thematic discussion of orphans and solitary children in Children's literature; in *Classics*, begin *The Secret Garden* (Ch. 1-14) and begin discussion of group projects and individual novel paper.

Thursday, March 29 Finish *Secret Garden* 15-end. Final revision of picture book

paper due. View portions of film version of *Secret Garden*.

Week 13

Tuesday, April 3 Problems and the historical novel, *Sadako and the Thousand Paper Cranes* (all-it's a very short book) and the problem picture book, including picture books about war.

Thursday, April 5 Continue discussion of war, violence, and other serious themes in children's lit, and work on novel papers.

Week 14

Tuesday, April 10 *The Watsons Go to Birmingham-1963*, (Ch. 1-8) Race, gender, and class in children's books, continue discussion of serious topics in children's literature.

Thursday, April 12 Conclude discussion of *The Watsons Go to Birmingham*, (Ch. 9-Epilogue)

Week 15

Tuesday, April 17. . .on a somewhat lighter note, begin discussion of Genre Fiction with *Nancy Drew: The Secret of the Old Clock*. We'll only spend one day on this one!

Thursday, April 19. Individual novel papers due. Presentations begin today and continue through April 27 (Groups will be formed in advance on categories of novel, and groups will discuss their chosen novels in relation to their categories. More on this in March)

Week 16

Tuesday, April 24 Group presentations on genre novels continue in class

Thursday, April 26 Spillover date for presentations, review for Final Exam.

THE FINAL EXAMINATION FOR THIS CLASS WILL BE ON  
Tuesday, May 1 from 2:45-4:45 IN OUR CLASSROOM.