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ENG 3405-001: Children's Literature

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Course description and objectives: An upper-level literature course in which we will read and discuss picture books, poetry, oral literature (including myths, legends, folk-tales, fables), traditional and contemporary fiction with a view toward developing a variety of perspectives literary, psychological, and social/cultural and expanding our repertoire of works for children to which we are capable of responding as adult readers. This is a content- rather than methods-oriented course. Students will read the equivalent of up to 300 pages of new material per week. (That's about 1-2 children's books per week, just to keep things in perspective.) Lively, intelligent discussion is essential.

Prerequisites: Successful completion of English 1001C and 1002C or the equivalents, and sophomore standing.

Coerr, *Sadako and the Thousand Paper Cranes*.
Levine, *Ella Enchanted*.
Lowry, *The Giver*.
Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone*.
Sachar, *Holes*.
Tolkien, *The Hobbit*.
Van Allsburg, *Jumanji*.
Wiesner, *Tuesday*.
Yolen, *The Devil’s Arithmetic*.

Grading: Unless otherwise specified in class, your grading will be based upon 100 points assigned as follows:
- Mid-term and final exams-25 points
- 2 papers, involving some research-40 points
- Shorter writings, participation, quizzes if given, and WebCT postings-20 points
- Group project-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; 70-80=C; 65-69=D. Your grade is determined by counting the points for each assignment, so missing assignments affect your grade tremendously.

All assigned writing must be done for you to pass the course.

Policies: The English Department’s Statement on Plagiarism:
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 papers makes it clear whether you are summarizing, paraphrasing, or quoting directly.

Plan to hand in papers on time. If you are having problems, let me know. Without explicit prior excuse, papers a week or more late will not be accepted at all.

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.
Attendance and Participation: I expect you to be here every class day, and to participate fully. Period. I will give permission for make-up work in the case of serious personal illness or emergency. This does not include going to the health service during class for a case of the sniffles. It does include breaking your ankle on the way to class. If you must be absent, call me. If it’s a serious illness or genuine emergency, I will see that you’re not penalized.

More than two absences will likely lower your grade significantly. Here’s why: you won’t now how course readings have been explained and analyzed. Most exam questions and paper assignments will be based on discussions. Workshops and small group discussions depend on the participation of everyone, and if you’re missing (physically or mentally) your group has to carry your share of the discussion as well as theirs. Besides, there’s a lot of fun in talking about children’s books; let’s have some!

Responses: Some time in the next week or so, I will set up the WebCT bulletin board for this class. Each week, beginning with next week, unless otherwise specified in class, you will be required to write and post one separate response to a specified reading assignment on the WebCT Bulletin Board. It should be a thoughtful response to the assigned reading, and should be 1-2 paragraphs long. I will sometimes suggest approaches in class, though a spontaneous response will usually be fine too. In this response you must do two things: unless you are the first person posting, respond to another 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. I’ll record them week to week, and assign a grade at the end of the semester based on aptness to the reading, precision, clarity, thoughtfulness, and completeness. A-level responses will go beyond the minimum in significant ways.

If for reasons beyond your control you fail to gain access to WebCT, bring a typed, 1-page response to the appropriate class period, doing everything specified except, obviously, that you may not be able to respond to the postings of others.

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:
Mid-term exam Tuesday, March 9
Final exam Thursday, May 6 at 10:15 a.m.
First paper due Tuesday, March 1
Second paper due Tuesday, April 20
Group project presentations begin Tuesday, April 5

Syllabus:

Readings are due at the beginning of the period on the dates specified; once we start WebCT responses, a response to a specific reading is due 24 hours before the class date on which the reading is due.

Tuesday, January 13, 2004 Introduction to the course

Thursday, January 15 Introduction to folktales—categories and classifications, and “Cinderella Stories”—In Griffiths and Frey, Perrault. “Cinderella, or the Little Glass Slipper” (17) and “The Master Cat, or Puss in Boots”; the Brothers Grimm. “Aschenputtel” (60)

Tuesday, January 20 All stories on handouts to be distributed Thursday “In the land of small dragon.” “Dick Whittington and His Cat,” and “Aladdin”

To be continued...