Spring 1-15-2009

ENG 3405-001-002: Children's Literature

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English 3405
Children's Literature
Spring, 2009

Section 001, TR 8-9:15, CH3160,
Section 002, TR 11-12:15, CH3290

Notes & Announcements

Current Reading

SYLLABUS

Course Description: Centered on established classics, the course offers a chance to discover and
rediscover many of the best-loved works for children while asking you to read with a certain
sophistication, attending to the surprising subtleties of supposedly simple readings. Works studied will
range from the briefest nursery rhymes to such longer stories as Little House on the Prairie and The
Adventures of Tom Sawyer. Authors will include Grimms, Andersen, Carroll, Alcott, Kipling, Wilder,
Twain, and Anonymous. Usually we will be less concerned with pedagogical questions (what you can
"use" in a K-12 classroom) than with larger philosophical and cultural issues. Lots of reading, lots of
work, lots of fun.

A writing-intensive course, 3405 will incorporate 2 papers, 3 exams, and a final, with essay questions
predominating on the tests.

Instructor: John Kilgore. Office: 3331 Coleman Hall. Phone: (217) 581-6313 (office); (217) 345-7395
(home); 217-549-0405 (cell). Office hours: M 10:30-12:30, TR 3:30-5:00. Also frequently available on
Wednesdays, around mid-day. E-mail: jdkilgore@eiu.edu. Please feel free to call my home at reasonable
hours. When leaving voice mail at the office, include date and time of call, and do not trust voice mail
for urgent messages — try my home or cell phone instead.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

• Extensive assigned readings.
• Two papers of about 1250-1500 words each (40%)
• Oral report (10%)
• First Exam (10%)
• Second Exam (10%)
• Third Exam (10%)
• Final Exam (20%)
I reserve the right to depart somewhat from these percentages.

**READINGS.** Are substantial and sometimes challenging. Get these done in timely fashion, or expect hard sledding on the tests. Depending on how good and avid a reader you are, and on a myriad of personal factors, most readings should be fun, but a majority should in one way or another take you beyond the bounds of what you might read on your own. Some works may strike you as strange, difficult, or even dull. It is very possible, even likely, that these works, rather than those you find more immediately accessible, have the most to teach you — if you persist with sufficient energy. Enjoy the readings, but work hard when necessary.

**ORAL REPORTS.** Will be 10-minute speeches in which you discuss and report on some children’s book that was important to you when you were younger. Avoid extensive plot-summary, but give us a vivid, clear impression of the book and share your enthusiasm for it. Relate your experience of this book to the course themes as appropriate, and try to explain why the book made such an impression on you.

You may want to use the audio-visual resources available in our classroom; if so, check ahead of time to make sure the equipment is what you need.

**EXAMS.** Are scheduled for weeks 5, 10, and 13, and will take one whole period in each case. A mix of objective and essay questions will be designed to establish that you are familiar with all the readings to that point and understand the concepts and issues that have been introduced in class discussion. The final exam will consist mainly of synoptic essay questions asking you to integrate many different works into a single discussion.

**PAPERS.** Will come due in weeks 8 and 15; see schedule below. These are to be analytical discussions of about 1250-1500 words, thoughtfully posed, rigorously developed and defended, written with great care. Detailed writing guidelines and suggested topics are online. You are welcome to develop your own topics rather than writing on the suggested ones, but must first get written permission via e-mail. I welcome consultation — in class, after class, or via e-mail — in advance of the due dates. In particular, I am happy to respond to drafts as my time permits. Help helps only when accompanied by a renewed creative effort on your part, and plenty of independent thinking. Second, in fairness to everyone, no matter how much I have seen drafts or pieces of a paper in advance, I will read and grade the final version as if I had never seen it before. I.e., no extra credit will be given merely because we have had the conference, or merely because you have tried to follow my advice.

Final drafts must be in hard copy and should follow the usual conventions of manuscript form. Double space, number your pages, use 12-point font and blue or black ink, and leave 1" or 1.25" margins all around. No report covers, please; a modest cover page will do nicely. Give your paper a title, centered a few lines above the first paragraph. In the upper-left corner of the first page, provide a heading which includes your name, the date, the course (English 3405) and the assignment, e.g. "First Essay." E-mail is not acceptable except in emergencies.

**PLAGIARISM AND CHEATING.** Will be dealt with harshly. For clear-cut and deliberate instances, my policy is both to impose an F for the course (not just the paper, the whole course) AND to file an incident report with Judicial Affairs. I certainly do not enjoy being so strict, but find that such measures are necessary, in the Internet era, to protect the honest majority of students from the unfair pressures generated by cheaters.

**LATE WORK POLICY:** I am willing to be somewhat flexible providing you have been in touch with me before the missed deadline. Otherwise, late papers will be penalized one third grade (e.g., from "A" to "A-" or from "A-" to "B+") for each calendar day of lateness, weekends and holidays included. In addition, late work forfeits the right to “feedback”; it will be returned with a grade, but no marks or comments.
I will be more than happy to make reasonable accommodations for any student with a documented disability. Please contact me if you will need such an accommodation; or call the Coordinator of the Office of Disability Services, 581-6583.

MISCELLANEOUS. During the period, feel free to slip out at any time when you need to; just don't scream or turn cartwheels as you leave. Please set your cell phones to "stun," or whatever it is that keeps them from making actual noise. Do NOT send or receive text messages during class. Please refrain from "packing up" during the last few minutes of class. I will signal when the discussion is done, and promise to end before the period is over.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

- Griffith and Frey, eds., *Classics of Children's literature*, 6th ed. (C)
- Jack London, *Call of the Wild*
- Laura Ingalls Wilder, *Little House on the Prairie*
- Scott O'Dell, *Island of the Blue Dolphins*

SCHEDULE

Note: Please complete the readings for each session before the class meets. As the course gets underway, try hard to READ AHEAD of the schedule. You will have a hard time keeping up at the end of the term if you do not make a head start on the longer readings.

Page numbers refer to *Classics of Children's Literature* except where otherwise noted. When a longer work from this text is assigned, please read the editor's introduction as well. To keep track of schedule adjustments, please make a habit of bringing a hard copy of the syllabus to class with you, and check the online version periodically.

1) January 12-16

Didactic Poetry handout
Nursery rhyme handout
Meter and prosody handout

2) January 19-23

Discuss meter and prosody.
Sign up for reports.

De Beaumont, "Beauty and the Beast," 22

3) January 26-30
Andersen, "The Steadfast Tin Soldier," 129; "The Ugly Duckling," 131
Conclude Fairy Tales. Start Alcott, Little Women, 181.

4) February 2-6

Alcott, Little Women, 181

5) February 9-12

T: First Exam: All Readings Through Carroll
Carroll, Alice in Wonderland, 322

6) February 16-20

Conclude Alice in Wonderland.
Reports.

7) February 23-27

Reports
Writing workshop (?)

8) March 2-6

Reports.
Adventures of Tom Sawyer, 375
First Paper Due on Tuesday

9) March 9-13

Adventures of Tom Sawyer

Spring Break, March 14-22

10) March 23-27

T: Second Exam: All Readings Through Kipling

11) March 30-April 3

Continue with Jungle Books.

12) April 6-10

London, The Call of the Wild

13) April 13-17

Wilder, Little House on the Prairie
Th: Third Exam: All readings through O'Dell

14) April 20-24

O'Dell, Island of the Blue Dolphins

15) April 27-May 1
T: Second Paper Due
Review and Catch-up

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Misc. Online Resources
(See Author Resource Page as Well)

- Notes on Meter and Prosody
- Adam Gopnik on Lewis Carroll
- Lewis Carroll Photographs of Children
- Tenniel Illustrations to the Alice books
- Nonfiction Bibliography
- Banned Books List
- Discussion of Banned Books
- Dr. Murray's Young Adult Literature Web Site
- Dr. Kory's Children's Literature Web Site

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