

Fall 8-15-2005

ENG 3405-002: Children's Literature

Carol Stevens
Eastern Illinois University

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3405-002

Prof. Carol Stevens

Office: 3861 Coleman Hall
Voicemail: 581-6970
E-mail cfcds@eiu.edu

English 3405.002 Fall 2005, Coleman 3170
Class meets every T and Th 12:30-1:45
Office Hours: 10-12 T-Th,
W 1-2:30, and many other
times by appointment

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*, 4th ed.

Coerr, *Sadako and the Thousand Paper Cranes*.

Curtis, *The Watsons Go to Birmingham*

Keene, *The Secret of the Old Clock*

Levine, *Ella Enchanted*.

Lowry, *The Giver*.

Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*

Also, all handouts and materials such as picture books and poems presented in class.

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 projects and class presentations—15 points

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

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.

NOTE: We may add, cancel, or revise some assignments. In that case, point totals may be adjusted also. 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.
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 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 papers 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.
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.

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. Sept. 20

Mid-term Exam Thurs. Oct. 6

Final revision of picture book paper Tues. Oct. 25

Final revision of novel paper Thurs. Nov. 17

Group presentations Tues. Nov. 29-Thurs. Dec. 8

Final Examination Wed. Dec. 14 12:30-2:30 p.m.

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, August 23 Introductions

Thursday, August 25 Begin *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* (Ch. 1-6); We'll look at David Wiesner's picture book fantasy *Tuesday*, which I will bring to class.

Week 2

Tuesday, August 30 Continue *Harry Potter* (Ch. 7-12) and discuss some basics about children's literature, fantasy genre

Thursday, September 1 Finish *Harry Potter* (Ch. 7-12), begin Poetry with *Classics of Children's Literature*, pp. 766-773, the selections from *A Child's Garden of Verses*

Week 3

Tuesday, September 6 Meet in the Ballenger Teacher Center at Booth Library. You will need to be prepared to choose a book of poetry for children, and will

evaluate one poem from this book for the next class meeting. We'll discuss classifying children's poetry books and poems here.

Thursday, September 8 Bring your poetry book to class plus a typed or Xeroxed copy of the poem you chose. 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.

Week 4

Tuesday, September 13 Bring a draft of your annotated poem for workshop. In *Classics*, we'll discuss the nursery rhymes collected by John Newbery, pp. 33-38.

Thursday, September 15 Begin fairy tales by reading in *Classics* "Little Red Riding Hood," "Cinderella," "Aschenputtel," "Snow White."

Week 5

Tuesday, Sept. 20 Revised poem 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."

Thursday, Sept. 22 We'll begin our formal study of picture books with a selection of books I will supply in class, to include *Where the Wild Things Are*, and principles of children's book illustration (on handout)

Week 6 BANNED BOOKS WEEK

Tuesday, Sept. 27 Multicultural picture books, selection to be supplied in class, and ideas for picture book paper

Thursday September 29 Begin *Ella Enchanted* (ch. 1-15) and discuss literary fairy tales and modern adaptations.

Week 7

Tuesday, October 4 finish *Ella Enchanted* (ch. 16-"Epilogue")

Thursday, October 6 Mid-term Exam

Week 8

Tuesday, October 11 Self-selected picture books in class with writing assignment to form the basis for the picture book paper

Thursday, October 13 Begin Lois Lowry's *The Giver* (Ch. 1-12) and discussion of the "problem" fantasy

Week 9

Tuesday, October 18, Finish *The Giver* (Ch. 13-end) and look at some "problem" picture books. First draft of picture book paper due. Principles of selecting fiction for novel paper.

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

Week 10

Tuesday, October 25 Conclude discussion of *Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, (Ch. 18-35) Revised draft of picture book paper due.

Thursday, October 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.

Week 11

Tuesday, November 1 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, November 3 Continue discussion of war, violence, and other serious themes in children's lit, and work on novel papers.

Week 12

Tuesday, November 8 *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, November 10 Conclude discussion of *The Watsons Go to Birmingham*, (Ch. 9-Epilogue)

Week 13 CHILDREN'S BOOK WEEK

Tuesday, November 15. . .on a somewhat lighter note, begin discussion of Genre Fiction with *Nancy Drew: The Secret of the Old Clock*, (from the introduction, "Keeping Nancy Drew Alive," by Sara Paretsky, through Ch. XIII)

Thursday, November 17. Individual novel papers due. Conclude discussion of *Secret of the Old Clock* (Ch. XIV-end)

Week 14 THANKSGIVING RECESS

Week 15

Tuesday, November 29 Group presentations on genre novels begin in class

Thursday, December 1 Continue group presentations, brief introduction to picture books on special holidays as time permits

Week 16

Tuesday, December 6 Continue group presentations, etc.

Thursday, December 8 Complete group presentations, review for final

THE FINAL EXAMINATION FOR THIS CLASS WILL BE ON
WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 14, FROM 12:30 TO 2:30 P.M. IN OUR CLASSROOM.