

Fall 8-15-2008

## ENG 3405-004: Children's Literature

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### Recommended Citation

Moore, John, "ENG 3405-004: Children's Literature" (2008). *Fall 2008*. 112.  
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3405-004

English 3405-004  
Children's Literature  
Fall, 2008  
TR: 2:00-3:15  
CH 3150

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Office Hours: TR 9:30-  
11:00; 12:30-2:00 &  
By appointment

TEXTS: The Norton Anthology of Children's Literature (NA)  
Classics of Children's Literature (4th edition) (CL)  
Only Connect: Readings on Children's Literature  
(3rd edition) (OC)  
Louise Fitzhugh: Harriet the Spy  
Louis Sacher: Holes

PAPERS: Two 6-8 page double-spaced typewritten essays. At least one of these two essays must deal with both a work or works we read for the course PLUS a work or works by a writer or writers not on the syllabus. The first of these two papers will be preceded by a written project proposal which will count for one-third of the paper grade. Topics, further guidelines and due-dates to be announced.

EXAMS: Mid-term and final. The mid-term and final will consist of essay and short answer identifications questions.

OTHER: To introduce opening discussion of some of the class sessions, teams of two students will be responsible for presenting and leading discussion on material relevant to the assigned readings. Student teams will turn in a written outline of the presentation for review, comment and grading.

GRADES: Each essay counts one third, and the average of the mid-term, the final, and the presentation makes up the final third of the course grade. **All work must be completed to pass the course.**

This average may be adjusted up or down depending on your class participation, improvement and effort.  
ATTENDANCE WILL AFFECT YOUR GRADE (see last page).

THE PURPOSE OF THIS COURSE:

First of all, this is not a methods course. The only method to which I subscribe of successfully presenting literature to children simply involves reading it, understanding it, and enjoying it yourself. If you can manage this, then the chances of your getting a child to like the literature should certainly improve. Beyond this obvious prescription I will not venture.

As the title states, this is a course in literature, and we will be approaching that literature with the same seriousness and rigor that can be

applied to any "adult" literature. The course aims at an understanding of children's literature in its psychological, historical, and cultural depths of meaning. We will be looking at the cultural history of the phenomena of childhood, and the changes in adult ideas about children and childhood, as reflected in this literature. We will try to see what is involved in a serious evaluation of the worth of such literature. Furthermore, we will try to understand the cultural values built into and/or imposed upon this body of literature. Throughout our consideration of these matters, I expect you to discuss, argue, and question.

### COURSE OUTLINE

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#### I. Children's Literature and Instruction

##### **Week 1**

8/26-8/28

Introduction to the course: course content and objectives. Presentation assignments. Writing.  
 READING: Peter Hunt, "Defining Children's Literature" (OC2)  
 Alphabets (NS 7-31)

##### **Week 2**

9/2-9/4

READING: Fables (NA 394-415)  
 David Macaulay: *Baaa* (NA 1069-1097)  
*A Little Pretty Pocket-Book* (NA 129-134)  
 "The Art of Making Money Plenty" (NA 70)  
*Duties of a Lady's Maid* (NA1433-1441)  
*Dick and Jane* (NA142-144)  
 "Lots of Questions" (NA1482-1483)

##### **Week 3**

9/9-9/11

#### II. Children's Literature and Oral Traditions

HANDOUT: Instructions for First Paper Project  
 READING: Classical Myths (NA423-443)  
 Additional selections (Handout)

##### **Week 4**

9/16-9/18

Work on Annotated Bibliographies for Paper Project

**Week 5**  
9/23-9/25

**Annotated Bibliography Due 9/23**

READING: Lullabies and Baby Songs (NA1133-1137)  
Nursery Verse (NA1139-1147)  
John Newbery, *Mother Goose's Melody* (CL35-38)  
Joanne L. Lynn, "Runes to Ward off Sorrow:  
Rhetoric of the English Nursery Rhyme" (OC110)  
Grimm Fairy Tales:  
    "Snow White" (CL41)  
    "The Frog Prince" (CL46)  
    "Hansel and Gretel" (CL49)  
    "Aschenputtel" (CL60)  
    "Rapunzel" (CL76)  
    "The Robber Bridegroom" (CL79)  
    "The Almond Tree" (CL81)  
    "The Sleeping Beauty" (CL87)  
Joyce Thomas, "Woods and Castles, Towers and  
Huts: Aspects of Setting in the Fairy Tale"  
(OC122)

**WEEK 6**  
9/30-10/2

READING: Perrault's Fairy Tales (CL5-21)  
Marina Warner, "The Absent Mother: Women against  
Women in Old Wives' Tales" (OC278)  
Versions of "Little Red Riding Hood" (NA345-386)  
**Paper Proposal Due. 10/2 (Due dates for completed  
paper to be announced).**

**Week 7**  
10/7

Andersen's Fairy Tales:  
    "The Little Mermaid" (CL111)  
    "The Little Match Girl" (CL129)  
    "The Swineherd" (CL130)  
    "The Ugly Duckling" (CL138)  
    "The Snow Queen" (CL93)

10/9

**Midterm Exam**

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II. Children's Poetry

**Week 8**  
10/14-10/16

READING: "Songs for the Little Ones at Home"  
Handout)  
Issac Watts, *Divine Songs for Children* (NA529-531)  
Stevenson, *A Child's Garden of Verses* (CL766)  
Poetry by Children (Handout)

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III. Fantasy and Adventure

**Week 9**  
10/21/10/23

Carroll, *Alice in Wonderland* (CL389)

**Week 10**10/28-10/30 Barrie, *Peter Pan* (CL961)**Week 11**11/4-11/6 Twain, *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* (CL389)**Week 12**

11/11-11/13 Potter, "Peter Rabbit," "Squirrel Nutkin" (CL1152)

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V. Realism and Magical Realism**Week 13**11/18-11/20 School Stories:  
READING: Hughes, *Tom Brown's Schooldays* (NA1835-1857)  
Kipling, *Stalky & Co.* (NA1859-1874)  
Evelyn Sharp, *In School* (NA1875-1905)**11/25-11/27 Thanksgiving Break****Week 14**12/2-12/4 Fitzhugh, *Harriet the Spy*  
Marilyn Fain Apseloff, "Abandonment: The New  
Realism of the Eighties" (OC359)  
Sheila Egoff, "The Problem Novel" (Handout)**Week 15**12/9-12/11 Sacher, *Holes*  
**Final Paper Due 12/11**English Department Statement Concerning 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.

Grading Scale

4.0 - 3.6 A  
3.5 - 2.5 B  
2.4 - 1.4 C  
1.3 - 0.1 D

### Attendance Policy

Because the information provided in the classroom is a major part of 3405, and because of the stress that I place on discussion, argument, and interrogation, failure to attend class will most definitely affect your grade. Any student missing more than 6 class meetings without obtaining either my approval beforehand or a formal excuse\*\* will fail the course.

\*\*Legitimate reasons (illness, official university activity, recognized emergency) established through the University Health Service or the Office of Student Personnel Services.

### Late Work

Unless you have made prior arrangements with me, or provided a formal excuse (see above), I will accept no late papers.

### Information for Students with Disabilities

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.