

Summer 6-15-2017

ENG 4905-001: Studies in Youth Literature

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Office Hours: TR 12:00 – 1:00

& by appointment

English 4905: Topics in Youth Literature

Reviewing Youth Literature

Tuesdays + Thursdays 1:00 – 4:30 in Coleman Hall 3290 (classroom)

+ Booth Library **Edgar Room** (in Ballenger Teacher Center)

+ Booth Library **e-Classroom** (4th Floor)

Course Description

A book review is an **evaluation**. It is the result of a “process of making a judgment about...*value*, *importance*, or *quality*.” Evaluation is near the top of Bloom’s taxonomy (just under “creation”) because it builds on everything below it: knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, and synthesis.

By analyzing professional reviews of the books we read and discuss, we will develop a conscious appreciation of the **conventions** and **craft** of books for young people and book reviews. These self-selected and shared readings will encompass literature in traditional **formats** (“novel”), formats that are only found in youth literature (“picture book,” “board book,” “easy reader”), and emerging or hybrid formats (“graphic narrative,” “app,” “audiobook”). At the same time, we will explore the **literary genre** available to children and young adults, from animal fantasy and contemporary realism to non-fiction.

Along the way, we will consider issues related to the **culture** and **politics** of publishing and reviewing books for young readers, and explore the expanding number of places that discussion takes place, including the influential kidlitosphere. Over the course of the semester, you will decide how you want to specialize as a reviewer (by genre? age/grade level? format? topic?) *and* consider the best genre and vehicles for reaching your audience (annotation? collective review in a print publication? blog post?).

TRS BOOKS

Textbooks

- 2003 *Pleasures of Children's Literature, 3rd ed.* (Nodelman & Reimer)
2010 *From Cover to Cover, revised edition* (Horning)

Trade Books

Picture Books

- 1962 *The Snowy Day* (Keats) Contemporary Realism
1969 *Stevie* (Step toe) Contemporary Realism
2005 *And Tango Makes Three* (Richardson & Parnell/Cole) Non-fiction
2008 *A Couple of Boys have the Best Week Ever* (Frazee) Contemporary Realism
2009 *The Lion and the Mouse* (Pinkney) Wordless Animal Fantasy/Fable
Down, Down, Down: A Journey to the Bottom of the Sea (Jenkins) Non-fiction
2012 *This is Not My Hat* (Klassen) Animal Fantasy
2015 *Last Stop on Market Street* (De la Peña/Robinson) Contemporary Realism

Easy Reader/Transition Books

- 1972 *Frog & Toad Together* (Lobel) Animal Fantasy
2005 *Baby Mouse* (Holm/HoIm) Graphic Animal Fantasy
2010 *We're in a Book!* (Willems) Animal Fantasy

Middle Grades Fiction

- 1997 *Ella Enchanted* (Levine) Fantasy/Revised Fairy Tale
2004 *Becoming Naomi Leon* (Ryan) Contemporary Realism
2010 *The Strange Case of Origami Yoda* (Angleberger) Contemporary Realism

Young Adult Literature

- 2004 *Feed* (Anderson) Dystopia
2007 *Does My Head Look Big in This?* (Abdel-Fatah) Contemporary Realism
2008 *American Born Chinese* (Yang) Multi-Genre Graphic Narrative
2009 *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part Time Indian* (Alexie/Forney) Contemporary Realism
Claudette Colvin: Twice Toward Justice (Hoose with Colvin) Historical Non-fiction
2014 *Brown Girl Dreaming* (Woodson) Verse Memoir

GRADES

Course grades will reflect the percentage earned of the 1000 points available.

note: I will adjust the points if we add, cancel, or revise any assignments.

D2L Posts (includes peer responses)	250 points
Book Talk	150
Book/Author 360° Presentation	150
+ Annotated Bibliography	50
Long Form Review/Essay	200
+ Annotated Bib. or Book List w/ annotations	50
End-of-Term Reflection	100
Participation (includes attendance)	50

Brief Description of Assignments

D2L Posts will document your engagement with readings & writing tasks. Some will document steps in the writing process (a draft of a review or peer response). Some will prompt you to reflect on your experience as a reader (what do you find challenging—or rewarding—about graphic narratives?) or ask you to focus on specific features of a book. In others you will evaluate professional reviews or respond to points in secondary readings.

Here are my core criteria for evaluation of these posts:

- exploration and development of ideas that are spelled out as fully and clearly as possible so that we see what you mean
- examples that help us see the basis or support for your ideas: “quoted text,” rich description of visuals, clear identification of physical features (like trim size).
- use of terms (like “trim size”) & concepts (“implied reader”) introduced in class
- “recursiveness”: efforts to revisit and refine your ideas about youth literature as you accumulate information, experience, and points of comparison
- completeness. Late posts are penalized on a sliding scale; missing posts can sink you

Review/Essay + Annotated Bibliography or Book List~ a longer form (1000 word minimum) such as a “collective review” (of a group of related books) or an evaluative essay that also provides historical perspective (“A Second Look at [Title of Classic Book]”) OR a magazine article focused on an issue of evaluation (“What Makes a Good Read Aloud?”). Should require substantial research and/or reading of multiple texts. Research-based Essays should include an annotated bibliography of sources; Collective Reviews will include a book list with annotations.

Presentations: Book/Author 360° provides an introduction to the resources available to help us understand and appreciate this book. The goal of the 15-minute Book Talk is to demonstrate skill as an evaluator of a specific type of book and ability to help others see its quality and value.

Reflective Essay (750 words): describes your focus as a reviewer and provides a rationale for your approach to evaluating books for children and/or young adults. Give credit to the ideas, experiences, and people that shaped your understanding of youth literature and reviewing.

The bottom line . . . *grades are not curved.*

91% & up = A 81 - 90% = B 71 - 80% = C 61 - 70% = D

RESPONSIBILITIES AND POLICIES

- 1.) Keep in touch! If you are experiencing temporary difficulties, let me know as soon as possible.
- 2.) Attendance counts. If you have two or more *un*-excused absences, you will lose the points available for "participation."
- 3.) For any assignment in which you use sources, you will be responsible for using the *latest* version of the *MLA Handbook* (8th edition) or *APA Publication Manual* (6th edition) for the Works Cited page (MLA) or References page (APA) and the parenthetical citations that refer readers to this list of sources. [The Purdue OWL](#) is a reliable online guide with up-to-date information and examples.

→ Practice makes perfect...so you will be required to revise incorrectly formatted citations for written work or presentations before they get a grade.
- 4.) Plagiarism is the act of taking someone else's phrasing, ideas or visuals and using them in your own oral, written or visual work without identifying and giving credit to their source. Learning how to appropriately credit your sources is necessary to avoid breaches of academic or professional integrity that could result in a failing grade for the plagiarized assignment or this course, and might incur other university penalties.
- 5.) Writing Center consultants Briana & Fabian will be happy to work with you on citation format or any other writing-related issues.

During the 6-week summer session, **the Writing Center** is open
12 - 3 Monday & Wednesday + **10 - 12** Tuesdays & Thursdays

Drop by **CH3110** or call **581-5929** for an on-campus or Skype appointment at any point in the writing process, from planning and drafting to editing.
- 6.) Students with documented disabilities should contact the Office of Disability Services (581-6583) so we can work out appropriate accommodations.
- 7.) You must complete all major assignments to pass this course.

Task: A presentation (15 minutes long) about a book related to your interests and goals in which you apply what you have learned about the multifaceted task of evaluating books for children and adults.

This task requires you to accurately describe key features of your book and provide us with illuminating analysis of the way examples of specific features on specific pages collaborate and contribute to the book's quality, appeal, usefulness (etc.) for specific audiences and purposes.

Your **audience** is your classmates, who are engaged in the study of children's literature for a variety of academic, professional, and personal reasons. They take an intelligent interest in issues related to the appreciation and evaluation of youth literature, including those that are most relevant and interesting to you. They will not know as much about your book or focus as you do, so you will need to provide an efficient introduction of the book and explain your interest in particular issues of evaluation. Since you will be talking to adult gatekeepers rather than child readers, you don't need to worry about spoilers.

After your presentation, we should all be more informed, aware, adept evaluators of youth literature.

Available Technology: Document Camera, Computer Projection System

Criteria for Evaluation of Book Talks (up to 150 points)

- **Focus:** provides a coherent, purposeful, productive evaluation of an appropriate text
- **Organization:** conveys information + analysis effectively and smoothly within time limits
- **Content:** demonstrates familiarity with relevant information about the book (reviews, awards, creators) plus concepts and terms used to describe books like this one
- **Development:** offers efficient summary/description + analysis of examples of that illuminate the function of specific features on pages/spreads or throughout the book
- **Style:** collegial tone, accurate terms & precise language, openness to interaction (Q & A)
- **Presentation:** uses technology effectively + demonstrates poise & preparation

Note: You will need to *practice* to get the timing right and to make sure you have found—and can pronounce—the words you need to talk about examples you share.

Author:

Book/Author:

As noted on the [Purdue Online Writing Lab \(OWL\)](#), evaluative annotations do several inter-related things:

- A. **Describe** the source: Who/what sponsors or publishes the journal/website/blog...? What is the purpose and focus of the source? How is it organized? What sorts of information/ideas does it cover (focus)? How thorough or detailed is it (scope/depth)?
- B. **Evaluate** the source: What are the strengths of this source? Are there any significant limitations to its relevance or usefulness? What evidence do you have that this source is relevant, reliable, current, and unbiased?
- C. **Reflective evaluation** of how this particular source might be useful to you [or someone else] who wants to learn or think about your topic. What is valuable about the perspective offered by the author(s) and the types of information and insights they share?

ANNOTATION	13 - 12	11 points	10 points	9 - 8 points	0
Description + Evaluation	Thorough overview of focus, scope, style, and organization; thoughtful analysis of authority, relevance, reliability, currency, and bias	Complete overview of focus, scope, style, and organization; sensible analysis of authority, relevance, reliability, currency, and bias	Useful overview of focus, scope, style and/or organization; some attention to issues of authority, currency, or relevance	Superficial or inaccurate overview and analysis of authority, currency, and relevance	None
Reflection	Usefully focused analysis of specific features that demonstrate value and utility of source; reflects clear grasp of the research goals + audience	Thoughtful analysis of some features that contribute to value and utility of source; reflects grasp of research goals + writing task	Analysis of value and utility of source reflects sense of purpose and audience	Analysis of value and utility of source has inconsistent sense of audience & purpose	None
Style	Precise, readable, effectively edited	Readable, effectively edited	Readable overall; some editing issues	Inconsistent clarity or editing	None
CITATION	At least five accurate, complete, correctly formatted MLA or APA-style citations of relevant sources that demonstrate mastery of appropriate professional format	At least five accurate, complete MLA or APA-style citations of relevant sources that demonstrate professionalism and attention to detail	NA <i>Incomplete, inaccurate, or incorrectly formatted citations must be edited or revised to receive credit</i>	NA	<i>Subtract 10 points from total score for each missing citation if less than five</i>

Total = _____ out of 50 points *minus* deductions =

Week 1**TUESDAY 6.13**

Introductions + Focus on Format: Board Books

THURSDAY 6.15

Peruse ch. 1 in *From Cover to Cover*: "A Critical Approach to Children's Literature"

Read ch. 6 in *From Cover to Cover*: "Easy Readers and Transitional Books"

Read all three Easy Readers you received from Textbook Rental

- Frog & Toad Together (Lobel)
- We Are in a Book! (Willems)
- BabyMouse (Holm & Holm)

Read & Evaluate your self-selected Easy Reader (see D2L post prompt in Week 1 module)

Browse & Respond to *Hornbook* magazine (see D2L post prompt in Week 1 continued)

Week 2**TUESDAY 6.20**

Readings (Bring books + reading notes to class)

Ch. 7: "Fiction" in *From Cover to Cover* (pp. 114+)

- Mark pages about which you have questions or observations

Self-selected Novel

- Use a post-it to mark passages or features that you might want to highlight in a review.
- Keep reading notes to document your questions, observations, and eventual insights into the features of this book that make it more or less interesting or effective.

Ch. 8: "Writing a Review" in *From Cover to Cover* (pp. 165+)

- Mark pages about which you have questions or observations

Writing Tasks

After finishing your self-selected novel, print & "annotate" a selection of professional reviews.

Bring these to class on Tuesday. Try to find *at least* three reviews of your book.

D2L Posts**T 6.20 Response to Annotated Reviews**

Answer these questions and share any other observations or questions about these reviews.

- What sorts of things do these reviewers focus most of their attention on?
(text? illustrations? story? design? something else?)
- For what points do they provide examples? Why these?
- What kinds of information or commentary do they add?
- What sorts of things do they seem to agree about? On what points do they disagree?
- To what extent does their evaluation align with yours? What would you do differently?
- What are the most useful or interesting things particular reviewers brought to your attention? Look for comments that made you see the book more clearly or differently.

*bonus extra: How do *professional* reviews of this work compare to *customer* reviews on a bookstore site like amazon.com? Or reader reviews on Goodreads? What do you notice when you compare them? In what ways are each helpful or interesting to you?

T 6.20 Dr. Frankenstein's Review Subject Line: Review of *Title of Book* (Genre) Age/Grade Level

Dr. Frankenstein's review is a creature formed by sewing together the most useful parts of a variety of professional reviews. Post your review along with an explanation of why you chose to use specific parts of other (clearly identified) reviews. Be clear about what each borrowed line contributes.

THURSDAY 6.22

Readings (Bring books + reading notes to class)

Ch. 7: "Books of Information" in *From Cover to Cover* (pp. 23+)

- Mark pages about which you have questions or observations
- *Claudette Colvin: Twice Toward Justice* (Hoose) OR self-selected YA Non-fiction)
- *Deep, Deep, Deep* (Jenkins) AND another informational picture book

Schedule

Kory, ENG4905: Evaluating Youth Literature (Su17)

D2L Posts

TH 6.22 Evaluating Information Books: Going Deep

Subject Line = Title of Book (Author) 1-2 #hashtags that reflect the book or your evaluation of it.

Using terms and concepts in the chapter on "Books of Information" in *From Cover to Cover*, compose a descriptive summary of *Down, Down, Down* OR your self-selected picture book in which you identify and describe key features of its format, structure/organization, and style (textual and visual). Then provide an evaluation of its success as an information book, using clearly cited categories and criteria from Horning's discussion, and offering your own take on its quality, value, or utility. Finally, read and respond to the reviews of this book, commenting on at least two specific (quoted) points that you found interesting or useful.

TH 6.22 Evaluating Non-Fiction: Looking Back

Subject Line = Title of Book (Author) 1-2 #hashtags that reflect the book or your evaluation of it.

Using terms and concepts in the chapter on "Books of Information" in *From Cover to Cover*, compose a descriptive summary of *Claudette Colvin* OR your self-selected non-fiction. Identify and describe key features of its format, structure/organization, and style (textual and visual). Then provide an evaluation of its success as an information book, using clearly cited categories and criteria from Horning's discussion, and offering your own take on its quality, value, or utility. Finally, read and respond to the reviews of this book, commenting on at least two specific (quoted) points that you found interesting or useful.

Week 3

TUESDAY 6.27

Readings

Ch. 5: "Picture Books" in *From Cover to Cover* (pp. 85+)

All Remaining Picture Books: Realism, Nonfiction, & Fantasy

- 1962 *The Snowy Day* (Keats) Contemporary Realism
- 1969 *Stevie* (Step toe) Contemporary Realism
- 2005 *And Tango Makes Three* (Richardson & Parnell/Cole) Non-fiction
- 2008 *A Couple of Boys have the Best Week Ever* (Frazee) Contemporary Realism
- 2015 *Last Stop on Market Street* (De la Peña/Robinson) Contemporary Realism
- 2009 *The Lion and the Mouse* (Pinkney) Wordless Animal Fantasy/Fable
- 2012 *This is Not My Hat* (Klassen) Animal Fantasy

"The Enduring Footprints of Peter, Ezra Jack Keats, and *The Snowy Day*" + ["What Makes a Good Banned Book"](#)

Bring *American Born Chinese* (graphic novel)

D2L Posts

TU 6.27 Realistic Picture books

Focus on one of the two recent realistic picture books (not *The Snowy Day* or *Stevie*). What "truths" about reality do author and illustrator assume and/or embed in the story told in this book? How?

Using the terms and concepts provided in *From Cover to Cover*, describe some of the key elements of text and illustration that are at play in this book. Look for patterns set up by the text or illustrations, and identify at least one meaningful break in one of those patterns. Provide a more detailed analysis of at least two spreads, focusing on the role of text and illustration in telling this story. Include any questions you have about the choices made by the illustrator or author on these pages.

Provide criteria and a rationale for your evaluation of some aspect of this book's quality, appeal, effectiveness, usefulness, or relevance/significance. Finally, read and respond to the reviews of this book, commenting on at least two specific (quoted) points that you found interesting or useful.

TU 6.27 Picture Book Fantasy

Focus on one picture book fantasy. Identify fantastic features of character, situation, plot, or setting and describe how they are presented (in text) or depicted (visually). Consider the function and/or appeal of the decision to introduce these alternatives to realism. Comment on any interesting contrasts in the use of fantastic and realistic elements by the author(s)/illustrator(s).

Schedule

Kory, ENG4905: Evaluating Youth Literature (Su17)

Then focus in on two spreads (facing pages or a unified "double-page spread") that allow you to talk about applicable features of composition. Consider how text and visuals work together on these pages. Comment on major features of "text" (patterned language, predictability, pacing) -- using specific examples (quoted if possible; described if not). Consider how artistic choices contribute to the meaning or effect of the story being told. Finally, read and respond to the reviews of this book, commenting on at least two specific (quoted) points that you found interesting or useful.

THURSDAY 6.29

Readings

"How to Read a Graphic Novel in Five Minutes" (Howerton) from The Reader's Advisory Handbook (ch. 4 in handout)

"Raising a Reader" Jaffe/Holm (.pdf on D2L) ~ Mark pages about which you have questions or observations

Baby Mouse (Holm/Holm) Graphic Animal Fantasy

American Born Chinese (Yang) Multi-Genre Graphic Novel

Browse Graphic Novel Review sites (links in module)

D2L Post

TH 6.29 American Born Chinese Subject Line: Section # (page #) + Sec. # (p. #)

Choose one two-page spread from your assigned section of American Born Chinese (section 4, 5, or 6) PLUS one of the last three sections. In your post, comment on both story (what is told) and discourse (how it is told) by identifying the visual and textual features that contribute to the meaning or effect of these pages. How do the conventional features of graphic narrative and the choices made by the award-winning writer/artist (Yang) and colorist (Pien) establish setting, advance plot, contribute to characterization, develop themes, and create "style"? Consider the page turns that lead into and out of this spread. Then move panel to panel on the spreads you have selected, describing the layout of the page and the composition of specific panels. Comment on the demands these panels make on the reader and point out some of the rewards of attentive, engaged reading of visuals and text in this format.

Week 4

TUESDAY July 4 Holiday: NO CLASS meeting

DUE on D2L

Topic Proposal 360 Presentation

THURSDAY 7.6

Read "This Blog's For You" + section on Annotations in Reader's Advisory Handbook (both on D2L)

DUE on D2L

Draft Topic Proposal: Long Form Review

- What sorts of books, issues, or problems are you most interested in? Who share these interests?
- What sorts of research and reading would be most productive for you?
- What form seems most natural for this topic & audience? What questions do you have?

* Draft Annotated Bibliography of Resources for 360 Presentation

D2L Post

Youth Lit Blogs & Reviews Subject Line: Name of First + Second Self-Selected Blog

Browse at least four blogs/review sites and then select two review blogs/sites to evaluate.

Check out the list of Cybils bloggers, the long list of School Library Journal recommended blogs the graphic novel sites in that module, or another in this module (others just need approval) Briefly describe all four blogs/sites you looked at; then explain why you chose to focus in on these two, noting any differences among these sources that are related to their audience, purpose, or focus. For each of these two on-line source of youth literature reviews, write an annotation (minimum 150 words) in which you identify its platform/format and describe its focus, scope, style, and organization; evaluate its authority, relevance, reliability, currency, and bias; and offer more focused evaluative reflections on the value and potential usefulness of the perspective provided by the author(s), and the information and opinions they share, with reference to specific examples (including at least one review). Finally, articulate any questions you have about reviewing in this medium.

Week 5

Plan on one Individual Conference Appointment

TUESDAY 7.11

Schedule

Kory, ENG4905: Evaluating Youth Literature (Su17)

Homework: Individualized Reading + Research

DUE on D2L

* Draft Annotated Bibliography or Book List with Annotations for Peer Review

* Scheduled 360 Presentations + Annotated Bibliographies (5)

THURSDAY 7.13

Individualized Reading + Research

DUE on D2L: Topic Proposal Book Talk

SATURDAY 7.14

DUE on D2L: Progress Report Subject Line: Focus (or Title) of Review

Describe what you are reading and re-viewing – primary texts (trade books) and secondary texts (resources) – and answer the question "how's it going?" by explaining how each text "fits" in your review/essay and how each secondary source contributes to your understanding of your topic and task.

Week 6 ***Plan on one Individual Conference Appointment***

TUESDAY 7.18

DUE on D2L: *Draft* of Long Form Review for Peer Review + Scheduled 360 Presentations (3)

DUE in Class: Scheduled Book Talks (3) + 360 Presentations

THURSDAY 7.20

DUE on D2L: *Outline/Draft* of Reflective Essay

DUE in Class: Scheduled Book Talks (5)

SUNDAY 7.23

DUE in D2L Dropbox: Revised Review/Essay + Annotated Bib/Annotated Book list + Reflective Essay