Spring 1-15-2008

ENG 3405-700: Children's literature

John Kilgore
Eastern Illinois University

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English 3405
Children's Literature
Spring, 2008
Section 001, 11-1215 TR, CH 3160
Section 700, 6-8:30, D216, Parkland

Notes & Announcements

SYLLABUS

Course Description: This course offers adult readers the chance to discover and rediscover some of the best-loved poems and stories for children while asking them to think and read with a certain sophistication, attending to the surprising subtleties of supposedly simple readings, making connections to larger cultural and philosophical issues. Works studied will range from the simplest 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. Lots of reading, lots of fun.

A writing-intensive course, 3405 will incorporate 2 papers, 2 exams, a take-home final exam consisting of essay questions, and an oral presentation.

Instructor: John Kilgore. Office: 3331 Coleman Hall. Hours: TTh 3:30-4:30, W 12-4. Also usually available right after class, and often here late on Monday. Phone: (217) 581-6313 (office); (217) 345-7395 (home). 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 me at home instead. I prefer that you NOT visit me with questions just before class begins; just after is fine.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

- Extensive assigned readings
- Two papers of about 1500 words each (40%)
- Oral report (10%)
- First Exam (10%)
- Second Exam (15%)
- Take-home Final Exam (25%)

I reserve the right to depart somewhat from these percentages.

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 CH3160 or D216; if so, check ahead of time to make sure the equipment is what you need.

PAPERS. Will come due in weeks 6 and 12: see schedule below. These are to be analytical discussions of about 1500 words (4-6 pages), thoughtfully posed, rigorously developed and defended, written with great care. Detailed writing . . . are online: suggested topics will be forthcoming. You are welcome to develop your own topics rather than writing on the suggested ones, but be sure to check with me first. I welcome and recommend consultation of some kind in advance of the due dates. Have a few words with me after class, come by my office for a longer talk, phone me, or submit a partial draft by e-mail, sending it as an attached file in WORD format.

I am happy to respond to drafts as my time permits, in writing or in conference. Several caveats, however:

- Don't over-rely on my help. Writing is an inherently individualistic enterprise, best accomplished by orneryusses who jealously guard their intellectual independence. The task can become very hard if you think too much about what I want from you — rather than what you want from you.
- Conferences are for brainstorming and general advice, not evaluation, which comes later, after you hand in the completed paper. Nothing I say in advance comments should be construed as a hint (much less a promise) of what grade seems likely. I assume that your goal is to improve, and will try to make suggestions that lead in that direction; but it is up to you to put them into effect and make them work — or to ignore them if they don't seem useful.
- My suggestions are always brilliant :-), but you really will have to ignore many of them. Writing is just like that; don't worry about it. When it comes time to grade the paper, I won't even remember what my advice was. and will respond to one thing only: how successful the discussion seems to be on its own terms.

Final drafts must be in hard copy and should follow the usual conventions of manuscript form. I.e., 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 each paper a title, and in the upper-left corner of the first page, give it a heading which includes your name, the date, the course (English 3405) and the title of the assignment. e.g. "First Essay." Email is not acceptable except in emergencies.

EXAMS. Are scheduled for weeks 9 and 15, with the final scheduled for Monday (off-campus) or Thursday (on-campus) of finals week. Exam # 1 will contain a mix of objective questions and mini-essays 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. Objective questions will ask you to identify authors, works, characters, terms, and quotations, and to provide other basic information from the works read. Essay questions will ask you to analyze concepts, interpret passages, and develop ideas in relation to works read on the syllabus.

The second hour exam, as you might guess from the timing (in the last week), is really the first part of the final: an in-class portion designed to establish that you have good command
of all of our extensive reading. The remaining portion of the exam, distributed as you hand in the first portion, will be a take-home consisting of numerous essay questions. You will have a week to write this, handing it in at the time of the officially scheduled exam period. Answers must be typed and can be submitted by email. To keep this portion of the exam from becoming a life-eating ordeal, fairly strict guidelines as to length and format will be enforced.

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.

Please be aware that the penalty for plagiarism or cheating — which I trust I will not have to impose — is automatic failure of the course. See me if you have any questions about this policy.

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.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

- Griffith and Frey, eds., *Classics of Children's Literature (C)*
- Scott O'Dell, *Island of the Blue Dolphins*
- Laura Ingalls Wilder, *Little House on the Prairie*
- William Golding, *Lord of the Flies*

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 7

Read pages 1-4, 33-38.
Nursery rhyme handout.

2) January 14

Sign up for reports.

http://www.ux1.eiu.edu/~jdkilgore/Litclas/3405/Current/Syl0801.htm 1/7/2008
3) January 21

Conclude fairy tales.

4) January 28

Reports

5) February 4

Reports

6) February 11

*Carroll, Alice in Wonderland*, C 331-388
First Paper Due on Thursday (Monday off campus)

7) February 18


8) February 25

Review and Catch-up.

9) March 3

First Exam

~~~ Spring Break, March 10-14 ~~~

10) March 17

*Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, 387-512

11) March 24

Finish Twain, *ATS*.

http://www.ux1.eiu.edu/~jdkilgore/Litclas/3405/Current/Syl0801.htm 1/7/2008
12) March 31

Wilder, *Little House on the Prairie*
Second Paper Due on Thursday (Monday off campus)

13) April 7

O'Dell, *Island of the Blue Dolphins*

14) April 14

Golding, *Lord of the Flies*

15) April 21

Review
Exam # 2 in class
Take-home final distributed.

Final Exam Due: Thursday, May 1, 10:15-12:15
(Off campus: Monday, April 29, 6:30)

**MISCELLANEOUS ONLINE RESOURCES**
(See Author Resource Page as Well)

- Lewis Carroll Photographs of Children
- 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

http://www.ux1.eiu.edu/~jdkilgore/Litclas/3405/Current/Syl0801.htm

1/7/2008
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Misc. Online Resources
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- Nonfiction Bibliography
- banned Books List
- Discussion of Banned Books
- Dr. Andrew Young Multiliteracy Web Site
- Dr. Kent's Children's Literature Web Site

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