Fall 8-15-2008

ENG 3405-001-700: Children's Literature

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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, making connections to larger cultural and philosophical issues. 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. Lots of reading, lots of work, 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. Phone: (217) 581-6313 (office); (217) 345-7395 (home); 217-549-0405 (cell). Email: 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.

Email can play an especially important role in the off-campus section, and I will try hard to reply to messages you send. But please try not to overuse this option. I do get a large number of messages, and keeping up with them can sometimes be difficult.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:
• Extensive assigned readings
• Two papers of about 1500 words each (40%)
• Oral report (10%)
• First Exam (10%)
• Second Exam (20%)
• Take-home Final Exam (20%)

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 our classroom; if so, check ahead of time to make sure the equipment is what you need.

PAPERS. Will come due in weeks 8 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 guidelines and suggested topics are online; see links at left. You are welcome to develop your own topics rather than writing on the suggested ones, but must first get written permission via email. I welcome consultation — in class, after class, or via email — in advance of the due dates.

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

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, 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 6 and 14, and will take one whole period in each case. A mix of objective questions and mini-essays 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. 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 final exam 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. 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. Late final exams will be accepted only when there has been a documented emergency.

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*, 6th ed. (C)
- Scott O'Dell, *Island of the Blue Dolphins*
- Laura Ingalls Wilder, *Little House on the Prairie*
- Jack London, *Call of the Wild*

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) August 25-29

Nursery rhyme handout.
Discuss meter and prosody (see handout link at left).

2) September 2-5

Sign up for reports.


3) September 8-12

Conclude fairy tales.

4) September 15-19

Conclude *Little Women*.

5) September 22-26

Carroll, *Alice in Wonderland*, 322.

6) September 29-October 3

First Exam on Tuesday (W off-campus): all readings through Stevenson.

7) October 6-10

Stevenson, continued.
Writing workshop.

8) October 13-17

Reports
First Paper Due on Tuesday (W off-campus)

9) October 20-24

Reports

10) October 27-31

Reports
Begin *Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, 375.

11) November 3-7

*Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, 375

12) November 10-14

Second Paper Due on Thursday (W off-campus)
13) November 17-21

Wilder, *Little House on the Prairie*

Thanksgiving Break

14) December 1-5

London, *The Call of the Wild*

Second Exam on Thursday *(W off-campus)*: all readings through O'Dell.

15) December 8-12

O'Dell, *Island of the Blue Dolphins*

Take-home Final Distributed Tuesday *(W off-campus)*.

Take-Home Final Due: Monday, December 15, 10:00 AM *(on-campus)*; W December 17 *(off-campus)*.

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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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