Fall 8-15-2004

ENG 3405-002: Children's Literature

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SYLLABUS

Current Assignment

Review Syllabus carefully.
Read pp. 1-9 and 15-20 in A.
Nina Bawden, "Emotional Realism in Books for Young People," A1081

NEXT HAND-IN DATE:

Check this space regularly. • • • Last update: 8/20/2004

Study Guides and Questions
Book Lists—Oral Reports
Writing Guidelines

Author Resource Page
Handout Library
Sample Student Writings

Dr. Murray's Young Adult Literature Web Site
Dr. Kory's Children's Literature Web Site

Course Description: This course will offer adult readers the chance to discover and rediscover some of the best-loved poems, tales, and novels for children while it challenges them to think with a certain sophistication about children, childhood, fantasy, and the role of literature. Our focus will be broadly historical, humanistic, and philosophical; be ready to think primarily about "big" questions, not pedagogical issues, though sometimes these will make their way into our discussion as well.

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. The emphasis is decidedly on the classics, but in children's literature these are more accessible (and current!) than classics.

http://www.ux1.eiu.edu/~cfjdk/Litclas/3405/Current/Syl0408.htm

8/24/2004
generally are; the quantity of reading assigned will be correspondingly high.

A writing-intensive course, 3405 will incorporate three papers, a midterm, a final, and an oral presentation.

INSTRUCTOR: John Kilgore. Office: 3331 Coleman Hall. Hours: Th 1-2, W 11-4. Other hours by arrangement. Phone: (217) 581-6313 (office); (217) 345-7395 (home). E-mail: cfjdk@eiu.edu. During registration (September-October), it might be best to call first before dropping by the office, as I will be having many advisement conferences. 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.
• Three papers of about 1,000-1,500 words each.
• Oral report (10%)
• Mid-term (10%)
• Final exam (20%)
• Attendance and participation (10%)
• Quizzes and Extra Credit Projects (up to 10% "bonus" to course average)

I reserve the right to depart somewhat from these percentages.

ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION. Will count approximately 10% of your grade in the course. From the second meeting on, I will be passing around an attendance sheet which you must sign. At the end of the term, I will assign a participation grade according to the following scale: 1 absence—A; 2 absences—B; 3 absences—C; 4 absences—D; 5 absences—F; more than 5—further, proportional declines in your course grade (your attendance grade becomes a negative number). I will raise the basic grade a bit if I think your contributions to class discussion have been especially good.

Note that you have one "free" absence. Use this if you have to, but otherwise keep it as insurance. I will listen sympathetically to excuses, but I will not normally award attendance credit for any session which you have missed. An approved "excuse" entitles you to just one thing: the option of making up for the missed day by doing a significant extra assignment. See me in my office to make arrangements for make-ups,
and check with me later to make sure the work has been duly credited. (Hint: It's easier just to be here. Honest.) Note: it is your responsibility to find and sign the attendance sheet at each session, to arrange for make-ups if necessary, and to check to see that make-up work has been duly credited..

**ORAL REPORTS.** Will be 5-10 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 sense of the book and its impact on you. Relate your experience of this book to the course themes as appropriate, but try also to explain why the book made such an impression on you.

Speak clearly, forcefully, and enthusiastically, resisting the compulsion, felt by many in the presence of a peer audience, to mumble, shrug, fidget, and speak only in vague generalities. Many of you will be making your living, two or three years hence, trying to engage a tough audience—school children—for hours every day. This is your chance to practice. By all means startle, provoke, and amuse us, but do not bore us.

You may want to use the audio-visual resources available in CH3170; if so, make arrangements with me to get checked out on the equipment.

**PAPERS.** Will come due on 9/16, 11/4, and 12/7; see schedule below. These are to be analytical discussions of about 1,000-1250 words (4-5 pages) each, thoughtfully posed, rigorously developed and defended, written with great care. Detailed writing guidelines 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. If you're having trouble getting your paper started or written, I welcome conferences in advance of the due date. I am willing to respond to drafts submitted by e-mail as my time permits; send drafts as attached files in WORD format. All papers should be typewritten (or computer printed), double-spaced, and generally legible. After the first paper is graded I will try to post some of the better efforts to this site (with the authors' permission, of course), and these may be useful models for subsequent efforts.

**EXAMS.** Are scheduled for 10/14 and 12/6 (in finals week) Both will contain a mix of objective questions and mini-essays designed to establish that you are familiar with all the reading 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. Essay questions will ask you to analyze concepts, interpret passages, and demonstrate basic familiarity with works on the syllabus. Both exams will be open-book, open-note.
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 receive "feedback," as it gives me no time to make marks or offer written commentary; I will simply read the paper and assign a grade.

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.

KEYS TO SUCCESS IN THIS CLASS:

- Attend faithfully.
- Consult the online "Current Assignments" board regularly, and make use of other online resources here.
- Be ready to think seriously and analytically about children's literature. The course is not a chance to be childish but to think hard about the nature and significance of childhood.
- Do ALL the reading, do it carefully, and do it EARLY. Papers and exams come thick and fast at the end of the term, and you need to make a head start now. Not all of the reading will be covered in class, but all or nearly all will be tested on exams.
- Make use of study guides and review questions in preparing for exams.
- Start your papers early and work hard on them, writing multiple drafts. Get feedback from me, from the Writing Center, or from your classmates before handing in the final version. Proofread repeatedly and then, when you're no longer seeing what's there, have a friend look at your penultimate draft. Be sure to consult the Writing Guidelines, and spend some time thinking about the comment sheets you will get back with your first two essays. Do follow-up reading if necessary to learn about basic writing conventions that may be giving you trouble.
- Be on the alert for special extra-credit projects, assigned to volunteers on short notice. These are fun and can give your grade average a small but worthwhile boost.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

http://www.ux1.eiu.edu/~cfjdk/Litclas/3405/Current/Syl0408.htm
• Saltman, et al, eds., *The Riverside Anthology of Children's Literature* (A)
• Griffith and Frey, eds., *Classics of Children's literature* (C)
• Egoff, et al, eds., *Only Connect* (E)
• Scott O'Dell, *Island of the Blue Dolphins*
• Laura Ingalls Wilder, *Little House on the Prairie*
• Jean George, *Julie of the Wolves*
• J.D. Salinger, *Catcher in the Rye*
• 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. To keep track of changes, make a habit of bringing a hard copy of the syllabus to class with you, and check the posted online version periodically.

1) August 24, 26  
**Introduction**

Read pp. 1-9 and 15-20 in A.

2) August 31, September 2  
**Nursery Rhymes and Nonsense**


**Handout:** Meter and Prosody.


3) September 7, 9  
**Fairy Tales**

**Note:** You will need to bring both anthologies to class while we are discussing fairy tales.
Continue with nonsense poems.

Read 245-252 in A.

4) September 14, 16  Fairy Tales


5) September 21, 23  Little Women

Alcott, Little Women, C186. Read Chapters 1-9 (to page 245); remainder optional.
First Paper Due on Thursday

6) September 28, 30  Alice in Wonderland

Alice in Wonderland: Read whole book in C, not just excerpt in A!

7) October 5, 7  Little House on the Prairie

8) October 12, 14  Review and Midterm

Review and catch-up.
Mid-Term Exam, Thursday.

9) October 19, 21  Reports

Reports in reverse alphabetical order, until everyone has gone.

10) October 26, 28  Poetry


11) November 2, 4  Poetry


Second Paper Due on Thursday
12) November 9, 11  
*Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, C389

13) November 16, 18  
*The Jungle Books*

Finish Twain, *ATS*.


Thanksgiving Break

14) November 30, December 2  
O'Dell, *Island of the Blue Dolphins*

15) December 7, 9  
Review

Review; Third Paper Due on Tuesday

Final Exam: Thursday, December, 16, 12:30-2:30

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**Some Links to Think About**

(See Author Resource Page as Well)

- [War Toy Collectible](#)
- [Lewis Carroll Photographs of Children](#)
- [Nonfiction Bibliography](#)
- [Banned Books List](#)
- [Discussion of Banned Books](#)