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ENG 3405-002: Children's Literature

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**INSTRUCTOR:** John Kilgore. Office: 3331 Coleman Hall. Hours: TR 12:00-2, MW 12-4. Other hours by arrangement. Phone: (217) 581-6313 (office); (217) 345-7395 (home). E-mail: cfdk@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.

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• Two papers of about 1,000-1,250 words each (45%)
• Oral report (10%)
• Mid-term (12%)
• Final exam (23%)
• Attendance and participation (10%)
• Quizzes and Extra Credit Projects (up to 10%)

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 dull, vague, unhelpful 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. Startle and provoke us if you like, but do not bore us.

Three more specific guidelines: 1) Begin with a children's joke, because this is fun and because jokes are oddly revealing of many developmental and cognitive issues we wish to explore. 2) Try to make appropriate use of the audio-visual resources available in CH3160, making arrangements with me to get checked out on the equipment. 3) If you wish you may have the presentation videotaped; see me to make arrangements. This can be an extremely useful, if somewhat harrowing, way to improve your speaking style.

PAPERS. Will come due on 9/30 and 12/2; see schedule below. These are to be analytical discussions of about 1,000-1250 words each, thoughtfully posed, rigorously developed and defended, written with great care. Detailed writing guidelines and 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 email as my time permits; but please be aware that this can become prohibitively time-consuming for me if you exercise the option too often. Make a substantial start before you send anything, and don't ask for help unless you need it. Send drafts as attached files in WORD format.

All papers should be typewritten (or computer printed), double-spaced, and generally legible. Check the Writing Guidelines handout for other relevant information. You will have the chance to present the first paper to the class, reading all or part of it to us on the due date. I recommend exercising this option, as it can make the whole writing experience more worthwhile and educational.

EXAMS. Are scheduled for Tuesday 8/14 and (in finals week) Thursday, 12/18. The mid-term will contain a mix of objective questions, mini-essays, and longer essays, designed to establish that you are familiar with all the reading.
through Week 8 and understand the concepts and issues that have been introduced in class discussion. The final will be similar but may also include a take-home essay portion, to be handed in at the beginning of the period. 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.

CHAT ROOM. Accessible through this page, will be available for a few days in advance of each exam. Check the "Current Assignment" board above for announced dates. Log on, post your questions, see what answers your classmates give, see what help you can offer in exchange. I will sometimes listen in and contribute answers or questions of my own. To participate you will need to have a WebCT User ID and know the basics of how to use the program. Take a little time with the "Student Starter Kit" to get this figured out.

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; and they will receive no written commentary, but a letter grade only. Pick up the phone, dial my number, and save yourself from this demoralizing fate.

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.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

• 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

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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 26, 28

Introduction

Read pp. 1-9 and 15-20 in A.
Atwood, "There Was Once," E350.
Nursery rhymes: read through pp. 15-63 in A, paying special attention to the following (by number in text): 8 ("To market, to market"), 12 ("Humpty, Dumpty"), 14 ("Little Jack Horner"), 18 ("Hey, diddle, diddle"), 19 ("Little Boy Blue"), 26 ("Peter, Peter, pumpkin eater"), 32 ("Wee Willie Winkie"), 33 ("A diller, a dollar"), 34 ("Jack and Jill"), 35 ("Diddle diddle dumpling"), 36 ("Georgie, Porgie"), 37 ("Rub-a-dub-dub"), 43 ("There was a crooked man"), 45 ("This Little Pig"), 49 ("Goosey, goosey gander"), 74 ("There was an old woman"), 76 ("The House that Jack Built"), 95 ("Thirty days hath September"), 106 ("Step on a crack"), 123 ("Jelly in the Dish"), 162 ("How much wood"), 163 ("Peter Piper").
Handout: Meter and Prosody.

2) September 2, 4

Nursery Rhymes and Nonsense

Continue with nursery rhymes.
Nonsense poems: Introduction, pp. 64-68 in A, plus the following poems from pp. 69-87: 5 ("Limericks"), 7 ("Knitted Things"), 8 ("Long Gone"), 9 ("One bright day"), 16 ("Let's marry!") , 19 ("A horse and a flea and three blind mice"), 36 ("The Owl and the Pussy-Cat"), 43 ("The Story of Augustus Who Would Not Have Any Soup"), 46 ("Jabberwocky"), 49 ("The Walrus and the Carpenter").

3) September 9, 11

Fairy Tales

Note: You will need to bring both anthologies to class while we are discussing fairy tales.
Read 245-252 in A.

4) September 16, 18

Fairy Tales


5) September 23, 25

Little Women

Alcott, Little Women, C186. Read Chapters 1-9 (to page 245); remainder optional.
6) September 30, October 2  

*Alice in Wonderland*

Tuesday: First Paper Due; class presentation of papers (optional).

_Alice in Wonderland_: Read whole book in C, not just excerpt in A!

7) October 7, 9  

Reports

Reports in reverse alphabetical order, until everyone has gone.


8) October 14, 16  

Poetry & Misc.

Mid-Term Exam, Tuesday.

9) October 21, 23  

_Little House on the Prairie_

10) October 28, 30  

_Adventures of Tom Sawyer, C389_

11) November 4, 6  

_Adventures of Tom Sawyer; Poetry_


12) November 11, 13  

Poetry; Kipling


13) November 18, 20  

O'Dell, _Island of the Blue Dolphins_

THANKSGIVING BREAK NOVEMBER 25-29

14) December 2, 4  

TBA

Work to be chosen by class vote: George, _Julie of the Wolves_, London, _Call of the Wild_, OR Salinger, _Catcher in the Rye._

Paper #2 due Tuesday

15) December 9, 11  

Review and Catch-Up

Final Exam: Thursday, December 18, 8-10

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