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ENG 3405-003: Children's Literature

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English 3405
Children's Literature

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TEXTS:
The Riverside Anthology of Children's Literature (RS)
Classics of Children's Literature (4th edition) (CL)
Only Connect: Readings on Children's Literature
(3rd edition) (OC)
Louise Fitzhugh: Harriet the Spy
C.S. Lewis: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe

PAPERS: Two 6-8 page double-spaced typewritten essays. At least one of these two essays must deal with both a work or works we read for the course PLUS a work or works by a writer or writers not on the syllabus. The first of these two papers will be preceded by a written project proposal which will count for one-third of the paper grade. Topics, further guidelines and due dates to be announced.

EXAMS: Mid-term and final. The mid-term and final will consist of essay and short answer identifications questions.

OTHER: To introduce the opening discussion of some of the class sessions, each student will at some point in the semester be responsible for a brief oral statement (to be accompanied by a written synopsis) on some aspect of the assigned reading material.

GRADES: Each essay counts one third, and the average of the mid-term, the final, and the oral statement makes up the final third of the course grade. All work must be completed to pass the course.

This average may be adjusted up or down depending on your class participation, improvement and effort. ATTENDANCE WILL AFFECT YOUR GRADE (see last page).

THE PURPOSE OF THIS COURSE:
First of all, this is not a methods course. The only method to which I subscribe of successfully presenting literature to children simply involves reading it, understanding it, and enjoying it yourself. If you can manage this, then the chances of your getting a child to like the literature should certainly improve. Beyond this obvious prescription I will not venture.

As the title states, this is a course in literature, and we will be approaching that literature with the same seriousness and rigor that can be applied to any "adult" literature. The course aims at an understanding of children's literature in its psychological, historical, and cultural depths of meaning. We will be looking at the cultural history of the phenomena of childhood, and
the changes in adult ideas about children and childhood, as reflected in this literature. We will try to see what is involved in a serious evaluation of the worth of such literature. Furthermore, we will try to understand the cultural values built into and/or imposed upon this body of literature. Throughout our consideration of these matters, I expect you to discuss, argue, and question.

COURSE OUTLINE


A. Myth. Epic. Legend
   St. George & the Dragon (RS553)
   Sigurd’s Youth & Fafnir the Dragon (RS620, 625)
   Heracles (RS569)
   Demeter (RS482)
   Anpao is Born (RS536)
   The Princess and the Feathers (RS528)

   Supplemental Reading:
   Peter Hunt, "Defining Children’s Literature" (OC2)

B. Folk Tradition
   Fables (RS230-243)

   "Nursery" Rhymes (Mother Goose)
   (Read all in RS & CL)

   Supplemental Reading:
   Joanne L. Lynn, "Runes to Ward Off Sorrow: Rhetoric of the English Nursery Rhyme" (OC 110)

Folk (Fairy) Tale
   (General)
   The Flea (RS331)
   The Old Troll of Big Mountain (RS390)
   Unanana & the Elephant (RS472)
   The Woman Who Flummoxed the Fairies (RS321)
   The Silver Nose (RS337)
   The Talking Pot (RS388)
   The Tongue-Cut Sparrow (RS394)

   Supplemental Reading:
   Joyce Thomas, "Woods and Castles, Towers and Huts: Aspects of Setting in the Fairy Tale (OC122)
II. The Invention of Childhood and Its Literature

A. The Child and the Folk
(The Grimm Brothers)

Snow White (CL41)
The Frog Prince (CL46)
Hansel and Gretel (CL49)
Aschenputtel (CL60)
Rapunzel (CL76)
The Robber Bridegroom (CL79)
The Almond Tree (CL81)
The Sleeping Beauty (CL87)

B. Literary Fairy Tales
(Charles Perrault)

Sleeping Beauty in the Woods (CL5)
Little Red Riding Hood (CL10)
Blue Beard (CL11)
The Master Cat (CL14)
Cinderella, or the Little Glass Slipper (CL17)

Supplemental Reading:
Marina Warner, "The Absent Mother: Women Against Women in Old Wives' Tales (OC278)

(Hans Christian Andersen)
The Snow Queen (CL93)
The Little Mermaid (CL111)
The Little Match Girl (CL129)
The Swineherd (CL130)
The Ugly Duckling (CL138)

C. Poetry

1) Poetry for Children

*Songs For the Little Ones at Home*, 19th century didactic verse for children (Handout)

R.L. Stevenson: *A Child's Garden of Verses* (CL766)

2) Poetry by Children: The Child's own Tradition

Street Chants, Rhymes & Games (RS42-49)
Poems by Children (RS159-161)

D. Nineteenth-Century Classics

Carroll: *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (CL333)
Twain: *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* (CL389)
Barrie: *Peter Pan* (CL961)
III. The Twentieth Century

Potter: "Peter Rabbit," "Squirrel Nutkin" (CL1152)
Burnett: The Secret Garden (CL516)
Supplemental Reading:
John Daniel Stahl, "The Imaginative Uses of Secrecy in
Children's Literature" (OC39)

Fitzhugh: Harriet the Spy
Supplemental Reading:
Marilyn Fain Apseloff, "Abandonment: The New Realism of
the Eighties" (OC359)
Sheila Egoff: "The Problem Novel" (Handout)

C.S. Lewis: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe
Supplemental Reading:
Sheila Egoff and Wendy Sutton, "Epilogue: Some Thoughts
on Connecting" (OC377)

English Department Statement Concerning Plagiarism

Any teacher who discovers an act of plagiarism -- "The
appropriation or imitation of the language, ideas, and/or thoughts
of another author, and representation of them as one's original
work" (Random House Dictionary of the English Language) -- has the
right and the responsibility to impose upon the guilty student an
appropriate penalty, up to and including immediate assignment of a
grade of F for the course.

Grading Scale

4.0 - 3.6 A
3.5 - 2.5 B
2.4 - 1.4 C
1.3 - 0.1 D

Attendance Policy

Because the information provided in the classroom is a major
part of 3405, and because of the stress that I place on discussion,
argument, and interrogation, failure to attend class will most
definitely affect your grade. Any student missing more than 6
class meetings without obtaining either my approval beforehand or
a formal excuse** will fail the course.

**Legitimate reasons (illness, official university activity,
recognized emergency) established through the University Health
Service or the Office of Student Personnel Services.
Late Work

Unless you have made prior arrangements with me, or provided a formal excuse (see above), I will accept no late papers.

Information for Students with Disabilities

If you have a documented disability and wish to receive academic accommodations, please contact the Coordinator of the Office of Disability Services (581-6583) as soon as possible.