

WESTERN WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY
English Department

**ENG 441 Children's Literature for the
Elementary and Middle School Teacher [5 credits]
Winter Term 2010**

❖❖❖ Winter Weather Hotline: (360) 650-6500 ❖❖❖

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Class Time/Location: Tuesdays and Thursdays -- 12:00-1:50 p.m.
HUM 106

Office Hours: Mon. 3:30-5:30 p.m.; Wed. 1:30-4:00 p.m.; Thurs. 10:30-11:30 a.m. & by appointment
One of my pleasures in teaching this class is sharing my extensive children's literature "library" with you. Please take advantage of my office hours to stop by to borrow some books, chat about children's literature, as well as ask questions and seek clarifications about class.

Course Overview:

This course will immerse you in literature for children and adolescents, written/illustrated by authors and illustrators about people who live during various time periods, among cultures, and in communities around the world (and beyond). We'll look (and re-look) at ourselves as readers (most specifically, of children's literature), consider the reading interests of children, and establish a repertoire of book titles to match their interests. During this term you will read voraciously, become familiar with books, authors, and illustrators in all genres, and develop literary evaluative knowledge and skill (considering both taste and quality). In addition, we will explore ways of inviting children and adolescents into books and reading while participating with creative responses to literature.

***THERE IS NO BETTER WAY TO LEARN ABOUT CHILDREN'S BOOKS THAN TO
READ THEM YOURSELF!***

Essential Questions:

- What makes children's literature enduring, engaging, and deserving of respect by adults as well as children?
- How do I negotiate and expand my personal taste/attitudes/experiences as a reader with accepted criteria for literary and artistic quality?
- What genres and noteworthy authors and illustrators are worth reading as we begin a new decade?
- How can I examine the *world of literature* for children/adolescents, examine the *world through literature* for children/adolescents, and examine *literature from around the world* written for children/adolescents?

"Few children learn to love books by themselves. Someone has to lure them into the wonderful world of the written word; someone has to show them the way." [Prescott]

Course Text (required):

CHILDREN'S LITERATURE, BRIEFLY, 4th edition (M.O. Tunnell and J.S. Jacobs)

Children's/Adolescent Literature (required):

CHARLOTTE'S WEB (E.B. White)

HARRY POTTER AND THE SORCERER'S STONE (J.K. Rowling)

JOEY PIGZA SWALLOWED THE KEY (J. Gantos) **or** MOCKINGBIRD: (MOK'ING-BÛRD)
(K. Erskine) **or** RULES (C. Lord)

THE KITE FIGHTERS (L.S. Park) **or** A SINGLE SHARD (L.S. Park) **or** WHEN MY NAME WAS
KEOKO (L.S. Park)

FREEDOM WALKERS: THE STORY OF THE MONTGOMERY BUS BOYCOTT (R.

Freedman) *or* HITLER YOUTH: GROWING UP IN HITLER'S SHADOW (S.C. Bartoletti) *or*
WE ARE THE SHIP: THE STORY OF NEGRO LEAGUE BASEBALL (K. Nelson) [hardcover
copies available for \$9]

THE INVENTION OF HUGO CABRET (B. Selznick)

Plus, numerous self-selected children's/young adult trade books

Professional Resources Worth Knowing About:

BOOK LINKS (quarterly journal)

JOURNAL OF CHILDREN'S LITERATURE (quarterly journal)

THE HORN BOOK MAGAZINE (bi-monthly journal)

CLIC (Children's Literature Interdisciplinary Collection) -- www.library.wvu.edu/clic/index.html

Bellingham Public Library – www.bellinghampubliclibrary.org

“Reading makes immigrants of us all – it takes us away from home, but, most importantly, it finds homes for us everywhere.” [Hazel Rochman]

Course Expectations:

This five credit course will carefully examine literature written for child and adolescent readers, in particular birth through age 14. Our emphasis will center around the question “What makes a good book?” with a focus on qualities related to writing *and* illustration. Since this class is a requirement for education majors, some attention will be devoted to elements of teaching (e.g., choosing books to read aloud, considering ways of inviting children to read authors/genres/titles they may not select on their own, responding to literature in ways that can adapt to the classroom). Even though we meet just twice a week, you'll fulfill the extra hour of class time by reading, reading, reading!

Attendance and Participation – Your on-time attendance, preparation prior to class, and presence/participation during class is expected since it impacts what we'll all learn this term. Through readings, discussions, and activities, you will accumulate a myriad of titles, ideas, and understandings about children's literature. Since much of our work is dependent upon your participation in class, it is difficult to make up a class you have missed. If you miss three classes, I will advise you to withdraw from the course and retake it another term. [Please silence your cell phone and refrain from distractions such as receiving/sending text messages during class.]

Oral, Written, and Art-Response Activities and Assignments – To receive maximum credit, all assignments must be submitted on the due dates listed on the course calendar. *Late papers and projects will only be accepted under unusual circumstances and with approval.*

“You have to write the book that wants to be written. And if the book will be too difficult for grown-ups, then you write it for children.” [Madeline L'Engle – 1918-2007]

Learning Activities and Projects:

- 1) **Read, Read, Read!** -- Many discussions and reader-response ideas will be based on *Children's Literature, Briefly*, our course text and the required children's literature. It is expected that you will complete required readings **prior** to each class session. The primary focus of this class is children's literature; enjoy this opportunity to read widely and with abandon. You will be involved in three types of reading this term:
 - a) Chapters from the course text
 - b) Required children's literature (see list at the bottom of the previous page & the top of this page)
 - c) Choice reading selections (see next page--***No more than five of these books can be published prior to 1995***)

Choice reading invites you to read books of your own choosing in several genres. You are required to read at least the required number of books in the formats and genres listed below. Naturally I hope you'll read even more than what's listed. *The required books listed on pages 1-2 may be counted in these numbers.*

REQUIRED & CHOICE CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

Three Poetry Books including:

- 1 anthology/collection that includes poetry about various topics, written by different poets
- 1 single topic or single author collection
- 1 picture book version of a single poem

Twelve Picture Books (aim for a variety of genres)

Ten Chapter Books including:

Contemporary Realistic Fiction

Joey Pigza Swallowed the Key **or** *Mockingbird* **or** *Rules*

1 other novel

Fantasy/Science Fiction

Charlotte's Web

Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone [optional alternate: another HP novel]

1 other novel

Historical Fiction

The Kite Fighters **or** *A Single Shard* **or** *When My Name was Keoko*

1 other novel

Biography/Autobiography

1 chapter-length book OR 2 picture books

Information/Nonfiction

Freedom Walkers **or** *Hitler Youth* **or** *We Are the Ship*

1 other chapter-length book OR 2 picture books

What's Groundbreaking In Children's Literature?

The Invention of Hugo Cabret

As you can see, there is much to read. **Please keep up with the readings!**

"Fiction allows us to do something that nothing else quite does. It allows us to enter fully into the lives of other human beings. . . . The fake characters we read about will evaporate like the morning dew, but the real ones, the true ones, will haunt us for the rest of our days." [Katherine Paterson, *Gates of Excellence*, p. 58-9]

- 2) **Literature Review Entries** (for required books only) – Review Entries consist of a typed *one page* (only) review for each book listed as “required.” These reviews demand careful attention to a book’s literary qualities as you develop skill as a knowledgeable reader and reviewer of children’s literature. Each book will be read in concert with a chapter from the Tunnell & Jacobs text. Literature Review Entries should reflect your personal response (taste) to the book as well as your sense of how it meets the criteria expressed in the chapter (quality). For example, when we read *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* you’ll read Ch. 10 in *Children's Literature, Briefly* to learn more about the literary expectations of fantasy. I’ll explain the expectations for Literature Review Entries and offer some writing strategies for these one-page reviews during class on January 12th. Please access a copy of the Literature Review Entry handout, evaluation rubric, and sample entry from Blackboard and bring it with you to class on January 12th. Use information from these resources and from *Children's Literature, Briefly* to guide the writing of your review entries. [You may delete *one* LR Entry with no penalty to your grade, either by not writing a Review for one book OR by dropping your lowest score.]

“What I like in a good author isn’t what he says, but what he whispers.”

[Logan Pearsall Smith, essayist (1865-1946)]

- 3) **Reading File/Reading Log** (for choice reading selections) -- Maintain a card file/database to record your choice readings. This serves to chronicle your reading and supports the bibliography you’ll prepare for your World of Literature project. It also affords me a window into your reading this term. You do *not* have to prepare Reading File entries for Literature Review Entry books.

Reading File entries should be written on index cards (4x6 or larger – *please do not use 3x5 notecards*) or onto a database. You may find it valuable to color code cards by genre. An extended explanation of the reading file (including a sample entry) is located on page 6 of this syllabus.

Your **Reading Log** (see pg. 9) records all books read this term, listed by format and genre. Write book titles only (include Literature Review Entry books with an asterisk). *This log needs to be kept up-to-date and should accompany your reading file each time it’s handed in.*

Reading Files and Logs will be collected on *January 28th* and *February 23rd* in order to receive feedback. Your final file and log is due on *March 1st*. Aim to turn in 1/3 of your cards with each submission. Clip your cards together or staple database entries and accompany these with your reading log. No file boxes please.

- 4) **Reader Response Activities** – Throughout the term you will be invited to participate in oral, written, and artistic activities designed to enhance your interaction with the books we’ve read. Some examples of response projects are:

Introductory Letter – Richard Peck, author of numerous award-winning books for children, claims, “the literature of our childhood becomes our lifelong luggage.” He admonishes authors, teachers, and parents to remember that “a book for the young must live in their world, not ours.” As a means of considering these words, I’m asking you to reflect upon your early (and later) reading life and introduce yourself in a 2-3 page letter (written to me) that reflects on some of your “lifelong luggage.” Include the following in this typed letter (*due Tuesday, Jan. 12th*):

- ▶ Mention three pieces of literature that had a strong impact on you as a reader from three different times in your life between birth and age 14 (e.g., a book read to you, one you reread over and over again, one that could have been your undoing as a reader, one you hope to introduce to your students/children).
- ▶ Consider the reason(s) for each book’s appeal.
- ▶ Relate the books to who you were at the time.
- ▶ Aim to find a “common thread” or make a metaphorical connection between the books and your life as a reader.

Q2 Response Cards – To process the information gleaned from the text and to guide our discussions, you will complete a 4 x 6 note card for each reading assignment in *Children’s Literature, Briefly*. [See course calendar for due dates. You have the option of choosing not to complete a Q2 card for one chapter with no penalty to your grade.] Q2 response cards include:

Side one: One *quote* that stands out as a key idea, issue, or inspiration from the reading [include page number] followed by your *response to the quote* discussing what insights or ideas it raises.

Side two: One *question* that was prompted by the reading (some issue, argument, or concern that you would like to discuss with others). Aim to raise a question you really wonder about. The more thoughtful and open-ended your question, the richer the discussion.

“The test of literature is, I suppose, whether we ourselves live more intensely for the reading of it.” [Elizabeth Drew]

- 5) **World of Children's Literature Project** -- This project (in lieu of a final exam) invites you to read children's literature to research and explore a culture, country, or region of interest. Select books from all genres representing the work of authors and illustrators from your selected "place," books that are set in that place, and books that inform readers about the place. Your findings will be presented both in writing (including an annotated bibliography) and visually. In addition, you will also present a 5-6 minute book talk featuring two selected books from your "place." A complete explanation of this project will be offered in class during week three. *Note:* You'll submit a two-part proposal for this project. Part I defines your "place" and provides your rationale for selection. It is due **January 21st**. Part II lists your selected books and project ideas and is due **February 18th**. Book talks and Written/Visual projects are due during our scheduled time during Finals Week on **Monday, March 15th from 1-3 p.m.** and will be presented in small groups.

AND LAST, BUT CERTAINLY NOT LEAST . . .

- 6) **Children's Literature Conference** – Mark your calendar for Saturday, March 6th to attend WWU's 7th annual Children's Literature Conference featuring five award-winners in the field of children's literature: Marla Frazee (and her editor, Allyn Johnston), John Green, Gerald McDermott, and Linda Sue Park. There is a reduced registration fee for students and numerous opportunities to help with the conference (further reducing fees) by participating as a volunteer prior to or the day of the conference. Access conference information at www.wwucl.com.

"It is not enough simply to teach children to read; we have to give them something worth reading. Something that will stretch their imaginations--something that will help them make sense of their own lives and encourage them to reach out toward people whose lives are quite different from their own." [Katherine Paterson, *The Spying Heart*, p. 163-4]

Evaluation

All activities and projects will be evaluated on thoroughness, clarity of presentation, timeliness, professional appearance (which includes grammatical and spelling correctness), and creativity (where appropriate). Attendance and participation are valued and will be calculated into the final grade. Arriving to class late and leaving early is unprofessional and distracting. It, too, will affect your grade. If you miss more than three classes (for *any* reason, including illness) you will have missed one quarter of the course. You will be requested to withdraw from the course and take it another term. Activities/Projects are worth the following points:

		<i>Points and Grade Equivalents:</i>	
Attendance/Participation	20	162-180	= A
Q2 Response Cards (2 pts. each)	25	156-161	= A-
Literature Review Entries (5 pts. each)	25	150-155	= B+
Reading File/Reading Log (approx. 2 pts. each)	35	145-149	= B
Intro. Letter, Folklore Sheet, Poetry Eval. Sheet	20	139-144	= B-
<u>World of Literature Project</u>	<u>55</u>	133-138	= C+
TOTAL Points Possible	180	128-132	= C

"No book is really worth reading at the age of ten that is not equally (and often far more) worth reading at the age of fifty . . . the only imaginative works we ought to grow out of are those which it would be better not to have read at all."

[C. S. Lewis, "On Stories," *Essays Presented to Charles Williams*]

READING FILE ENTRIES:

Create a reading file entry for every choice reading selection (remember, you need NOT prepare a file entry for Literary Review Entry books). These can be written onto notecards (4x6 or larger) or typed into a database. Either way, all reading file entries must include the following:

- a) Genre/format
- b) author, Title, illustrator, publisher, copyright date (If there is more than one date, then include the most recent, followed by the original publication date)
- c) Description/Summary/Plot [For illustrated books, also include description of illustrations (medium, technique, style)]
- d) Response: Include your personal response with explanation. If you think it's useful, you may want to include recommended audience and/or classroom application. When possible, cite awards received. [Appendix F in Children's Literature, Briefly is an excellent resource for this.]

Fantasy – picture book*Elise Verdiere*

Waldman, Neil. The Starry Night. Honesdale, PA: Boyds Mills Press, 1999.

Description: Bernard, an African-American child from New York, meets Van Gogh in Central Park. He is impressed by his painting and begins to show him around. Van Gogh paints New York in beautiful colors, then takes Bernard to the museum to show a film of “The Starry Night” before he vanishes mysteriously in the museum.

Waldman’s illustrations are oil on canvas, acrylic on canvas, and pen and ink on paper. The canvases (in Van Gogh’s style) are framed within sepia ink drawings. End papers are drawings of the “Starry Night” created by children from an art class the illustrator taught with the Southern Westchester Board of Cooperative Education Services.

Response: Very attractive book, joyful and colorful. I could almost feel the texture of the paintings which are paired effectively with the story. Bernard is a true-to-life young boy who readers will connect with. This book would be an ideal introduction to impressionism as well as to New York City and might even inspire readers to create their own “Starry Night” paintings or inquire about the real Vincent Van Gogh.

Tips/Suggestions/Reminders:

- Often you can discern an illustrator's medium and even glean stylistic information at the very beginning or at the end of the book, either in an Illustrator's Note, or in the fine print on the CIP page. Also, the information in Chapter 4 of Children's Literature, Briefly will support your growing understanding of style, media, and visual elements.
- Record *all* books read on your Reading Log (last page of your syllabus). Place an * next to required books (those you've prepared a Literature Review Entry for, but not a Reading Log Entry).
- Remember, you do *not* need to prepare a Reading File Entry for Literature Review Entry books.
- World of Literature Project books are choice reading and *do* count as Reading File Entries.
- The focus this term is to introduce you to children's literature that has been published since you were a child. As such, **you may include no more than five books that have been published before 1995** for this requirement.

General Course Outline and Assignments

<i>Week /Date</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>Assignment</i>
1	January 5th	Getting Acquainted & Course Overview
	January 7th	Why Read? Creating Historical Context and Classifying Children's Literature Book Pass
		Read: <i>Chapter 1, 5, 6</i> Q2 response card (one card)
<hr style="border-top: 1px dashed black;"/>		
2	January 12th	Personal Response to Literature What Makes a Good Book? Words Explanation: Literature Review Entries [Bring handout from Blackboard]
	January 14th	Personal Response to Literature Where do stories come from and how do different readers respond?
		Read: <i>Chapters 2 & 3</i> Q2 response card Introductory Letter CHARLOTTE'S WEB [Lit. Review Entry]
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3	January 19th	What Makes a Good Book? Pictures Developing the Ability to See Explanation: World of Literature Project
	January 21st	The Illustrated Book: Examining Process and Intent Video: "Eric Carle~Picture Writer"
		Read: <i>Chapter 4</i> Q2 response card Read: <i>Chapter 7</i> Q2 response card World/Lit Proposal #1
<hr style="border-top: 1px dashed black;"/>		
4	January 26th	The Illustrated Book: Marrying Illustration and Text
	January 28th	Traditional Fantasy/Folklore Folktale retellings
		Picture Book discussion notes Read: <i>Chapter 15</i> Q2 response card Read: <i>Chapter 9</i> Q2 response card Reading File/Log [approx. 7 cards]
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5	February 2nd	Evaluating Traditional Tales CLIC Fieldtrip – discovering resources & Beginning research for W of L project
	February 4th	Modern Fantasy (and sci fi)
		Folklore Eval. Sheet [handout on Blackboard] Read <i>Chapter 10</i> Q2 response card HARRY POTTER . . . [Lit. Review Entry]
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6	February 9th	Poetry and Verse A Look at the Poetry Picture Book Explanation: World of Lit. Projects
	February 11th	Responding to and with Poetry Bring: poetry anthology marked with 1-3 poems that matter to you
		Read: <i>Chapter 8</i> Q2 response card Poetry Eval. Sheet [handout on Blackboard]

" . . . she will never again think of literature merely as a tool for developing literacy, for she now understands from the inside out that literature provides essential sustenance for the soul: that it is of life and about life, and that classrooms lacking in literature are classrooms lacking in soul." [Mem Fox, Radical Reflections . . .]

<i>Week /Date</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>Assignment</i>	
7	February 16th	Contemporary Realistic Fiction	Read: <i>Chapter 11</i> Q2 response card
	February 18th	No Class – Work on World/Lit Project	World/Lit Proposal #2 [e-mail to NJJ by noon 2/19]
8	February 23rd	Contemporary Realistic Fiction	JOEY PIGZA ... THE KEY <i>or</i> MOCKINGBIRD <i>or</i> RULES [Lit. Review Entry] Reading File/Log [7 cards]
	February 25th	Historical Fiction Explanation: World of Lit. Booktalks	Read <i>Chapter 12</i> Q2 response card KITE FIGHTERS <i>or</i> A SINGLE SHARD <i>or</i> WHEN MY NAME WAS KEOKO [Lit. Review Entry]
9	March 2nd	CLIC Brown Bag Lunch Event: 2010 Children's Literature Awards	
	March 4th	Nonfiction/Informational Books	Read <i>Chapter 14</i> Q2 response card FREEDOM WALKERS <i>or</i> HITLER YOUTH <i>or</i> WE ARE THE SHIP [Lit. Review Entry]
	[optional]	4:30-7:00 p.m. NSSRC Presentation w/Gerald McDermott--Location TBA	
<i>Saturday, March 6th – WWU 7th Annual Children's Literature Conference</i>			
10	March 9th	Biography/Autobiography	Read <i>Chapter 13</i> Q2 response card
	March 11th	What's Groundbreaking in Children's Literature?	HUGO CABRET [Lit. Review Entry] Reading File/Log
Monday, March 15th [1-3 p.m.]	World of Literature Booktalks Small group sharing of final projects Course Evaluation	World of Literature Written/Visual Project	

"And now," cried Max, "let the wild rumpus start!"

--Maurice Sendak

Where the Wild Things Are

READING LOG

Name _____

Write book titles only. List all books read, including required and independent reading choices. Place an asterisk (*) next to books with no note card (Literature Review books).

Poetry Books

Anthology/Collection (poetry on various topics):

1.

Single Topic or Single Author Anthology/Collection:

1.

Picture Book Version of a Single Poem:

1.

Picture Books (aim for a variety of genres)

- | | |
|----|-----|
| 1. | 7. |
| 2. | 8. |
| 3. | 9. |
| 4. | 10. |
| 5. | 11. |
| 6. | 12. |

Chapter Books

Contemporary Realistic Fiction:

- | | |
|----|----|
| 1. | 2. |
|----|----|

Fantasy/Science Fiction:

- | | | |
|----|----|----|
| 1. | 2. | 3. |
|----|----|----|

Historical Fiction:

- | | |
|----|----|
| 1. | 2. |
|----|----|

Biography/Autobiography (1 chapter book OR 2 picture books):

- | | | |
|----|----|----|
| 1. | 2. | 3. |
|----|----|----|

Information/Nonfiction (2 chapter books OR 1 chapter book & 2 picture books):

- | | | |
|----|----|----|
| 1. | 2. | 3. |
|----|----|----|

⇒ To be completed for the March 11th submission: Using your own criteria, what is the “best” picture book and the “best” chapter book you’ve read this term? Explain your choices on the back of this form by addressing your criteria for each choice.