Texas A&M University

Core Curriculum

Initial Request for a Course Addition to the Fall 2014 Core Curriculum

Foundational Component Area: Language, Philosophy and Culture

In the box below, describe how this course meets the Foundational Component Area description for Language, Philosophy and Culture. Courses in this category focus on how ideas, values, beliefs, and other aspects of culture express and affect human experience. Courses involve the exploration of ideas that foster aesthetic and intellectual creation in order to understand the human condition across cultures.

How does the proposed course specifically address the Foundational Component Area definition above?

**English 360:** Students in this course will read several classics in children's literature as well as a number of contemporary children's books. This course will explore a variety children's literature through various genres--contemporary novel, classic novel, historical fiction, and realistic fiction, picture books, and fairy tales. The student will not only become familiar with these genres but explore various ideas conveyed in the texts, the historical development, social and cultural context of children's fiction, how novels for young readers have changed and/or stayed the same, and the intersections among gender, politics, and children's fiction. Most importantly, however, we will be examining the ideologies embedded in the texts as well as beliefs and values that guide our culture, particularly in terms of children and the literature they read. This course will ultimately reveal how wider social forces shape the philosophical outlooks and aesthetic sensibilities of writers of literature for children and how writers of different racial, ethnic, gender, regional backgrounds, and sexual orientation may approach and interpret the world differently for readers of children's literature. Material from this course will include written texts and such visual representations as photographs, illustrations, films, or theatrical performances.

**Core Objectives**

Describe how the proposed course develops the required core objectives below by indicating how each learning objective will be addressed, what specific strategies will be used for each objective and how student learning of each objective will be evaluated.

Critical Thinking (to include creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation and synthesis of information):

*Critical Thinking Skills (CTS):* The course will enhance critical thinking skills through consistent reading and class discussion of literature for children. The evaluation of critical thinking skills will be based on exams and class participation and may include written work. Exams will be designed to allow students to demonstrate their ability to evaluate and synthesize key ideas from the assigned reading. Class room discussion will focus on helping students better understand the nuances and complexities of literature for children.

Communication (to include effective development, interpretation and expression of ideas through written, oral and visual communication):

*Communication Skills (CS):* The course enhances communication skills through small and large group discussion, writing and visual texts of ideas, issues, questions, and themes central to course reading. The course will help students learn how to develop a greater understanding of literature for children that may involve guided writing assignments in which they will receive feedback, exams in which students will be expected to effectively convey
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key ideas from the course succinctly and clearly, and class room discussion in which students will learn how to express questions and thoughts about the subtleties of each text under examination. Material from this course will include written texts and such visual representations as photographs, illustrations, films, or theatrical performances.

Social Responsibility (to include intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to engage effectively in regional, rational, and global communities):

*Social Responsibility (SR)*: The course enhances social responsibility by providing students with a cross cultural understanding of how history and broader social forces have shaped the distinctive literary traditions of literature for children. The evaluation of social responsibility will be based upon an end-of-the-semester short writing assignment in which students will be asked to reflect upon how their knowledge of literatures from previous historical periods and cultures outside of their own has changed in light of the new information that they now possess. Students will be expected to demonstrate how key insights from the course have helped broaden their understanding of literature for children.

Personal Responsibility (to include the ability to connect choices, actions and consequences to ethical decision-making):

*Personal Responsibility (PR)*: The course will enhance personal responsibility through engagement with moral and thorny ethical issues that arise in class readings. The course material throughout the semester will offer students an opportunity to reflect upon personal responsibility and ethical responses to such topics as good vs. evil, gender ideology, socializing effects of children's literature, competing worldviews, and the ethics of adult censorship on children's reading.

Please be aware that instructors should be prepared to submit samples/examples of student work as part of the future course recertification process.