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Office hours: TR 11-12:30
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Course title and number: ENGL 360.500, Literature for Children
Term: Fall 2012
Times and location: TR 9:35-10:50, LAAH 3XX

Course Description
Catalog Description: (3-0). Representative writers, genres, texts and movements.

Course Description: 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 of 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.

Student Learning Outcomes

1. Identify major writers in children's literature.
2. Explain the relationship between individual works and social/historical contexts.
3. Form written arguments and support them with textual evidence.
4. Explain how gender and wider societal and cultural values shape the literary sensibilities and humanistic concerns in the literature for children.
5. Identify and interpret major literary traditions and aesthetic movements that have shaped the development of literature for children.
6. Engage in comparative work.
7. Write formal essay answers which provide critical insights into literary works.

Core Curriculum Objectives

Critical Thinking Skills (CTS): The course will enhance critical thinking skills through consistent reading and class discussion of literature for children.

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.

Personal Responsibility (PR): The course will enhance personal responsibility through engagement with moral and thorny ethical issues that arise in class readings.
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.

Evaluation of Core Objectives

CTS: 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. Classroom discussion will focus on helping students better understand the nuances and complexities of literature for children.

CS: 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 key ideas from the course succinctly and clearly, and classroom 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.

PR: The course material throughout the semester will offer students an opportunity to reflect upon personal responsibility through such topics as good vs. evil, gender ideology, socializing effects of children's literature, competing world views, and the ethics of adult censorship on children's reading.

SR: 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.

Course Requirements

Required reading
- Keliko Kasha, A Mother for Choco
- C. S. Lewis, The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe
- Chris Van Allsburg, The Wretched Stone
- Jon Scieszka and Lane Smith, The Stinky Cheese Man and Other Fairly Stupid Tales
- Pam Muñoz Ryan, Esperanza Rising
- Anna Sewell, Black Beauty
- David Maransky, Black and White
- David Wiesner, The Three Pigs
- Edward Fager, Seven-Day Magic
- Terry Pratchett, Only You Can Save Mankind
- Assorted short works as listed below (available online or on e-reserve)
Grading Policies

Assignments and Grade Distribution
Exam 1 30%
Exam 2 30%
Exam 3 30%
Attendance/participation, including free writing 10%

All essay exams will be made up of short and long questions.

Grading Scale
F: 0-59, D: 60-69, C: 70-79, B: 80-89, A: 90-100

Attendance Policy

The University views class attendance as the responsibility of an individual student. Attendance is essential to complete the course successfully. University rules related to excused and unexcused absences are located on-line at http://student-rules.tamu.edu/rule07.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact Disability Services in Cain Hall, Room B118, or call 845-1637. For additional information visit http://disability.tamu.edu.

Academic Integrity
For additional information please visit: http://aggiehonor.tamu.edu “An Aggie does not lie, cheat, or steal, or tolerate those who do.”

Course Calendar

Week 1 Introduction to course


Week 2 Keiko Kasza, A Mother for Choco
Chris Van Allsburg, The Wretched Stone

Week 3  MacDonnell, “The Day Boy and the Night Girl” (a.k.a. “Phatogen and Nycteiris”), online
at http://www.ccel.org/ccel/macdonald/daynight/files/daynight.html and elsewhere
C. S. Lewis, The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe (read whole book for this class meeting).

Week 4  Lewis contd.
  Lewis contd.

Week 5  Exam #1 workshop.
  Exam #1 workshop

Week 6  EXAM #1

  Unit 2, Didacticism, socialization, and parody/oppositional reading: Catherine
  Sinclair, “Uncle David’s Nonsense Story about Giants and Fairies” (from
  Jane Taylor, “The Idle Boy” (online; Google “Jane Taylor” + “idle boy” and look
  in
  Original Poems, 1804-5, for the poem beginning “Thomas was an idle lad”);
  Adelaide
  Proctor, “Never Play with Fire” (also appearing in Original Poems); Heinrich
  Hoffman,
  “The Story of Little Suck-a-Thumb” (from Struwwelpeter, orig. German 1844),
  online at
  http://www.gutenberg.org/files/12116/12116-h/12116-h.htm; Hilaire Belloc,
  “Jim,”
  (1907), online at:

  ntents

Week 7
Scieszka and Lane Smith, The Stinky Cheese Man and Other Fairly Stupid Tales

Week 8
Muñoz Ryan, Esperanza Rising (read entire book for this meeting)
  Ryan contd.
Ryan contd.

Week 9
Anna Sewell, Black Beauty (read entire book for this meeting)
Sewell contd.

Week 10
Exam #2 workshop
EXAM #2

Week 11
Unit 3, Books about reading (and more): Edward Eager, Seven-Day Magic (read whole book for this class meeting)
Eager contd.

Week 12
David Macaulay, Black and White
David Wiesner, The Three Pigs

Week 13
E. Nesbit, “The Town in the Library in the Town in the Library” (1901), on e-reserve (do read the story, but note that if you like, you may also listen to an audio version at http://archive.org/details/9unlikelytales_cs_lv2)

THANKSGIVING; no class

Week 14
Terry Pratchett, Only You Can Save Mankind
Pratchett contd.

FINAL EXAM: On the third and final exam students will be expected to demonstrate how key insights from the course have helped broaden their understanding of how history, culture, and philosophical outlooks have shaped the literary traditions of literature for children.