

ENG 2280: CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

Class: Section 01 CRN# 22368, Section 02 CRN#23900, or 03 CRN# 25737
MWR 9-9:50am (01), 10:00-10:50am (02), or 11:00-11:50am (03)
Classroom: Holt 304 (01), Holt 309 (02), Holt 307 (03)
Prerequisite: one lower level course in written communication in ENGL

Instructor: Dr. Meghann Meeusen

Contact Information:

meghann-meeusen@utc.edu, 586-651-0289

I prefer email as the method to contact me with inquiries regarding class, and I check for messages regularly. Please only use my private phone for dire emergencies, and keep in mind I am not typically available to answer.

Office Hours:

Monday, Wednesday, and Friday 12pm-3pm or by appt
UTC's New Library, RM 403

I am also available outside of these times by appointment.

TEXT REQUIREMENTS

Please bring a paper or digital copy of all books to class each day during the week they are assigned. Learning artifact points will sometimes be awarded for simply having a copy of the text, as this is a crucial part of full participation in class.

In all cases, any edition/version of a text is acceptable, including digital texts. Listening to books via audio is also encouraged, although a hard copy is necessary for class. The following books are required and recommended for purchase:

- Gail Carson Levine, *Ella Enchanted*
- Neil Gaiman, *Fortunately, the Milk*
- Kate DiCamillo, *Flora and Ulysses*
- JM Barrie, *Peter Pan*
- Kadir Nelson, *Heart and Soul*
- Pam Munoz Ryan and Brian Selznick, *When Marian Sang*
- Shaun Tan, *The Arrival*
- Lenore Look, *Alvin Ho: Allergic to Girls, School, and Other Scary Things*
- Margarita Engle, *The Wild Book*

The following picture books are required, but are also on reserve at the library (and can be read in a shorter period). If you have a copy, please bring it to class, but doing so is not required.

- Virginia Lee Burton, *The Little House*
- Muriel and Tom Feelings, *Jambo Means Hello*
- Maurice Sendak, *Where the Wild Things Are*

Additionally, you'll need to bring several picture books that you've selected based on your interests to class. These can be books you've purchased or checked out from the library (either UTC library's selection of picture books, the Chattanooga Public Library, or your local public library):

- One favorite picture book
- One Caldecott award winning picture book
- One alphabet picture book
- One picture book biography
- One nonfiction picture book

Other Required Class Materials (should have each day of class)

- Composition Notebook (hard cover, bound pages—not spiral/binder, minimum of 80 sheets/160 pages)
- Glue Sticks and Post-It Notes

Finally, printing is required for the submission of several assignments, so please make sure you consistently have the means by which to do so.

COURSE CONTENT

COURSE DESCRIPTION

A survey and evaluation of some of the best literature for children, with special attention to literature for preschool and elementary school years.

OBJECTIVES

- Students will learn to identify the social, cultural, and ideological messages presented in texts and identify what books and other media composed for children reflect about contemporary society.
- Students will interrogate how scholars and teachers think, write and speak about literary texts, producing examples of this unique literary approach and articulating the defining characteristics of such literary discourse in its various forms.

- Students will investigate the common and conflicting trends in how scholars and teachers think about texts with particular attention to analysis and interpretation.
- Students will demonstrate and reflect on their own use of purposeful writing techniques and rhetorical strategies as fitting within the conventions of scholarly writing and other forms of writing about literature.
- Students will prepare for future studies in literature by building foundational skills in literary analysis, criticism, and technique.
- Students will explore and articulate explicit and implicit ideologies, studying texts in terms of their social context with special attention to intertextuality, historical basing, and position within contemporary culture.
- Students will build knowledge about foundational topics, concepts, theories and approaches to children’s texts.
- Students will develop a language with which to discuss children’s texts built on contemporary theoretical perspectives.
- Students will consider various critical approaches, not only practicing critical thinking in a variety of means, but also interrogating the nature of these kinds of approaches to textual analysis.

ASSIGNMENTS & STUDENT WORK

DAYBOOK- 25% (100 midterm points & 150 final points)

The daybook is one of the most significant ways of engaging with course material this semester, kept in the form of a composition notebook. It is my hope that students will take this daybook with them everywhere, and they must bring it to class each day with a glue stick. Anything can go in it—random thoughts, more developed musings, things you want to remember, poems, pictures, mementos, etc., as well as assignments we do in class. Each week, the weekly reading guide will include several suggestions for daybook activities, and after each class, a “homework” or extension activity for the daybook is provided. While students decide themselves what to include in their daybook, EVERY PAGE in the composition notebook must be filled by the end of the semester for full credit.

At the end of the semester, students will turn in a portfolio that will demonstrate the depth of work they have done in the daybook throughout the semester, collecting work in a folder by selecting and photocopying entries. Students will include entries that demonstrate roles they have enacted throughout the semester,

such as questioner, creative thinker, connection maker, researcher, and reviser, as well as significant moments of learning and meaning.

IN CLASS WORK- 30% (300 points)

As the foundation of this course is the study of literature, students should complete all readings in their entirety by assigned due dates and prepare to discuss these texts fully in the classroom setting. To demonstrate their thoughtful reading, active participation, and critical thinking, students will complete a variety of assignments in class. These will primarily include reading quizzes, exit tickets, daybook checks, and learning artifacts.

Reading Quizzes: Students will complete short unannounced quizzes at the beginning of class throughout the semester. Quizzes will ask students to recount main elements of a story or make connections in short answer questions that rely upon careful reading for completion.

Exit Tickets: Participation in activities during class and short in-class writing assignments will also frequently be used as “exit tickets,” turned in on the way out of the classroom.

Daybook Checks: To make sure that students are on track in the work they do in their daybook, they will be asked to share an entry that they have completed outside of class a few times throughout the semester.

Learning Artifacts: Additionally, students may be asked to bring a particular item or short piece of writing that can demonstrate learning or research into a particular text or idea related to the week's reading. These required “learning artifacts” will be announced at least one class in advance.

Please Note: No in-class assignments, including quizzes, exit tickets, daybook checks, or learning artifacts, can be made up in the event of absence. Students can only earn these points by being present in class, as they rely heavily on class participation.

WRITTEN ANALYSIS- 15% (150 points)

Students will conduct a critical study of one or more pieces of children’s literature, follow specific instructions to demonstrate a research driven analysis of a topic related to children’s texts. This assignment asks students to compose a short piece of analytical writing explaining an interpretation and research driven thesis that will then act as the basis of the subsequent individual project. Students will have the choice to receive written or verbal feedback on this assignment, encouraged to schedule a conference outside of class with the instructor to receive feedback on their written analysis essay.

While topics for the written analysis are student selected, they must reflect an understanding of an important or unique aspect of children's literature, with particular attention to trends, patterns, related critical theory, or historical significance.

Mostly importantly, students must present a conclusion drawn about one or more text that is not readily obvious or apparent; the analysis should recount something students have noticed in their study that would not be easily observed by everyone, explaining why what they have noticed is important to a deeper understanding of literature for children. Students should base their analysis on a text or texts considered children's literature, including at least one book we have not read together in class.

INDIVIDUAL RESEARCH PROJECT- 15% (150 points)

Scholars and teachers who study literature write in a variety of ways, utilizing numerous approaches and multiple genres. This project asks students to choose their own approach to writing about literature, purposefully and thoughtfully selecting and creating a project that will demonstrate their understanding of the unique ways that scholars and teachers think about literary texts. Suggested genres (types of projects) will be provided, and this project also includes a rationale, a written defense that explains how the project meets certain objectives.

FINAL TAKE HOME EXAM- 15% (150 points)

The final exam includes short answer and essay length questions related to class content, activities, lectures, and readings. Questions will ask students to draw connections between texts and apply various class ideas and critical approaches to children's literature. While the exam is a take home assignment, it will have a finite amount of time for completion.

GRADING BREAKDOWN

90%-100% A	exceptional, outstanding work
80%-89% B	strong, thoughtful work
70%-79% C	average, complete work
60%-69% D	problematic, sloppy work
59% F	incomplete, careless work

ATTENDANCE AND LATE WORK

As active participants in an academic community, students must attend class every day. Furthermore, regular attendance is necessary for successful completion of all major assignments. As part of the attendance policy, **in-class points (including**

quizzes, exit tickets, daybook checks, and learning artifacts) can ONLY be earned if a student is present in class, as the opportunity to earn these points is based upon participation in the class itself. These in class points are considered, in part, attendance and participation points, and thus are only earned via a student's attendance of the class period and active participation in class.

If a student must be absent, he/she is responsible for all missed content, including turning in assignments on their given due date. Please demonstrate professionalism by arriving to class on time. Additionally, it is a personal pet peeve of mine when students pack up their belongings before I have dismissed them, as it is extraordinarily distracting during a time when I typically announce important summary points or assignment requirements for the next class. Please do not begin preparations to leave the classroom until class has officially ended. Finally, any health conditions that prevent students from regular attendance should be discussed with me at the beginning of the semester.

I do not accept late work. Although I reserve the right to make exceptions to this policy, this is rare and is only possible after a meeting with me. If you foresee a problem completing an assignment on time, please speak to me at least 48 hours in advance, at which time I am far more open to making arrangements.

OTHER PROCEDURAL INFORMATION

Student Conduct: As adults in the academic community, a respectful and appropriate behavior code is expected at all times. However, should this behavior code be broken by a disruptive or disrespectful student, he/she may be asked to remove him/herself from class for the day. For information on specific behavior expectations, please see the UTC Student Conduct Code.

Academic Integrity/Plagiarism: Students are responsible for making themselves aware of and understanding the policies and procedures found in the Student Code of Conduct, including those policies regarding academic dishonesty and plagiarism. Although plagiarism comes in many forms, students are expected above all to produce their own work in an ethical and honest way. Additionally, issues of correct citation and use of resources are crucial to both work as a student and development as a writer, and students are expected to consider carefully these tenets in the production of all class texts. Students should consult with the instructor if they are uncertain about an issue of academic honesty prior to the submission of an assignment.

Students engaging in any level of academic dishonesty or plagiarism will have to meet with the instructor outside of class to discuss academic penalty based on the severity of the offense, which can include a failing grade on the assignment or a failing grade in the entire course.

ADA STATEMENT: If you are a student with a disability (e.g. physical, learning, psychiatric, vision, hearing, etc.) and think that you might need special assistance or a special accommodation in this class or any other class, call the Disability Resource Center (DRC) at 425-4006 or come by the office, 102 Frist Hall
<http://www.utc.edu/disability-resource-center/>.

If you find that personal problems, career indecision, study and time management difficulties, etc. are adversely affecting your successful progress at UTC, please contact the Counseling and Career Planning Center at 425-4438 or
<http://www.utc.edu/counseling-personal-development-center/index.php> .

Writing Center: The Writing Center at UTC is a free service offered to all members of the University community. The Center is staffed by peer tutors, graduate students, and English instructors, and offers various services to writers, including tutorials, workshops, and access to resources. Please visit the Writing Center in Holt 119.

UTC E-mail: To enhance student services, the University will use your UTC email address (firstname-lastname@mocs.utc.edu) for communications. See <http://www.utc.edu/> for your exact address. Please check your UTC email on a regular basis. If you have problems with accessing your email account, contact the Help Desk at 423/425-4000.

Computers in the Classroom: Although I encourage students to use personal computers in the classroom, once class begins, every student should be actively engaged in class content. Electronic readers may be used for class texts when available as long as the format remains reasonably similar AND students bring the text on their laptop computer or an electronic reader to class.