FOUNDATIONS OF LITERATURE FOR CHILDREN

Room: STV 0347 A

Times: MWF 12:00pm – 12:50pm

Instructor: Meghann Meeusen

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

Office Hours: Monday/Wednesday/Friday 2pm-3pm. I am also available outside of these times by appointment.

TEXT REQUIREMENTS

- Neil Gaiman's *Coraline*
- Lemony Snicket's *The Bad Beginning* (Series of Unfortunate Events #1)
- Lois Lowry's *The Giver*
- Jennifer Rozines Roy's *Yellow Star*
- JM Barrie's *Peter Pan and Wendy*
- Eric Shanower and Skottie Young's *Wonderful Wizard of Oz*
- Shaun Tan's *The Arrival*
- Christopher Paul Curtis's *The Watsons Go to Birmingham—1963*
- Gail Carson Levine's *Ella Enchanted*
- Kirsten Cashore's *Graceling*

Other Requirements: You will also need to read several picture books available on reserve at Milner Library and for "suggested" purchase at the bookstore. Other outside reading will also be necessary for major projects/assignments. Finally, additional supplemental readings will be available online, including some required handouts.

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. Finally, although many materials are available and/or submitted online, some printing is necessary, so please make sure you have the means by which to do so.

COURSE OVERVIEW

As the first course in the children's literature sequence at Illinois State University, ENG 170, *Foundations in Literature for Children*, is designed to serve as a general introduction to literature for those students studying children's literature. The course covers K-8th grade literature. The primary goal of the course is for students to learn to read literature using children's literature as texts.

The course focuses on children's texts for pre-readers and young readers, including picture books, chapters books, series books, novels, poetry and nursery rhymes, folklore, mythologies, information books and children's films at the K-8th grade level. Texts covered in the class include both canonical and noncanonical texts, recognized and recent children's texts, with attention to classics and multicultural texts, both historical and contemporary. Students in the class learn a range of conceptual materials as they are exposed to this wide variety of children's texts, including how to analyze genre, narrative and poetic form, ideology and issues of social construction, and introductory literary concepts.

SEMESTER TOPICS

Unit One: Children and Agency

Adult/Child Relationships and Depictions of the Child
Topics: Motif, Gothic/Uncanny, Aedonormativity, Childhood Agency, Narration, Perspective, Parody, Dystopia and Power, Close Reading
> Readings: *Coraline*, *The Bad Beginning*, *The Giver*

Just a Child? Culture and Power in Stories for Young People
Topics: Historical Fiction, Realistic Fiction, Wordless Picture Books, Holocaust Literature, Children's Poetry, Gender and Power
> Readings: *Watsons Go to Birmingham- 1963, The Arrival, Yellow Star*

Words and Pictures: Radical Picture Books
Topics: Visual Theory, Word/Picture Interaction, Children's Literature Awards, Cultural Issues including war, disability, sexuality, immigration, race and internationalism
> Readings: *The Illustrator's Notebook, A Place Where Sunflowers Grow, The Enemy*, *The Black Book of Colors*, *And Tango Makes Three*

Unit Two: Retelling the Classics

Fantasy Revisited- Canonical Texts and Adaptation
Topics: Genre, History of Children's Literature, Instruction versus Delight, Nonsense and Poetry, Adaptation, Graphic Novels, Mythology, Children's Film
> Readings: *Peter Pan and Wendy*, *Wizard of Oz* (Marvel graphic novel), *How to Train Your Dragon* (film)

Retelling and Re-Imagining: Fairy Tales, Folklore and Fantasy
Topics: Ideology, Fairytales, Folklore, Gender Constructions and Binaries, High Fantasy, Retellings/Cultural Variants, Identity, Palace Intrigue, Femininity/Masculinity
Readings: "Cinderella" (various variants), *Ella Enchanted*, *Graceling*

ASSIGNMENTS & STUDENT WORK

ASSIGNMENT CONTENT

Literariness Portfolio- 35%
Literary scholars think, speak and write about literature in very specific ways. The purpose of the literariness journal is to interrogate these methods and approaches to literature, exploring the idea of "literariness".

To do so, students will produce a variety of written and spoken genres in response to the semester's reading. Some of these productions will require analysis and interpretation, while others will ask students to observe and comment upon examples of literary activity. Students will then comment on the literariness of these texts, attempting to articulate throughout the semester what are the similarities and differences in the ways that literary scholars think about texts, so that they might replicate this kind of thinking and transfer this critical consciousness into new situations. Portfolios are due at midterm and on the final day of class, and must be picked up during the exam time (portfolios left at semester's end drop one letter grade).

Individual Writing Project- 25%
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 or creating (and defining) a genre that will demonstrate their understanding of the unique ways that scholars and teachers think about literary texts. Students will also choose the topic they wish to research for this writing project (although a list of suggestions will be provided).

Collaborative Multimodal Project- 25%
Just as in the individual writing project, the purpose of this assignment is to explore a topic related to class themes through an exercise that demonstrates literariness—the unique way that scholars and teachers analyze, interpret, write and speak about literary texts. In addition, this project provides an opportunity to build collaborative skills, working together to more meaningfully share information with our academic community. However, students will be *graded individually* for this project and will decide themselves the level of collaboration they wish to utilize.

Final Literariness Report- 15%
After completing their literariness portfolio, students will use this resource to produce a comprehensive report about the ways that scholars think and write about literature.

Students will thoroughly annotate and describe the literariness of their entries throughout their portfolio, then write a final report which identifies what they have learned about how scholars think about texts.

GRADING / METHOD OF ASSESSMENT

Scores are based on how proficiently the conventions of specific genres are met, as well as whether projects are complete, thoughtful, insightful, detailed, specific and robust. Students are expected to interrogate the ways that scholars think, talk and write about texts and demonstrate an understanding of this unique approach in their own work, then reflect and articulate their understanding of this approach. Methods of assessment for individual projects will be articulated further on assignment handouts and in class discussions. If you ever have any questions about grading, methods of assessment or expectations, please do not hesitate to speak with me, and I would be happy to discuss these elements with you individually.

Please also note that some entries in your literariness portfolio need to be posted on the online (public) course wiki. This includes book reviews, critical readings responses, and scribe recordings. Students will also need to post to a discussion board on blackboard. **In addition to these public posting, students should ALSO include a copy of these entries in the portfolio they submit for grading.** This portfolio may be electronic or printed, but must be organized and contain a table of contents.

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

ASSIGNMENT BREAKDOWN

Assignment	%
Literariness Portfolio	35
Individual Writing Project	25
Collaborative Multimodal Project	25
Final Literariness Report	15

ATTENDANCE AND LATE WORK

As active participants in the process of writing studies, students must attend class every day. Students are allowed a maximum of three absences before penalization begins.

For every absence after the third, **irrespective of cause**, the final grade will be penalized 3% for each additional absence. Additionally, if students miss more than 20% of class, (10 or more sessions in a MWF course) they will have missed too much content to pass the course.

Students are responsible for signing themselves in to demonstrate attendance. 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. 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 both rare and unlikely, and is only possible after a meeting with me.

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 ISU 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.

Accommodations: Any student needing to arrange an accommodation for a documented disability should contact Disability Concerns at 350 Fell Hall, 438-5853 (voice), 438-8620 (TTY).

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.