

ENG 170: FOUNDATIONS IN LITERATURE FOR CHILDREN

Class: STV 232, Monday, Wednesday and Friday 10:00am-10:50am

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: MWF 11am-12pm in Stevenson 422 G

I am also available outside of these times by appointment.

TEXT REQUIREMENTS

Please bring a paper or digital copy of all books to class during the week they are assigned. This is an important part of actively participating in class discussion, and thus failing to have a copy of the text will be reflected in participation grades.

Required Book List

- *Ella Enchanted* by Gail Carson Levine
- *The Graveyard Book* by Neil Gaiman
- *Peter Pan* by JM Barrie
- *Wonderstuck* by Brian Selznick
- *Inside out and Back Again* by Thanhha Lai
- *Birchbark House* by Louise Erdrich
- *One Crazy Summer* by Rita Willams Garcia
- *Babymouse #11: Dragonslayer* by Jennifer L. Holm and Matt Holm
- *Bomb: The Race to Build--and Steal--the World's Most Dangerous Weapon* by Steve Sheinkin
- *The Arrival* by Shaun Tan
- *Becoming Naomi Leon* by Pam Munoz Ryan
- Shorter readings via handout or distributed online will also be required (see schedule for details)

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

COURSE CONTENT

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.

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 the ways that scholars and teachers think, write and speak about literary texts, both 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, with particular emphasis on defining children's literature and notions of genre, media and mode.

- Students will develop a language with which to discuss children's texts built on contemporary theoretical perspectives.

ASSIGNMENTS & STUDENT WORK

Portfolio- 35%: Literary scholars think, speak and write about literature in very specific ways. The purpose of the portfolio and report is to interrogate these practices, methods and approaches to literature, so that students might replicate this kind of thinking and transfer this critical consciousness to new situations. To do so, students will produce a variety of written/spoken genres and comment on these texts, attempting to articulate what are the similarities and differences in the ways that literary scholars think about literature.

The portfolio includes the following elements, collected in an organized folder/binder:

- all **weekly responses** assigned for specific readings – see schedule for specific due dates and check the website for assignment instructions (15%)
- **sign up reading responses** that require students to select an individual due date...
 - preparation of a brief **critical handout and report** summarizing an article or chapter from a scholarly text (3%—sign up for specific reading)
 - a **book review** of an outside text self selected by the student (2%)
 - a **compare, contrast and conclude** response based on a children's story and its film adaptation (3%)
 - **two writing prompts**, with one due by midterm portfolio check (2%)
- **post-it note commentary** about how various parts of your portfolio engage in critical thinking, typically utilizing 40-50 post-it notes (5%)
- **critical thinking log**, which briefly describes the work students do as critical thinking and/or describes what they've learned about this kind of analytical approach. This log will be checked periodically to make sure students are staying current, with a grade deduction if the log is ever more than one week behind (5%)

Individual Writing Project- 35%: 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. **This project includes several components: a proposal, an annotated bibliography, an observations/conclusion sheet, the project itself and a reflection.** Students will also be encouraged to attend a conference outside of class with the instructor regarding their topics.

Final Exam- 20%: The final exam will include a brief section asking students to recall major themes and ideas from the semester and a longer essay-style section requiring students to interrogate their own critical thinking activities and the ways that scholars

think and write about literature. More information about the exam will be provided throughout the semester, and students may use their portfolio during the exam.

Participation- 10%: Students are expected to actively participate in the course, sharing their ideas and contributing to the classroom community in thoughtful, prepared ways. This participation should include: vocal contributions to large and small group discussions, preparation for class including completing all readings and bringing assigned book to class, the taking of careful notes regarding class ideas, and active listening during all activities and lecture. In addition, full participation requires signing up for **one or more “discussion observation” days**, where students will be asked to pay particular attention to the nature of classroom discussion and/or activity and notate what they observe. These notes/observations should be emailed to the instructor within 24 hours of class ending, and will be posted on the website.

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

Portfolio entries will be scored on a check scale with the following expectations. *Check Plus* work is exceptional, the equivalent of a 3/3. *Check / Check Plus* work is thoughtful and complete, the equivalent of a mid B (2.5/3). Work marked with a *Check* fulfills minimal requirements or misses only minor elements, the equivalent of 2/3. A *Check Minus* denotes failure to meet minimum requirements (1/3).

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. Thus, exceptional attendance will be rewarded by extra credit added final grade (3% for perfect attendance, 2% for only one missed day and 1% for two missed days). Attendance will be completed via a sign in sheet, and it is students' responsibility to sign in each day to receive extra credit. Because attendance can only earn a student extra credit, there is no system of excused versus unexcused absences. All absences, regardless of reason, count as an absence, as does failure to sign in.

Students who are absent the equivalent of 3 weeks or more (9+ absences) will automatically fail the course. The rationale for this policy is that after missing more than three weeks of class, you have missed too much content to be able to say honestly that

you have “taken” the course. If students miss more than 3 weeks, it is usually because they have encountered a serious family or personal emergency. I recommend that if you are an undergraduate facing an emergency, you should call the Dean of Students, who can help in a number of ways, including setting up appointments with a counselor, contacting your professors, and/or providing you with academic advice. You can contact the Dean of Students office at (309) 438-2008.

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 can 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 both rare and unlikely, 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 ISU Student Conduct Code.

Furthermore, I expect professional behavior that shows respect to our classroom community. Please arrive to class on time and remain attentive for the entirety of our time together, respecting our shared academic goals with your active participation.

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 and Students Services: 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). I also strive to create a productive classroom environment flexible to all students and individual situations. If you find that there are ways that the class could be better molded to your particular needs, please speak to me, and I would be happy to help navigate a way to work with you. Life at college can get very complicated. Students sometimes feel overwhelmed, lost, experience anxiety or depression, struggle with relationship difficulties or diminished self-esteem. However, many of these issues can be effectively addressed with a little help. Student Counseling Services (SCS) helps students cope with difficult emotions and life stressors. Student Counseling Services is staffed by experienced, professional psychologists and counselors, who are attuned to the needs of college students. The services are FREE and completely confidential. Find out more at Counseling.IllinoisState.edu or by calling (309) 438-3655.

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 a hard copy of the text, a laptop computer or an electronic reader to class.

Schedule of Readings and Assignments

Week	Monday	Wednesday	Friday
Jan 14-18			Cinderella Variants <i>Response Due</i>
Jan 23-25	MLK no class	Ella Enchanted <i>Response Due</i>	
Jan 28-Feb 1	Graveyard Book to pg 165 (interlude), <i>Response Due</i>	Graveyard Book (finish) <i>Response Part 2 Due</i>	
Feb 4-8	Peter Pan, <i>Response Due</i>		Peter Pan Film, sign up <i>Response Due</i>
Feb 11-15	Birchbark House + chp from Little House, <i>Response Due</i>		
Feb 18-22	Bomb, <i>Response Due</i>		Midterm Portfolio Check
Feb 25-Mar 1	One Crazy Summer, <i>Response Due</i>		
March 4-8	Inside Out and Back Again <i>Response Due</i>		Project Topic Due
March 10-17 Spring Break			
March 18-22	Becoming Naomi Leon <i>Response Due</i>		
March 25-29	Breadwinner <i>Response Due</i>		No Class (Conferences March 18-April 22)
April 1-5	Wonderstruck <i>Response Due</i>		Observe/Conclusion Sheet Due
April 8-12	Baby Mouse: Dragonslayer, <i>Response Due</i>		Annotated Bibliography & Proposal Due
April 15-19	The Arrival <i>Response Due</i>		
April 22-26	Picture Book Film (watch in class), no response	Project & Reflection Due	
April 29-May 3	Caldecott Picture Book- sign up, <i>Response Due</i>	Final Portfolio Check	