

**English 2033E – Children’s Literature (Online)**  
**Section 650**  
**Fall/Winter 2014-15**

**Instructor: Dr. Mark Stephenson**

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### **Course Description**

This course covers the major genres of children's literature including the fairy tale, nonsense, adventure fiction, the domestic novel, fantasy, and animal stories.

### **Learning Objectives**

By the end of the course, the successful student will be able to

- place individual texts in their context within the historical development of children’s literature;
- recognize and understand the features of genres such as the fairy tale, the cautionary tale, nonsense, adventure, domestic fiction, and fantasy;
- display a knowledge of several classic children’s novels, as well as more recent contributions to the genre;
- analyze texts employing the skills of literary analysis, considering features such as narrative technique, symbolism, rhyme and rhythm, layout and illustrations, etc.;
- understand the political, religious, moral, and philosophical underpinnings of the books on the course;
- communicate ideas effectively in writing (through discussion posts and persuasive essays);
- develop a specific, focused argument and support it with textual evidence.

### **Assignments and Grade Distribution**

Essay 1 *Due by the end of Unit 6* (Sunday, October 19) 1000 words 10%

Essay 2 *Due by the end of Unit 12* (Sunday, November 30) 1500 words 15%

Essay 3 *Due by the end of Unit 20* (Sunday, March 8) 2500 words 25%

Quizzes 5%

Participation 10%

Final exam 35%

### **Late Policy**

Essay assignments are due *no later than five minutes before midnight (11:55 p.m.) on the due date*. If you require an extension you must contact me by email, *no later than 24 hours prior to the due date for the essay*. Otherwise, the late penalty is 2% per day (including weekend days), and after two weeks, the paper will receive a grade of zero. Assignments should be posted as attachments to the Essay Drop Box; if you are unable to post the assignment in this way, I will accept the assignment as a posted attachment via email, but only if you are entirely unable to post the attachment to the drop box.

## **How to Proceed**

For each unit in this course, you should begin by reading the assigned text(s) (see “Reading Schedule,” below, beginning on page 6).

When you have finished the book (or the stories/poems), you should click on the learning module for that unit (these can be found on the left-hand side of the course page). Within the learning module, you’ll find a document containing notes on the assigned readings. These notes are designed to play the role that a lecture would play in an on-campus course.

At the end of the course notes for each unit, you will find several self-testing questions. These questions are designed to help you assess your grasp of the lecture material. In some cases, the answer can be found explicitly in the course notes; in other cases, the questions prompt you to think more deeply about the ideas presented in the notes.

You will also find several discussion questions listed below the self-testing questions. You may post your responses to these questions on the forums; these can be found within the learning module, and all the forums are also available from the left-hand menu. The Participation mark of 10% will be based primarily on your activity in the forums, reflecting both the quality and the quantity of your responses.

Additional optional readings can be found at the end of each unit. For each unit, I have provided a link to a relevant article or website that provides additional information about the author and/or text. While these readings are not required, you may find them helpful, especially for books on which you are writing an essay. (If you use information from these sites, be sure to cite the source using MLA format!) Many of these articles contain controversial ideas; if you’d like to respond to or discuss these articles (or other issues arising from your reading), you can use the “Comment” button at the bottom of each learning module.

## **Quizzes**

By the end of every even-numbered unit, you will be required to complete a quiz containing ten multiple-choice questions testing your knowledge of the texts covered in those two units. The questions will focus on content rather than interpretation; if you have read the material, you should have no difficulty answering the questions. You may keep your books handy and consult them freely, but you will be limited to ten minutes to complete the quiz. The due date for each of the quizzes is one week after the end of the units which they cover – so, for instance, the first quiz is due Sept. 28 – but you can complete the quiz any time after it is made available to be taken (be sure to do so, however, only after you have completed all the readings – both the primary readings, and the lectures – for the units). I will make the quizzes available to be taken as the course proceeds; you will receive email notifications as they become available.

## **The Participation Grade and Discussions**

The one great drawback to an online course is the lack of classroom discussion. I therefore encourage students to use the Forums feature in OWL, which gives you the opportunity to discuss a text with your classmates. Your participation in these discussions is worth 10% of your grade.

Discussion questions are posted in the forums. You may use these questions to get a discussion of a text started, although you may certainly raise other questions or issues not included in the questions. Once a discussion is posted, you may respond to it or raise another issue. Post as many discussions and responses as you like.

Remember, these discussions replace in-class discussions and should, therefore, be seriously considered and analytical. Avoid using the Forums just to state whether you liked or disliked a text or to simply agree or disagree with a previous post. I will be checking the Forums at least three times a week, and I expect you to do likewise. Posting responses to questions without first reading your fellow students' responses is not discussion: it's a monologue, and it does not meet the criteria of this on-going assignment. You'll get the most out of this assignment by treating it as an academic conversation.

For the most part, the Forums page is for students; however, I will interject if a student has posted a problematic reading or an error, if I want to emphasize a particular point or issue that has been raised, or if students seem to need some help to push their ideas further. I try to keep my interventions brief, so often they will take the form of a question stemming from the previous discussions.

### **Citing Sources**

Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea or a passage from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major offense (see Scholastic Offence Policy in the Western Academic Calendar). Any student who commits this or any other act of academic dishonesty will receive a grade of zero and a note will be placed on his or her academic record.

Here are some steps to follow to avoid plagiarism

- 1) Do as much work as possible *before* beginning your secondary research – read the novel(s), think of a thesis statement, sketch out your argument. Write down your own ideas before reading any criticism.
- 2) Develop a note-taking style that clearly indicates what ideas are your own and what ideas are taken from another source. You can use different coloured pens, cue cards, or any other method that helps you distinguish your own ideas from those of other critics.
- 3) Feel free to disagree with any critic you are reading – don't simply regurgitate somebody else's argument.
- 4) When you are incorporating someone else's ideas into your essay, acknowledge them within the essay itself using
  - (a) quotations marks (whenever you have even part of a sentence that's the same as the original)
  - (b) introductory tag phrases – i.e. According to John Smith...  
As Smith points out...  
Smith observes that...
  - (c) a reference in parentheses that indicates the source of the idea (often just the page number, if you've already used a tag phrase)
- 5) Cite the source in full in your Works Cited list (see guidelines below).

### **MLA Guidelines**

Your essays should follow the MLA format:

- 1) In the top left-hand corner of the first page, put your name, the name of your professor, the name of the course, and the date.
- 2) Number your pages in the top right-hand corner.
- 3) Double space.

4) If you use a snappy, attention-grabbing title, follow it up with an informative sub-title that indicates your topic and the works you will be discussing (i.e. Touching Pitch: Moral Ambiguity in R. L. Stevenson's Treasure Island).

5) Titles of books should be underlined or *italicized*. Titles of short poems, articles, and short stories should be put in quotation marks.

6) Introduce quotations in your own words, identifying the speaker and context: i.e. Bettelheim argues that "The fairy tale ... confronts the child squarely with the basic human predicaments" (311). Use ellipses to indicate where you have omitted material.

7) If the quotation is longer than four lines, do not use quotation marks; instead, indent the passage ten spaces from the left and continue to double space.

8) For short quotations, indicate the page number(s) in parentheses after the quotation marks and before the end punctuation. For long, indented quotations, place the parentheses after the end punctuation. Do not use abbreviations such as p. or pp. or include the author's name if the identity of the author is clear from the context.

9) List all the works you have referred to in a Works Cited list at the end of your paper. Use the following format in your Works Cited list: Author's last name, Author's first name. "Title of article or short story." Title of Book.

City of publication: Publisher, date of publication.

There is a useful online guide to MLA format at the following address:

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>

### Plagiarism

The following statement on plagiarism is from the UWO Senate:

Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea, or a passage of text from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offence (see Scholastic Offence Policy in Western Academic Calendar). Plagiarism checking: Western University uses software for plagiarism checking. Students may be required to submit their work in electronic form for plagiarism checking.

Be aware that if you are caught engaging in plagiarism, it will result, *at the very least*, in a zero for the assignment.

### Exam Format

The examination has three parts (A,B,C), all of which are weighted equally; you will need to budget your time carefully. Read the whole exam first, taking time to choose your texts and plan your answers. To demonstrate both the breadth and depth of your knowledge of Children's Literature, you must discuss different texts in all three parts of the exam – **you may not use any text more than once**. In Part A, you will discuss **four** texts, and in each of Parts B and C, you will discuss **three** texts, for a total of ten different texts altogether. Each of the following will be considered equivalent to "ONE TEXT" in Parts B and C:

a) any five nursery rhymes

b) any three fairy tales

c) any two poems or stories by Edward Lear (the limericks count, collectively, as one poem)

*Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking-Glass* can be used together as one work, or you may focus solely on one rather than the other, but you may not use *Alice* twice in different parts of the exam.

### **PART A: Identifications**

Identify the author (first and last name) and title of the following ten quotations (20 marks); choose **four** of the quotations and for each one (a) discuss its context in the original work (who is speaking, who is being spoken to, under what circumstances, etc.), (b) comment on any key words or images in the passage, and (c) analyze its significance to the work as a whole and/or to other works or trends in children's literature (4 x 20 = 80 marks).

### **PARTS B & C: Essay**

Choose **one** of the following three topics and write a fully developed essay making an argument about at least **three** texts that we have studied on this course. Be sure to include an introduction, a thesis statement, and specific textual evidence in support of your argument. Remember to compare and contrast the three texts throughout your paper.

The instructions for Parts B & C are identical; however, in Part C you will be able to discuss any three texts of your choice, whereas in Part B, one of those texts will be chosen for you.

### **\*\*\*\*Final Grades\*\*\*\***

***STUDENTS MUST PASS BOTH TERM WORK AND THE FINAL EXAMINATION (IN COURSES WITH FINAL EXAMINATIONS) IN ORDER TO PASS THE COURSE. STUDENTS WHO FAIL THE FINAL EXAMINATION (REGARDLESS OF THEIR TERM MARK) AUTOMATICALLY FAIL THE COURSE.***

### **Prerequisites**

This statement is also from the Western University Senate:

Students are responsible for ensuring that their selection of courses is appropriate and accurately recorded and that all course prerequisites have been successfully completed, and that they are aware of any antirequisite course(s) that they have taken. If the student does not have the requisites for a course, the University reserves the right to remove the student from the course and to delete it from the student's record. This decision may not be appealed. A student will receive no adjustment to his or her fees in the event that he or she is dropped from a course failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

### **Academic Accommodation and Emotional/Mental Distress**

Students seeking academic accommodation on medical grounds for any missed tests, exams, participation components and/or assignments worth (either alone or in combination) 10% or more of their final grade must apply to the Academic Counselling office of their home Faculty and provide documentation. Academic accommodation cannot be granted by the instructor or department. Documentation shall be submitted, as soon as possible, to the Office of the Dean of the student's Faculty of registration, together with a request for relief specifying the nature of the accommodation being requested. The Student Medical Certificate (SMC) can be found at

[http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf).

The full policy is set out here:

[http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/accommodation\\_medical.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf)

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to MentalHealth@Western <http://wwwuwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

### **Reading Schedule**

You should complete one unit for each full week of the term. Note the corresponding dates for each of the units/weeks of the course (and note, to that effect, the holiday break after unit/week 12 and the Reading Week in February).

### **Fall Term 2014**

#### **Part I: Fairy Tales**

##### **Unit 1: September 8-14**

##### Introduction / Traditional Fairy Tales

Read the following fairy tales from *Folk and Fairy Tales*:

- “The Story of Grandmother” – Paul Delarue
- “Little Red Riding Hood” – Charles Perrault
- “Little Red Cap” – Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm
- “The Chinese Red Riding Hoods” – Isabelle C. Chang
- “Sun, Moon, and Talia” – Giambattista Basile
- “The Sleeping Beauty in the Wood” – Charles Perrault
- “Brier Rose” – Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm
- “Cinderella: Or the Glass Slipper” – Charles Perrault
- “Cap o’ Rushes” – Joseph Jacobs
- “Hansel and Gretel” – Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm
- “Snow White” – Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm
- “Rapunzel” – Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm
- “Jack and the Beanstalk” – Joseph Jacobs
- “Beauty and the Beast” – Madame Leprince de Beaumont
- “The Brave Little Tailor” – Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm
- “Puss in Boots” – Charles Perrault
- “Bluebeard” – Charles Perrault
- “Rumpelstiltskin” – Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm
- “The Goose Girl” – Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm

Also, read the Grimm brothers’ “Cinderella,” available at <http://www.pitt.edu/~dash/grimm021.html>

**Unit 2: September 15-21**Revisionist Fairy Tales

Robert Munsch, *The Paper Bag Princess*

Read the following stories from *Folk and Fairy Tales*:

“The Company of Wolves” – Angela Carter

“When the Clock Strikes” – Tanith Lee

“The Tale of the Handkerchief” – Emma Donoghue

**Unit 3: September 22-28**

George MacDonald, *The Princess and the Goblin*

**Part II: Nonsense****Unit 4: September 29-October 5**

*This Little Puffin*

Dennis Lee, *Alligator Pie*

Read Perry Nodelman, “The Nursery Rhymes of Mother Goose: A World Without Glasses” (coursepack)

**Unit 5: October 6-October 12**

Edward Lear, *The Complete Nonsense of Edward Lear*

Read the following poems and stories:

“Self-Portrait of the Laureate of Nonsense”

all limericks

“The Owl and the Pussy-Cat”

“The Jumblies”

“The Story of the Four Little Children Who Went Round the World”

“The Dong with the Luminous Nose”

“The Pobble Who Has No Toes”

**Unit 6: October 13-October 19**

Lewis Carroll, *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking-Glass*

**\*\*\*Essay #1 Due, Sunday, October 19\*\*\***

**Part III: Adventure****Unit 7: October 20-October 26**

Robert Louis Stevenson, *Treasure Island*

**Unit 8: October 27-November 2**

Beatrix Potter, *The Tale of Peter Rabbit*

Read Jackie F. Eastman, “Beatrix Potter’s *The Tale of Peter Rabbit*: A Small Masterpiece” (coursepack)

**Unit 9: November 3-November 9**

J.M. Barrie, *Peter Pan*

**Part IV: Realism**

**Unit 10: November 10-November 16**

E. Nesbit, *The Story of the Treasure Seekers*

**Unit 11: November 17-November 23**

John Boyne, *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas*

**Unit 12: November 24-November 30**

Louise Fitzhugh, *Harriet the Spy*

Read Lissa Paul, “Feminist Writer as Heroine in *Harriet the Spy*” (coursepack)

**\*\*\*Essay #2 Due, Sunday, November 30\*\*\***

**HOLIDAY BREAK**

**Part V: The Domestic Novel**

**Unit 13: January 5-January 11**

Louisa May Alcott, *Little Women*

**Unit 14: January 12-January 18**

L.M. Montgomery, *Anne of Green Gables*

Read the following articles from the coursepack: Perry Nodelman, “Progressive Utopia, or How to Grow Up without Growing Up”; Susan Drain, “Community and the Individual in *Anne of Green Gables* The Meaning of Belonging”; Eve Kornfeld and Susan Jackson, “The Female Bildungsroman in Nineteenth-Century America: Parameters of a Vision”

**Unit 15: January 19-January 25**

Frances Hodgson Burnett, *The Secret Garden*

**Unit 16: January 26-February 1**

Laura Ingalls Wilder, *Little House on the Prairie*

**Part VI: Animals**

**Unit 17: February 2-February 8**

Kenneth Grahame, *The Wind in the Willows*

Read Jane Darcy, “The Representation of Nature in *The Wind in the Willows* and *The Secret Garden*” (coursepack)

**Unit 18: February 9-February 15**

E.B. White, *Charlotte’s Web*

Read Perry Nodelman, “Text as Teacher: The Beginning of *Charlotte’s Web*” (coursepack)

**(Reading Week: February 16-22)**



**Part VII: Fantasy****Unit 19: February 23-March 1**

J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Hobbit*

**Unit 20: March 2-March 8**

C.S. Lewis, *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*

**\*\*\*Essay #3 Due, Sunday, March 8\*\*\***

**Unit 21: March 9-March 15**

J.K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*

Read Alexandra Mullen, "Harry Potter's Schooldays" (coursepack)

**Unit 22: March 16-March 22**

Lois Lowry, *The Giver*

**Unit 23: March 23-March 29**

Neil Gaiman, *Coraline*

**Unit 24: March 30-April 5**

Roald Dahl, *Matilda*