

Department of English & Writing Studies

**English 3900G – Children’s Literature and Advertising Culture**

Tuesday 12:30-1:30pm; Thursday 12:30-2:30pm AHB 2R21  
Winter 2016

**Instructor:** Dr. Gabrielle Ceraldi

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**Office Hours:**

T/Th. 2:30-3:30 or  
by appointment

Advertising is a central institution in our consumeristic culture, and children are an important but problematic target for the advertising industry: children wield power as potential consumers of toys, foods, and television programs, but lawmakers also seek to protect children from advertising that might compromise their health or values. Children’s literature is situated uneasily within this cultural minefield. The stories we tell children are themselves products (sold in stores like Chapters or online on Amazon.com), and they are implicated in a merchandizing industry that peddles Anne of Green Gables dolls, Winnie the Pooh plush toys, and Disney princess lunch boxes. Many novels for children foreground these problems by examining the roles played by consumption, advertising, and branding in the formation of identity. In a society where we are increasingly defined by the products we purchase – and are expected to package *ourselves* as products we can peddle to clients, customers, and employers – children’s literature offers a critical perspective on the distinction between person and product.

**Required Texts**

James Twitchell, *20 Ads that Shook the World*, Crown

L.M. Montgomery, *Anne of the Island*, Seal

L. Frank Baum, *The Wizard of Oz*, Puffin

Roald Dahl, *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, Puffin

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

E.B. White, *Charlotte’s Web*, Harper Trophy

Dr. Seuss, *Green Eggs and Ham*, Random House

Annie Barrows and Sophie Blackall, *Ivy + Bean: No News is Good News*, Chronicle

Suzanne Collins, *Catching Fire*, Scholastic

Rainbow Rowell, *Fangirl*, St. Martin’s Griffin

**Schedule of Classes**

Jan. 5 Introduction

Jan. 7 Peanuts Christmas special

**A World Before Advertising**

Jan. 12-14 Twitchell, Introduction

Joel Spring, “Liberation with Jell-O and Wonder Bread” from *Educating The Consumer-Citizen* (on reserve)

L.M. Montgomery, chapters from *Anne of Green Gables*, *Anne of Avonlea*

Jan. 19-21 L.M. Montgomery, *Anne of the Island*

Twitchell, Ch. 3 Pears Soap

Jan. 26-28 Christina Rossetti, "Goblin Market" (on OWL)

**The Advertising Wizard: Adults as Advertisers**

Feb. 2-4 L. Frank Baum, *The Wizard of Oz*

Twitchell, Ch. 1 J.P. Barnum

Feb. 9-11 Roald Dahl, *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*

Feb. 15-19 READING WEEK (no class)

**Producing and Consuming: The Child Entrepreneur**

Feb. 23-35 E. Nesbit, *The Story of the Treasure Seekers*

Mar. 1-3 E.B. White, *Charlotte's Web*

Mar. 8 Dr. Seuss, *Green Eggs and Ham*

Mar. 10 Annie Barrows + Sophie Blackall, *Ivy + Bean: No News is Good News*

Twitchell, Ch. 20 Nike and Michael Jordan

**Personal Branding: The Child as Product**

Mar. 15 David Buckingham, *The Material Child*, Chapter 2 (on reserve)

Mar. 17, 22 Suzanne Collins, *Catching Fire*

**But Is It Art?: The Boundary between Art and Advertising**

Mar. 24 Stephen Brown, "Who Moved My Muggle?: Harry Potter and the

Marketing Imaginarium" (on OWL)

Twitchell, Ch. 18 & 19 Apple's *1984* and The Rise and Fall of the

Infomercial

Mar. 29-31 Rainbow Rowell, *Fangirl*

Apr. 5 review

**Marking**

Essay Proposal (250 words – due Jan. 28) 5%

Essay (2500 words – due March 24) 35%

Participation 10%

Seminar Presentation (500 words) 15%

Final Examination 35%

NOTE: As in all courses in the Department of English, students must pass BOTH the term work and the final examination in order to pass the course.

**General Information**

1. Regular attendance in class is essential. Absenteeism can result in debarment from writing the final examination, which results in failure of the course.
2. All essays should be double-spaced and printed in a standard font such as 12-pt Times Roman. Please follow MLA format (for guidelines see the MLA guide at the OWL Purdue website). Essays should be submitted on paper and can be handed in during class or dropped off in the Department of English Essay Drop-Off Boxes (across from AHB 2G02). Do not leave essays under office doors. Two percent per day (including weekends) will be deducted from late essays. Extensions will be approved only with a recommendation for accommodation from an academic counsellor. No paper will be accepted after the last day of classes (Apr. 6).
3. Plagiarism: 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.

4. Plagiarism Checking: The University of Western Ontario uses software for plagiarism checking. Students may be required to submit their written work in electronic form for plagiarism checking.
5. The Participation Grade will reflect not only your presence in class but also your active engagement in class discussions and activities.

### **Learning Objectives**

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

- understand how the historical development of advertising has been reflected in works of literature produced for children
- consider the ways in which consumerism constructs children as purchasers, influences on adult purchasing, producers of goods, and products to be marketed
- examine the ways in which authorship can be (or has been) understood as a form of personal branding
- communicate ideas effectively through public speaking, both in formal presentations and in class discussions
- write an essay about a work of literature containing an effective thesis supported by adequate evidence from the original text as well as relevant secondary research
- offer independent insights, beyond those outlined in class
- organize and present ideas clearly and effectively
- document essays using MLA format

### **Scholastic Offences, including Plagiarism**

The University Senate requires the following statements, and Web site references, to appear on course outlines:

“Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site: <http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/scholoff.pdf>.”

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 as above).

“All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>).”

### **Prerequisites**

The University Senate requires the following statement to appear on course outlines: "Students are responsible for ensuring that their selection of courses 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 for failing to have the necessary prerequisites."

### **Medical Accommodation Policy**

For UWO Policy on Accommodation For Medical Illness, see:

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

(downloadable Student Medical Certificate (SMC): <https://studentservices.uwo.ca> under the Medical Documentation heading)

Students seeking academic accommodation **on medical or other grounds** for any missed tests, exams, participation components and/or assignments **worth 10% or more of their final grade** must apply to the Academic Counselling office of their home Faculty and provide documentation. Academic accommodation on medical grounds cannot be granted by the instructor or the Program in Writing, Rhetoric, and Professional Communication, and the Program requires students in these circumstances to follow the same procedure when seeking academic accommodation on non-medical (i.e. non-medical compassionate or other) grounds.

Students seeking academic accommodation **on medical grounds** for any missed tests, exams, participation components and/or assignments **worth less than 10% of their final grade** must also apply to the Academic Counselling office of their home Faculty and provide documentation. Where in these circumstances the accommodation is being sought on **non-medical grounds**, students should consult in the first instance with their instructor, who may elect to make a decision on the request directly, or refer the student to the Academic Counselling office of their home Faculty.

Students should also note that individual instructors are not permitted to receive medical documentation directly from a student, whether in support of an application for accommodation on medical grounds, or for other reasons (e.g. to explain an absence from class which may result in a grade penalty under an 'Attendance' policy in the course). **All** medical documentation **must** be submitted to the Academic Counselling office of a student's home Faculty.

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

**Grading Rubric:**

<b>Thesis</b>	Excellent	Forceful, fresh and challenging
	Good	Clear development of a specific thesis
	Satisfactory	Reasonably clear thesis
	Poor Inadequate	Unclear, overgeneral
<b>Argument (ideas)</b>	Excellent	Original, analytical, persuasive, depth of insight
	Good	Analytical, persuasive, with some originality and depth
	Satisfactory	More descriptive than analytical, not fully persuasive
	Poor Inadequate	Plot summary or lengthy paraphrase, general observations
<b>Organization</b>	Excellent	Paragraphs focus on clearly articulated, meaningful topics
	Good	Paragraphs support thesis adequately
	Satisfactory	Most paragraphs support thesis; some problems with coherent paragraphing
	Poor Inadequate	Significant problems with paragraphing
<b>Use of Sources (quotations)</b>	Excellent	Detailed engagement with text, seamless integration, proper documentation
	Good	Adequately detailed reference to text, proper documentation
	Satisfactory	Effort to support points with reference to text and proper documentation
	Poor Inadequate	Overgeneralization with inadequate support, little effort at documentation
<b>Style</b>	Excellent	Graceful, rhetorically impressive, few if any errors
	Good	Clear writing style, errors relatively few and minor
	Satisfactory	Some problems with clarity, grammar, punctuation, or wordiness
	Poor Inadequate	Errors serious enough to interfere with understanding

A+ Outstanding 90+  
 A Excellent 80-89  
 B Good 70-79

C Satisfactory 60-69  
 D Poor 50-59  
 F Inadequate across several areas