

Department of English & Writing Studies

**Children's Literature**  
**English 2033E (651)**  
Fall/Winter 2020-21

**Instructor:** Dr. Gabrielle Ceraldi

**Delivery Type:** Online

Course Description

This course examines the development of literature for and about children from its roots in fairy tales, nursery rhymes, and nonsense literature. Animal stories, adventure tales, picture books, and domestic novels will be considered alongside visits to fantasy realms like Wonderland, Neverland, or the Land of Oz. A central focus will be the assumptions about children and childhood that shape these texts, all produced by adults based on what they believe children enjoy, want, or need.

**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.

Methods of Evaluation

Essay 1	Due by the end of Unit 7	2000 words	20%
Essay 2	Due by the end of Unit 20	3000 words	35%
Quizzes			5%
Participation			10%
Final exam			30%

Please note: The Department of English & Writing Studies does not release final grades. All undergraduate grade reports will be available online from the Office of the Registrar.

Students are fully responsible for looking at and being familiar with the information posted on the department website at <https://www.uwo.ca/english/undergraduate/Student%20Information.html>

### Reading Schedule

If you are taking this course during the Fall/Winter term, then you should complete one unit for each full week of the term. During the Summer term, you should complete two units per week. For exact dates, please consult the Schedule, as well as the welcome message in the Course Information forum.

### Fairy Tales

#### Unit 1: 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
- "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
- "Ashputtle" – Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm
- "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

#### Unit 2: 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

#### Unit 3: George MacDonald, *The Princess and the Goblin*

### Nonsense

Unit 4: *This Little Puffin* (OR read the nursery rhymes here:

<http://www.hubbardscupboard.org/nursery-rhyme-words>)

Dennis Lee, *Alligator Pie*

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

Unit 5: Edward Lear, *The Complete Nonsense of Edward Lear*

Read the following poems and stories:

“Self-Portrait of the Laureate of Nonsense”

all limericks (these can be found at

<http://www.nonsenselit.org/Lear/learwk.html>)

“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: Lewis Carroll, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking-Glass Adventure*

Unit 7: Robert Louis Stevenson, *Treasure Island*

Unit 8: 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: J.M. Barrie, *Peter Pan*

### **Realism**

Unit 10: E. Nesbit, *The Story of the Treasure Seekers*

Unit 11: John Boyne, *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas*

Unit 12: Louise Fitzhugh, *Harriet the Spy*

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

### **The Domestic Novel**

Unit 13: Louisa May Alcott, *Little Women*

Unit 14: 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: Frances Hodgson Burnett, *The Secret Garden*

Unit 16: Laura Ingalls Wilder, *Little House on the Prairie*

### **Animals**

Unit 17: 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: E.B. White, *Charlotte's Web*

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

### **Fantasy**

Unit 19: J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Hobbit*

Unit 20: C.S. Lewis, *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*

Unit 21: J.K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*

Read Alexandra Mullen, “Harry Potter’s Schooldays” (coursepack)

Unit 22: Lois Lowry, *The Giver*

Unit 23: Neil Gaiman, *Coraline*

Unit 24: Roald Dahl, *Matilda*

### How to Proceed

For each unit in this course, you should begin by reading the assigned text(s) (listed above). 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 on OWL). 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. The forum questions for the previous week will be locked each Monday.

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.

### **Marks for Forum Participation**

Your Forum Posts mark will be the average of two marks assigned, one at the end of Unit 12 and the other at the end of Unit 24. For full credit, you must post a total of 10 substantial posts in each half of the course. A substantial post is one in which you discuss something specific about the text at hand (ideally using quotations and/or specific details and commenting on their significance). There is no penalty for contributing less substantial posts (such as expressions of agreement with another student or general reflections about childhood and/or children's literature), but these posts do not count towards your grade.

### **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. (For exact due dates, consult the Schedule document or the welcome message on the Course Information forum.) 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. Your mark will be based on your



- 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/>

### General Information

1. Essays must be submitted before 11:55 pm on the due date in order to count as on time. The accepted method of submission is to upload the essay to the Assignments tool on the OWL as a document or pdf. Any essays submitted after the due date will be penalized 2 marks per day. No essay will be accepted beyond three weeks after the due date.
2. Requests for extensions will be handled according to the practices recommended by the university; these may evolve based on the COVID-19 pandemic, but currently, requests based on mental health or family emergency should still be directed to the academic counsellor in your dean's office, while requests based on illness can be emailed to me directly (gceraldi@uwo.ca). If you are ill, please use the self-reporting tool as well. If any of these practices change, I will post an announcement on the OWL.
3. Essays should be double-spaced in a 12-pt Times Roman font and they should follow MLA format (see guide above).
4. All grades, once assigned and/or posted, are final. While formal appeal processes do exist in the Department of English and Writing Studies, grades will not be changed after the fact in response to emailed requests and/or GPA requirements, nor will the weighting of assignments be altered for individual students.

## Grading Rubric

### THESIS

- Is there a unifying idea in this paper?
- Is this idea specific, original, and argumentative?
- Is this idea explained clearly near the beginning of the paper?

### ARGUMENT

- Does the material in this paper go beyond description to explore the implications and meaning of the text(s)?
- Have opposing ideas been acknowledged and given a convincing response?

### ORGANIZATION

- Do paragraph breaks reflect a meaningful shift in topic?
- Does the opening sentence of each paragraph identify the central idea of that paragraph and its relationship to the thesis?

### USE OF SOURCES

- Is there textual evidence to back up each claim in the paper?
- Is there an attention to detail (word choice, imagery, etc.) that adds intricacy to the argument?
- Are quotations integrated smoothly and cited correctly?

### STYLE

- Is the writing style clear, concise, and readable, so that the focus falls on the ideas in the paper?
- Are sentences punctuated correctly?

A+ (90-100) = Excellent ("Yes, absolutely!" in all categories)

A (80-89) = Very Good ("Yes" in almost all categories)

B (70-79) = Good ("Yes" or "Somewhat" in all categories)

C (60-69) = Satisfactory ("Somewhat" in most categories OR "No" in one category)

D (50-59) = Poor ("No" in several categories)

F (49 or below) = Unsatisfactory (does not meet the requirements for the assignment)

### Academic Consideration for Missed Work

Students who are temporarily unable to meet academic requirements (e.g. attending lectures or labs, writing tests or midterm exams, completing and submitting assignments, participating in presentations) may submit a self-reported absence form online (available on your Student Center) provided that the absence is 48 hours or less and the other conditions specified in the Senate policy are met. Students can self-report only two absences per academic year. See policy here:

[https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/Academic\\_Consideration\\_for\\_absences.pdf](https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/Academic_Consideration_for_absences.pdf).

Students whose absences are expected to last longer than 48 hours, or where the other conditions detailed in the policy are not met (e.g., work is worth more than 30% of the final grade, the student has already used 2 self-reported absences, the absence is during the final exam period), may receive academic consideration by submitting a Student Medical Certificate (for illness) or other appropriate documentation (for compassionate grounds) to Academic Counselling. Academic accommodation cannot be granted by the instructor or department. The Student Medical Certificate is available online at [https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf](https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf).

All students pursuing academic consideration, regardless of type, must contact their instructors no less than 24 hours following the end of the period of absence to clarify how they will be expected to fulfill the academic responsibilities missed during their absence. Students are reminded that they should consider carefully the implications of postponing tests or midterm exams or delaying submission of work, and are encouraged to make appropriate decisions based on their specific circumstances.

Students who have conditions for which academic accommodation is appropriate, such as disabilities or ongoing or chronic health conditions, should work with Accessible Education Services to determine appropriate forms of accommodation.

#### Academic Offences

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at [http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/scholastic\\_discipline\\_undergrad.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf)

#### **Plagiarism:**

Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea or 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 academic offence.

#### **Plagiarism Checking:**

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>.

All instances of plagiarism will be reported to the Chair of Undergraduate Studies. Proven cases of plagiarism will result in a grade of zero for the assignment. Subsequent offences will result in failure for the course.



**Support Services**

Registrarial Services <http://www.registrar.uwo.ca>

Student Support Services <https://student.uwo.ca/psp/heprdweb/?cmd=login>

Services provided by the USC <http://westernusc.ca/services/>

Student Development Centre <http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/>

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.