

DR. MEGHANN
MEEUSEN

ENG 5820
CHILDREN'S AND
YA LITERATURE:
IMAGE AND
THEORY

Spring 2017



Course Objectives



Contact Info

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Office Hours

921 Sprau Tower
Tuesday/Thursday
12:30pm-3:30pm

I am also available
outside of these times
by appointment.

Advanced study of children's literature includes application of critical and theoretical approaches to books and other media for young people. To facilitate such study, ENGL 5820 utilizes both works of fiction and critical readings from WMU's Children's Literature Comprehensive Examination Reading List to offer the opportunity for an in-depth study at children's and YA literature.

Because of the wide range of the field of children's literature, ENGL 5820 also offers students a more specific topic of study that acts as an anchor for class discussion. After reading selections from critical texts, students will apply this theoretical foundation to examples of children's fiction as well as their visual adaptations. In this way, students will build a foundational knowledge of children's literature and related theoretical perspectives, but also explore a guiding research question:

How do children's and young adult texts reflect major critical and theoretical concepts differently when they engage various visual mediums?

The goal of this course is to offer students the chance to take analysis stemming from critical sources deeper by discussing either the visual elements or visual adaptations of key primary texts. By examining how the same theories can be interpreted differently when interrogating the new visual meaning, students will not only engage a wide variety of critical approaches, but also develop a richly analytical foundation in critical thinking.



93%-100% A
distinctive, exceptional,
outstanding work

88-92% BA
83%-87% B
strong, thoughtful work

78-82% CB
73%-77% C
average, complete work

68-72% DC
62%-67% D
problematic, sloppy work

Required Reading

The Wonderful Wizard of Oz, Frank L Baum
Charlie and the Chocolate Factory, Roald Dahl
Coraline, Neil Gaiman
Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone, J.K. Rowling
The Hunger Games, Suzanne Collins
Monster, Walter Dean Myers

The Watsons Go to Birmingham, 1963,
Christopher Paul Curtis
The Invention of Hugo Cabret, Brian Selznick
Where the Wild Things Are, Maurice Sendak
The Lorax, Dr. Seuss
The Three Pigs, David Wiesner

Book/Film Requirements: Please bring a paper or digital copy of reading, including critical readings, to class each day during the week it is assigned. Listening to books via audio is also encouraged, but a hard copy is necessary for class (to look up quotes, etc). This important part of active class participation can affect participation grades. Students will also watch various children's films or consult other visual texts throughout the semester for individual assignments. These can be rented digitally or from the KPL.

Critical Readings: Students will read at least one chapter from all required texts on WMU's Children's Literature Exam Reading List, most paired with a primary text reading. These readings are available online via course reserve, but students who intend to take the exam should read the entire critical text (rather than just the single chapter). Students will also sign up for an additional critical reading for their opening writing & individual handout assignments; hardcopies of these texts are on physical reserve at the library.

Prefatory Reading: As this is an advanced children's/YA literature course, students are expected to have an introductory knowledge of the field. While ENGL 3830 *Literature for the Intermediate Reader* satisfies this prerequisite for undergraduate students, all students are encouraged to consult Eric Tribunella and Carrie Hintz's text, *Reading Children's Literature: A Critical Introduction*, in order to refresh or build necessary background knowledge to engage fully with the rigors of this course. It is also available on reserve.



Knowledge Sharing

Opportunities to prepare and share research and ideas with the class totaling 30% of final grade.

Critical Article Handout,
100 points

Participation / Discussion
Leader / Mini Poster
Presentation, 100 points

Ticket-Ins (10 points each),
100 total

Individual Research and Writing Assignments

Chances to develop analytical writing proficiency totaling 70% of final grade.

Opening and Closing
Writings (100 points each),
200 points total

Visual Connection Essay and
Discussion, 200 points

Final Essay Project,
300 points

OPENING/CLOSING WRITING (20% of final grade):

Students will practice two instances of short formal analytical writing based on prompts. These will explore an individually selected text and offer opportunity for reflection on improved analysis proficiency. *Due Jan 23 & April 17*

"MIDTERM" VISUAL CONNECTION ESSAY (20% of final grade):

Students will compose a short research essay that applies the assigned critical reading to a visual adaptation of the primary text reading and share their findings on the day their colleagues read the primary text. *Individual Due Date*

INDIVIDUAL FINAL ESSAY PROJECT (30% of final grade):

Students may choose between a traditional scholarly essay or a creative writing project, both with a self-commentary component. Students planning to take the comprehensive exam are encouraged to use this opportunity to "practice" for the specialization component of the exam. *Due April 26*

CRITICAL ARTICLE HANDOUT (10% of final grade):

Students will sign up for one critical article related to a certain week's reading and create a single page handout summarizing the main thesis and argument the writer makes, copying this handout to share with the rest of the class. *Individual Due Date*

KNOWLEDGE SHARING AND PARTICIPATION (20% of final grade):

Building an academic community is crucial to engage fully with critical ideas. Thus, active and daily participation is necessary. Students will have multiple opportunities to share their ideas and knowledge:

- **Discussion Leader:** Students will sign up for 1-2 days to lead discussion, providing colleagues with a handout about the primary text reading to share key quotes, discussion questions, connections to the critical reading, etc. *Individual Due Date*
- **Ticket-Ins (10 points each):** For each critical reading, students will complete a short written response to demonstrate understanding, which will serve as a "ticket-in" to class. These can ONLY earn credit if a student is in attendance. *Due Weekly*
- **Mini Poster Presentation:** As part of our concluding study of cultural representation in visual texts, students will select a children's picture book published by an African American author after 2002 to study alongside Michelle Martin's *Brown Gold* and extend her arguments, sharing what they discover via a small poster. *Due April 10*
- **Quizzes/Etc:** Quizzes and other homework may be assigned as needed to encourage robust participation.



Procedures & Resources

Students are responsible for making themselves aware of and understanding the University policies and procedures that pertain to Academic Honesty.

These policies include cheating, fabrication, falsification and forgery, multiple submission, plagiarism, complicity and computer misuse. The academic policies addressing Student Rights and Responsibilities can be found in the Undergraduate Catalog at

<http://catalog.wmich.edu/content.php?catoid=24&navoid=974>.

If there is reason to believe you have been involved in academic dishonesty, you will face academic penalty based on the infraction's severity, which can include a failing grade and/or referral the Office of Student Conduct. Please consult with me if you are uncertain about an issue of academic honesty prior to the submission of an assignment.

In addition, please make yourself familiar with the following campus services and policies, and don't hesitate to let me know if you have any questions:

- Disability Services for Students
www.wmich.edu/disabilityservices
- Division of Student Affairs / Diversity Questions
www.wmich.edu/students/diversity
- Sexual and Gender-Based Harassment and Violence, Intimate Partner Violence, and Stalking Policy www.wmich.edu/sexualmisconduct
- Religious Observance
http://www.wmich.edu/facultysenate/downloads/MOA0702_religious_observances_final.pdf
- Office of Student Conduct www.wmich.edu/conduct
- Civility Statement
http://wmich.edu/sites/default/files/attachments/u370/2016/Civility%20Stmt.7-27-16_0.pdf

If you are a student with a disability (e.g. physical, learning, psychiatric, vision, hearing, etc.) and think that you might need special assistance or a special accommodation in this class or any other class, please call Disability Services at (269) 387-2116 or visit them at Woodlawn Place at 2210 Wilbur Ave. Please don't hesitate to speak with me about ways to meet your needs in this capacity.

Additionally, I am more than happy to discuss ways that this course could better meet any student's needs, and I encourage anyone who is struggling for any reason to contact me. I will do my very best to fairly accommodate all students who express concern in a respectful way.

Dr. Meeusen's private phone, for emergencies only: 586-651-0289



Attendance & Late Work

As active participants in an academic community, students must attend class every day. **Students who miss 4 or more classes (30% of the course) will not be eligible to pass, despite work completed.**

As part of the attendance policy, **credit for ticket-ins can ONLY be earned if a student is present in class.** If a student must be absent, he/she is responsible for missed content, including assignment due dates.

Please demonstrate professionalism by arriving to class on time and waiting until class concludes completely before packing up belongings.

I do not accept late work. Although I reserve the right to make exceptions to this policy, this is only possible after a discussion with me. If you foresee a problem completing an assignment on time, please contact me at least 48 hours in advance, at which time I am far more open to making arrangements.