

DR. MEGHANN  
MEEUSEN

ENGL 4840:  
MULTICULTURAL  
AMERICAN  
LITERATURE  
FOR  
CHILDREN



Spring 2018

## Course Objectives



### Contact Info

[meghann.meeusen@wmich.edu](mailto:meghann.meeusen@wmich.edu)

### Office Hours

921 Sprau Tower  
Tuesday/Thursday  
2pm-3pm and by  
appointment

**Analytical Depth:** Students will work to develop literary analysis techniques and critical approaches cultivated in earlier courses in order to refine their abilities to interpret, evaluate, critique, and interrogate texts.

**Criticism and Theory:** Students will work to cultivate understanding the elements, terms, and theories associated with studies of multiculturalism, cultural representation, critical race theory, and related critical approaches.

**Textual Knowledge:** Students will work to broaden their knowledge and understanding of underrepresented voices and authors of color in children's literature.

**Ideology and Representation:** Students will work to interrogate explicit and implicit ideologies of texts, as well as critical and popular perspectives related to race, representation, and culture in children's literature.

**Social Justice and Intersectionalism:** Students will work to explore how children's literature might participate in efforts of activism related to human rights, civil rights, and equality, with particular attention to the complexly interconnected and overlapping nature of race, class, and gender.



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 Books and Materials

*Mockingbird* by Kathryn Erskine  
*Return to Sender* by Julia Alvarez  
*Heart and Soul* by Kadir Nelson  
*Tropical Secrets* by Margarita Engle

*Emmanuel's Dream* by Laurie Ann Thompson  
*The Journey* by Francesca Sanna  
*Grand Mosque of Paris* by Karen Gray Ruelle

*George* by Alex Gino  
*Shooting Kabul* by NH Senzai  
*How I Became a Ghost* by Tim Tingle  
*Inside Out & Back Again* by Thanhha Lai

*Deep in the Sahara* by Kelly Cunnane  
*Separate is Never Equal* by Duncan Tonatiuh  
*Place Where Sunflowers Grow* by Amy Lee-Tai

**Copy Card & Printing:** Students will also need to purchase a **\$5 Copy Card** (available at the WMU bookstore) to cover the cost of printed in-class materials. For some assignments, students will need print copies for submission. If you would like something printed or copied by Dr. Meeusen (including assignments and copies for the class, etc), please email a digital version **at least 48 hours** before you need it.

**Book Requirements:** Students will also select several self-selected books as well as critical articles and other short readings available on e-learning. Additionally, while a copy in-class (print or digital) is required for novels, for required picture books (see above), a copy is also available at Waldo library and can be read on two hour reserve. Listening to books via audio is also encouraged.





## Daily Participation

Quizzes: 50-70 points

Exit Tickets &

Ticket-Ins: 80-100 points

*In-class point breakdown may change with class needs, but the total will remain at 150 points.*

## Knowledge Sharing

Discussion Board:  
100 points

Midterm Poster  
Presentation: 200 points

## Individual Writing

Line of Inquiry  
Assignments: 300 points  
(100 pts each)

Project Proposal: 50 pts

Final Research Project &  
Rationale: 200 points

## ATTENDANCE / READING ENGAGEMENT

**(15% of final grade):** Students will have regular opportunities throughout the semester to practice analysis through writing activities completed as homework or during class. These include (usually worth 10 pts each):

- Quizzes: assess close reading of texts
- Exit Tickets: demonstrate understanding of in-class discussions, activities, and content
- Ticket-Ins: prepare answers to several questions before class, submitted when class begins

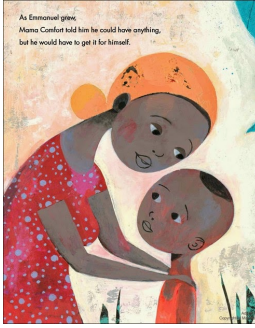
*Note: Students can only earn credit for these assignments when present in class on the day they are collected or completed.*

**ONLINE DISCUSSION BOARD (10% of final grade):** In order to open additional opportunities to discuss difficult topics, students will contribute to discussion in an online space in e-learning throughout the semester. These posts respond to specific prompts and must contribute significantly and thoughtfully to the conversation to earn credit and will be monitored, scored, and engaged by the course graduate teaching assistant, Ariel Berry, who may ask follow up questions regarding online commentary during class.

**RESEARCH/WRITING DEVELOPMENT: LINE OF INQUIRY ASSIGNMENT (30% of final grade):** Students will propose a “line of inquiry” in three short writing assignments, exploring the potential of a particular critical question and what research might be used to delve more deeply into this particular critical or analytical study.

**MIDTERM ACADEMIC POSTER PRESENTATION (20% of final grade):** Students will create a professional poster presentation to share a specific literary interpretation, focusing on connection-making, trends/patterns, critical theory, social messages, etc. Posters may be digital or handmade and accompany a 3-5 minute presentation.

**FINAL RESEARCH PROJECT (25% of final grade):** Scholars and teachers who study literature write in a variety of ways. The final project asks students to choose one of these approaches, purposefully creating a project that demonstrates understanding of the unique ways individuals think about literary texts. This project also includes a proposal and a rationale (a written defense that explains how the project meets objectives).



## 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 to 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.

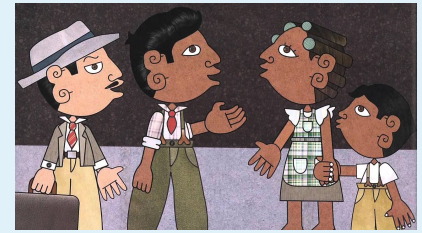
In addition, please make yourself familiar with the following campus services and policies, and don't hesitate to let me know if you have any questions:

- Disability Services for Students [www.wmich.edu/disabilityservices](http://www.wmich.edu/disabilityservices)
- Division of Student Affairs / Diversity Questions [www.wmich.edu/students/diversity](http://www.wmich.edu/students/diversity)
- Sexual and Gender-Based Harassment and Violence, Intimate Partner Violence, and Stalking Policy [www.wmich.edu/sexualmisconduct](http://www.wmich.edu/sexualmisconduct)
- Religious Observance [http://www.wmich.edu/facultysenate/downloads/MOA0702\\_religious\\_observances\\_final.pdf](http://www.wmich.edu/facultysenate/downloads/MOA0702_religious_observances_final.pdf)
- Office of Student Conduct [www.wmich.edu/conduct](http://www.wmich.edu/conduct)
- Civility Statement [http://wmich.edu/sites/default/files/attachments/u370/2016/Civility%20Stmt.7-27-16\\_0.pdf](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. As part of the attendance policy, **attendance/response writing points (including quizzes) can ONLY be earned if a student is present in class.**

If a student must be absent, he/she is responsible for all 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 in preparation for departure.

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.