



**ENG 305: Children's Literature  
COURSE SYLLABUS:  
Fall 2013**

**Instructor:** Mary Couzelis

**Office Location:** HL 126

**Office Hours:** Tues/Thur 11am-noon and 1pm-2pm, and by appt.

**Office Phone:** (903) 468.8725

**Office Fax:** (903) 886.5980

**University Email Address:** mcouzelis@leomail.tamuc.edu

<b>COURSE INFORMATION</b>
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**Catalogue Description:** A survey of children's literature. The course includes various authors and illustrators in such genres as the oral tradition, fantasy, realistic and historical fiction, poetry, and the picture book. Prerequisite Eng 1302.

**Course Description:** Students in this course will read several classics in children's literature as well as a number of contemporary children's books. This course will explore a variety of children's literature through various genres. These genres include contemporary novel, classic novel, historical fiction, and gothic fiction, picture books, fairy tales, and graphic novel. This course has several goals. You will become familiar with the genres listed above, but together, we'll also explore various ideas conveyed in the texts, the historical development and context of children's fiction, how novels for young readers have changed and/or stayed the same, and the intersections among language, theory, politics, ideology, and children's fiction. Most important, however, we will be examining the ideologies embedded in the texts as well as the ideologies that guide our culture, particularly in terms of children and the literature they read. We'll also be tackling several questions throughout the semester. What IS children's literature? What is its purpose, how does it function, and why? Is it successful in its function? What are adult expectations of children as set forth in these texts? What might these novels say about our culture? Why study children's literature in the first place?

**Course Goals/Objectives:** By the end of the semester, students will be able to analyze and clearly articulate interpretations of the various meanings of the texts we read, with particular reference to relevant contexts and subtexts. "Texts" include written and spoken language, visual, pictorial, kinetic, multimodal, and in general "semiotic" artifacts. (Just about everything is a text—even your professor! The most successful students can generally "read" their professors). Ultimately, I want you to be able to read the assigned texts closely, critically, creatively, intellectually, and theoretically, and articulate that ability.

**Student Learning Outcomes:**

To be successful in this class, students will:

1. Demonstrate their familiarity with the terminology identified in the class. This outcome will be assessed by one or more of the following: quizzes, exams, discussion boards or written analyses.
2. Demonstrate their ability to recognize, identify and communicate the role of ideology in children's texts. This outcome will be assessed by one or more of the following: quizzes, exams, discussion boards or written analyses.

## Materials – Textbooks, Readings, Supplementary Readings:

- Louise Fitzhugh, *Harriet the Spy* [Yearling 0440416795]
- G. Neri, *Yummy* [Lee & Low 1584302674]
- Julia Alvarez, *Before We Were Free* [Knopf 0375815449]
- Lenore Look, LeUyen Pham, *Alvin Ho: Allergic to Girls, School, and Other Scary Things* [Yearling 978-0-375-84930-5]
- Lois Lowry, *The Giver* [Laurel Leaf 0440237688]
- Adam Gidwitz *A Tale Dark and Grimm* [Puffin 0142419672]
- Drew Taylor, *The Night Wanderer: A Native Gothic Novel* [Annick Press 1554510996]
- Regular internet access (additional readings available online)
- Understanding of eCollege
- Notebook for in-class work and homework
- Flash drive or other means (dropbox.com account, for example) of storing digital versions of the essays and other written material you generate (always, always keep a backup of everything you turn in!)
- A valid, working university email address that you check often (everyday)

<b>COURSE REQUIREMENTS</b>
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### Assignments:

**Responses:** These will be one page, single spaced, 600 words of critical thinking. You will be given a prompt to address.

**Reading Quizzes:** Expect a quiz on the same date a text is to be read. These will generally consist of content based questions that demonstrate you read the text. No make-ups, but because we all have bad days, I will drop the lowest quiz grade at semester end.

**Midterm:** This will be an exam on what we have studied up to the midterm point in the semester. The exam will have definitions, matching, and short answer.

**Final Exam:** Your final exam will cover what we have read since your midterm. Your final exam will include definitions, matching, and short answer.

**Bibliographic Essay:** At the end of the semester, you will write a bibliographic essay. A bibliographic essay is a narrative discussion of selected, scholarly articles written about a chosen topic. Your essay will be based on a *minimum* of five carefully-chosen scholarly articles published about any of the works from our syllabus, or about any theme, genre, or concept that we have encountered during the semester or about a children's literature book that does not appear on the syllabus (with my permission).

**Participation:** You will be graded on participating in class discussion. Talking in class in an intelligent way shows you have read the homework assignments.

### Grading

Here's a breakdown of how your grade will be calculated:

- 35 pts Participation
- 35 pts Responses
- 30 pts Reading Quizzes

150 pts Bibliographic Essay  
100 pts Midterm  
150 pts Final  
500 pts Total

**Grading Scale:** 100%-90% A; 89%-80% B; 79%-70% C; 69%-60% D; 59%-0 F.

Your grades will be posted for you to see throughout the semester on eCollege. The great thing about eCollege is that it calculates your total grade for you as we go so you always know where you stand in the class. Only you and I can see your grades on eCollege.

## TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

You will need:

- Flash drive or other means (dropbox.com account, for example) of storing digital versions of the essays and other written material you generate (always, always keep a backup of everything you turn in!)
- A valid, working email address that you check often (everyday)
- Regular internet access (additional readings available online and eCollege)
- Access to a computer with a word processing program and a printer (assignments must be typed and printed)
- Ability to print 30-50 pages throughout the semester (funds, ink, paper, etc.)

## ACCESS AND NAVIGATION

Some texts for this course exist exclusively online, so you must have Internet access to read and/or view these texts. You must have an understanding of eCollege.

## COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT

### Interaction with Instructor Statement:

Please contact your instructor with any questions you may have. Your instructor's communication preference is e-mail, and my address is: [mcouzelis@leomail.tamuc.edu](mailto:mcouzelis@leomail.tamuc.edu). Also, each instructor in the department of literature and languages is required to keep at least three office hours per course per week.

### Grievance Procedure:

Students who have concerns about their writing course or instructors should speak *first* to the instructor about those concerns. If the student is unsatisfied with the outcome of that conversation, the next person in the chain of command is the Dr. Susan Stewart. Students should contact her via e-mail at [susan.stewart@tamuc.edu](mailto:susan.stewart@tamuc.edu)

## COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES

### Course Specific Procedures:

#### *Attendance Policy*

Students may miss up to **five** times without penalty. After the **sixth** absence, the student's final grade will drop by one letter. After the **eighth** absence, the student cannot pass the course.

There is no such thing as "partial attendance"—students are either present for the entire course or they are absent.

Excessive tardiness will be penalized as an absence. If you come to class late 3 times that will count as an absence. "Late" is when I have completed calling roll and class has begun. It is your responsibility to make sure your presence is accounted for accurately; therefore, if you do come in late, then it is your responsibility to make sure I have you marked as late instead of absent.

The university has no policy for "excused absences" except for university sanctioned events, so please save your absences for illness, court appearances, child care arrangements, and other situations when you must miss class.

You are responsible for obtaining the information you missed when you are absent. Do not email me and ask what you have missed; refer to the calendar on Ecollege or email a peer from class.

#### *Academic Honesty*

The official departmental policy: "Instructors in the Department of Literature and Languages do not tolerate plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty. Instructors uphold and support the highest academic standards, and students are expected to do likewise. Penalties for students guilty of academic dishonesty include disciplinary probation, suspension, and expulsion. (Texas A&M University-Commerce Code of Student Conduct 5.b [1,2,3])

If you ever have any questions about a particular use of a source, always ask your instructor. They want you to avoid plagiarism, too, so they will help you do so whenever and wherever they can. Do what you can to take advantage of this support—to look innocent in addition to being innocent when it comes to charges of plagiarism.

Students guilty of academic dishonesty of plagiarism can expect to fail the assignment in question or the entire course depending on the nature of the incident. See your *Texas A&M University-Commerce* Code of Student Conduct for more information.

### University Specific Procedures:

#### *Statement on behalf of students with disabilities*

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

Office of Student Disability Resources and Services  
Texas A&M University-Commerce  
Gee Library  
Room 132  
Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835  
Fax (903) 468-8148  
StudentDisabilityServices@tamuc.edu

*Student Conduct*

All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. (See *Code of Student Conduct from Student Guide Handbook*).

*Other Course Policies:*

Cell Phone policy – using your cell phones, including texting, while in class is disrespectful and disruptive to me and those around you. If you text during class, you will be asked to leave and you will not earn participation points for that day. Your cell phones should be turned OFF and PUT AWAY.

## Calendar

T 8/27 – Intro.

Th 8/29 – PDF version of John Newbery, *Little Pretty Pocket Book* (1767), available in DocSharing.

9/3 – Fairy Tales: Red Riding Hood & Bluebeard

9/5 - Fairy Tales: Hansel & Gretel. DocSharing. **RR1 due.**

9/10 - Fairy Tales (Cinderella) into Picture Books.

9/12 – Picture Books - Art.

9/17– Picture Books – Ideology.

9/19– Picture Books – Trauma. **RR2 due.**

9/24 – *The Wind in the Willows* – available online <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/289/289-h/289-h.htm>

9/26– *The Wind in the Willows*.

10/1 - *Harriet the Spy*. **RR3 due.**

10/3 - *Harriet the Spy*

10/8 - *Harriet the Spy*

10/10 – **No Class.** Review.

10/15 – Midterm.

10/17 – *Alvin Ho*

10/21 - *Midterm Grades Due.*

10/22– *Alvin Ho*

10/24– *The Night Wanderer*

10/29– *The Night Wanderer*

10/31 – *The Night Wanderer*. **RR4 due.**

11/5 – *The Giver*

11/7 – *The Giver* **Alternative RR4 due.**

11/12 - *Before We Were Free*.

11/14 - *Before We Were Free*.

11/19 - *Before We Were Free*. **RR 5 due.**

11/21 – *Yummy*.

11/26 – *Yummy*. **Alternative RR5 due.** Discussion about Bibliographic Essay.

11/28 – **No Class.** *A Tale Dark and Grimm*

12/3 – *A Tale Dark & Grimm*.

12/5– *A Tale Dark & Grimm* **RR6 due.**

T 12/10– Review. **Due: Bibliographic Essay.**

Th 12/12 – **Last Class. Final Exam. RR7 due.**