

**EDU 319: Children's Literature: Multicultural and International Approaches
Spring 2010 – American University – School of Education, Teaching & Health**

Instructor: Alex R. Hodges, Assistant Librarian/Professor

Office: 107 (Ref, 1st fl) & 312 (CMC, 3rd fl), AU Library

Office Hours: Tuesdays, 3:00-5:00pm in 312 (CMC, 3rd fl)

Phone: office 202.885.3845; cell/text 202.210.8850

E-mail: alex.hodges@gmail.com

Classroom location: University Library, 306 (3rd fl)

Meeting time: Tuesdays, 5:30-8:00pm; January 12 to May 4

Catalog Course Description

Exploration and critical analysis of multicultural and international children's literature from preschool to adolescence. Includes how contemporary issues are reflected in different genres, as well as marginalization, gender equity, social inequity, racism, and censorship. Usually offered every spring.

Required Textbooks:

See course outline for reading assignments by date.

Jacobs, J. S. & Tunnell, M. O. (2008). *Children's Literature, Briefly*. 4th ed. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, Inc.

ON RESERVE at the University Library, Lower Level. Call number PN 1008.8 .J33 2008

Vasquez, V., et al. (2003). *Getting Beyond "I Like the Book": Creating Spaces for Critical Literacy in K-6 Classrooms*. Newark, DE: International Reading Association.

ON RESERVE at the University Library, Lower Level. Call number LB 1576 .V37 2003

Required Children's and Young Adult Literature:

See course outline for reading assignments by date.

Bridge to Terabithia, Katherine Paterson

ON RESERVE at the University Library, Lower Level. Call number PZ 7.P27 Br

Elijah of Buxton, Christopher Paul Curtis

ON RESERVE at the University Library, Lower Level. Call number PZ 7.C94137 El 2007

The Stinky Cheese Man and Other Fairly Stupid Tales, Jon Scieszka

ON RESERVE at the University Library, Lower Level. Call number PZ 8.S324 St 1992

Weetzie Bat, Francesca Lia Block

ON RESERVE at the University Library, Lower Level. Call number PZ 7.B6194 We 1999

Course Objectives and Expanded Course Focus*:

Our work together in this course requires reflection, observation and communication. We will examine both children's and young adult literature. Some of the texts we may have encountered in our own childhood. Others may be so current that they will include allusions to modern social conventions. I want you to apply what you learn in this class to your eventual teaching practice and to the development of your critical thinking skills. Careful evaluation of the literature along with an engaged, conversant classroom dynamic will aid the discussion of our discoveries. In order to achieve these means, we will use critical theory and a critical literacy framework to uncover meaning, explore linguistic constructions and critique artistic imagery.

As a class, we will . . .

1. Experience an introductory overview of the field of children's and young adult literature.
2. Engage critical thinking skills to evaluate, discuss, research and reflect upon our reactions to the literature in order to . . .
 - View literacy as a social practice,
 - Explore the possibilities of multiple literacies,
 - Discover situated meanings within individual works, and
 - Examine the motivations of authors, illustrators and publishers.
3. Use the lens of critical literacy to . . .
 - Discuss and learn about social issues such as diversity, difference, privilege, disadvantage, power and control as applied in books written for children,
 - Construct alternate versions of existing texts, and
 - Inform our actual teaching of children's literature while also reflecting upon teaching practice and critical theory.
4. Develop, discover and share research methods and strategies.
5. Respect the diversity of communicated thoughts, experiences and belief systems.
6. Have fun and learn while making these discoveries.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Professionalism: Attendance & Participation (10 Points)

Your attendance and critical engagement are crucial for your success. You are expected to be on time and to attend all sessions. Students are allowed one absence with no questions asked. Students who accrue 2 absences will receive a **one-half letter grade deduction** (i.e. an A- becomes a B+) from the final course grade. Students who accrue 3 absences will receive a **one letter grade deduction** (i.e. an A becomes a B) from the final course grade. Students who miss more than 3 class sessions **will not pass** the course.

Blog and Blackboard Posts (15 Points)

Each student will blog about children's or young adult literature, and on occasion, participate in assigned discussion threads via Blackboard. Participation in these forums is critical to attaining goals and objectives for the course.

Blogger via Google

Students are expected to join the class Blogger site through a personal Google account (see the instructor for a Google account if you don't have one separate from AU), and provide the class with their discoveries about children's literature.

Active participation will be gauged three times during the course:

- Feb. 2 (grading date ranges Jan. 20-Feb. 2)
- Mar. 2 (grading date ranges Feb. 3-16; Feb. 17-Mar. 2)
- Apr. 6 (grading date ranges Mar. 3-23; Mar. 24-Apr. 6)

Full points can be earned by providing at least **biweekly** opinionated posts that—

- a) respond to and cite other media about children's or young adult literature,
- b) reflect on and contribute meaningfully to other students' posts, or
- c) provide reviews or critical evaluations of specific children's or young adult titles.
 - **At least ONE book review blog post is expected from each student for each monthly evaluation. You will be expected to bring in the reviewed book on the dates (Feb. 2, Mar. 2, & Apr. 6) to share in class.**

Blackboard (Bb) Discussions

If additional time is necessary to treat a topic or if class discussion is lacking, students may be asked to expand on course topics via the course Blackboard site's Discussion Board. Also, students who miss in-class meetings may be assigned makeup reflection assignments that will be posted in the Bb Discussion Board.

Quizzes & Reading Responses (15 points)

There will be two in-class reading response exercises and an indeterminate number of unannounced pop quizzes related to the required course reading. The two exercises will be worth (5 points each; 10 points total). The exercises and quizzes will gauge your understanding of concepts presented in lectures, readings and discussions. More information about each exercise will be offered in class. The quizzes will be worth (1 point each). The number of pop quizzes will be in the 5-10 range (N.B. their frequency depends on the quality of class discussion), and only scores for the best 5 will count toward your final grade. Pop quizzes cannot be made up for any absence.

Counter Narrative Project* (Individual - 25 points)

Each student will create a counter narrative text for a traditional Cinderella story. There are many texts that we could choose for this assignment, but we will use the Cinderella story to help get the point across that texts are socially constructed, not neutral, and that given a set of different circumstances, every story could be told differently. Your individual counter narrative based on the original text and images is worth (15 points), and a one-page description (worth 10 points) of the differences will detail the sociopolitical impact of the recast text, images or characters. More information about this assignment will be explained in class.

Final Project (Group - 35 points)

Student groups (4-6 per group) will create a critical literacy analysis of a topical or genre area within children's or young adult literature. Groups will collectively choose one text to examine in depth; provide a linguistic (and imagery, too, if illustrated) analysis of this text; research similar and different texts within the genre; examine and observe through field research in library and bookstore collections for coverage of this subject; develop a potential social justice project based on the text and its general subject – aiming to show how teaching in K-12 curricula about the subject can effect social action or illuminate a social problem that needs attention and change.

Students are expected to design a Google Site that collects and organizes online content for the social action project. The Web site (worth 10 points) is one part of the overall project, which includes an evaluative, collaboratively written 5-7pp essay (worth 20 points) that describes the project. This project and your rationale for its creation will be presented to the class (worth 5 points). More information about this assignment will be explained in class.

CLASS SCHEDULE – SPRING 2010 – EDU319.001

Note: These details are subject to change. Be aware of in-class & online announcements.

Date	Lecture/Discussion Topics & Activities	Assignments/Readings Due
Jan. 12 Class 1	<p><u>Introduction to the Course</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review syllabus and course overview Develop communications structure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Class group/buddy system Blackboard <p>Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share favorite books Begin to set up class blog 	<p>In-Class Assignments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introductory writing assignment Library as classroom/classroom as library model
Jan. 19 Class 2	<p><u>Multimodal Connections: Literature & Film</u></p> <p>Guest lecture from Marcy Campos, Director, AU Community Service Center</p> <p>Activity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Watch <i>Bridge to Terabithia</i> (2007) 	<p>Reading: <i>Bridge to Terabithia</i> (Patterson)</p> <p>Homework Assignment: Post film/text analysis to Blackboard Due Tues, Jan. 26 by 3pm</p>
Jan. 26 Class 3	<p><u>Introduction to Children's & YA Literature</u></p> <p>Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussion of <i>Bridge to Terabithia</i> Film/Text comparison exercise 	<p>Reading DUE: <i>Bridge to Terabithia</i> Tunnell & Jacobs, Ch. 1, 5, 6, 7</p> <p>Hint: Probable pop quiz</p>
Feb. 2 Class 4	<p><u>Critical Literacy</u></p> <p>Lecture/Class Discussion</p> <p>Activity: Share books</p>	<p>Reading Due: Vasquez, Ch. 1, 2 hooks, pp. 7-28</p> <p>Blog post check up Bring reviewed book to class</p>
Feb. 9 Class 5	<p><u>Evaluating Literature</u></p> <p>Lecture & Class Discussion</p> <p>Activity: Reading Response Exercise</p>	<p>Reading Due: Tunnell & Jacobs, Ch. 2, 3, 4</p> <p>In-Class Assignment: Group Reading Response #1</p>
Feb. 16 Class 6	<p><u>Multicultural & International Books (1)</u></p> <p>Class Discussion: Intro to <i>Elijah of Buxton</i></p>	<p>Reading Due: <i>Elijah of Buxton</i>, Ch. 1-12 Tunnell & Jacobs, Ch. 12, 15</p>

Date	Lecture/Discussion Topics & Activities	Assignments/Readings Due
Feb. 23 Class 7	<u>Multicultural & International Books (2)</u> Class Discussion: <i>Elijah of Buxton</i> (cont.)	Reading Due: <i>Elijah of Buxton</i> , Ch. 13-24 & Afterwords Tunnell & Jacobs, Ch. 13, 14
Mar. 2 Class 8	<u>Fairy Tales, Folk Tales & Fantasy</u> Lecture & Class Discussion Activity: Share books	Reading Due: Tunnell & Jacobs, Ch. 9, 10 <i>The Stinky Cheese Man and Other Fairly Stupid Tales</i> , Scieszka & Smith Blog post check up Bring reviewed book to class
Mar. 9	NO CLASS – Spring Break	
Mar. 16 Class 9	<u>Focusing on Social Issues (1)</u> Lecture & Class Discussion	Reading Due: Vasquez, Ch. 3, 4
Mar. 23 Class 10	<u>Focusing on Social Issues (2)</u> Activity: Counter Narrative Presentations	Counter Narrative Project Due: Email by Tues, March 23, 4pm Name attachment: lastname_edu319_narrative.doc
Mar. 30 Class 11	<u>Banned and Controversial Books</u> Lecture & Class Discussion: <i>Weetzie Bat</i> Activity: Reading Response Exercise	Reading Due: Tunnell & Jacobs, Ch. 11, 16 <i>Weetzie Bat</i> In-Class Assignment: Group Reading Response #2
Apr. 6 Class 12	<u>Critical Literacy as a Curricular Framework</u> Lecture & Class Discussion Activities: Share books & Counter Narrative text reflections	Reading Due: Vasquez, Ch. 5, 6 Tunnell & Jacobs, Ch. 17, 18 Blog post check up Bring reviewed book to class
Apr. 13 Class 13	NO CLASS – Instructor at Conference	Group Work on Final Project
Apr. 20 Class 14	Final Project - Preparations Activity: Work time and troubleshooting session for final project & course evaluations	Group Conferences: Each group will meet with the instructor during class.
Apr. 27	NO CLASS – Spring Study Day	
May 4 Class 15	Final Project - Group Presentations	Final Project Due & Presented

Academic Integrity Code

Students are expected to conform to the regulations of the University in regard to academic integrity, especially in regard to plagiarism, inappropriate collaboration, dishonesty in examinations, dishonesty in papers, work for one course and submitted to another, deliberate falsification of data, interference with other students' work, and copyright violation. The student academic integrity code is located here:

<http://www1.american.edu/academics/integrity/code.htm>

Research Assistance

The University Library faculty provide assistance with developing search strategies for AU's online research tools. You can seek help by visiting the reference desk, by calling (202) 885-3238, or by instant messaging **askaulibrary** via AIM/GTalk/Yahoo!/MSN.

Using Appropriate Documentation Formats

The School of Education, Teaching & Health endorses the use of APA or MLA style for research citations, footnotes, list of references, and layout, and all written work. All style guides can be found in print in the library next to the reference desk.

American Psychological Association. (2010). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association, Sixth Edition*. Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association. **(At Reference Desk – Call number: PN147 .A7 2010)**

Gibaldi, J. *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*. 7th ed. New York: Modern Language Association, 2009. **(At Reference Desk – Call number: LB2369 .G53 2009)**

Center for Research, Teaching & Learning (CTRL)

CTRL offers students assistance with advanced technology support services. Discover their offerings here: <http://www.american.edu/teachingcenter/index.htm>

Emergency Preparedness

In the event of a declared pandemic (influenza or other communicable disease), American University will implement a plan for meeting the needs of all members of the university community. Should the university be required to close for a period of time, we are committed to ensuring that all aspects of our educational programs will be delivered to our students. These may include altering and extending the duration of the traditional term schedule to complete essential instruction in the traditional format and/or use of online learning.

In the event of a pandemic, this course will continue through our online communications. I will communicate class-specific information to students via email and Blackboard, while students must inform me immediately of any absence due to illness. Students are responsible for checking their email regularly and keeping themselves informed of emergencies. In the event of a declared pandemic or other emergency, students should refer to the AU Web site (<http://www.american.edu/emergency/>) and the AU information line at (202) 885-1100 for general university-wide information, as well as contact their faculty and/or respective dean's office for course and school/college-specific information.

Protection of Human Subjects Catalog

Any research involving interviewing, surveying, or observing human beings is subject to review and approval by the University Institutional Review Board (IRB) and information about the university's IRB process is outlined at <http://american.edu/irb/index.cfm>. The university IRB liaison is Matthew Zembrzuski and his email is zembrzus@american.edu.

Academic and Disability Support Services

Appropriate modifications to academic requirements may be necessary on a case-by-case basis to ensure educational opportunity for students with disabilities, and individual faculty members may need to modify specific course requirements to permit equal participation by students with disabilities. A wide range of services is available to help you meet course requirements:

Academic Support Center -- <http://www.american.edu/ocl/asc/index.cfm>

Disability Support Services -- <http://www.american.edu/ocl/dss/index.cfm>

Counseling Center -- <http://www.american.edu/ocl/counseling/index.cfm>

Incomplete Grades

Faculty members must approve student requests for an incomplete grade, and must do so before the end of the semester. Students must complete and submit an Incomplete Contract Form to the faculty member. Incompletes are given only in cases of severe emergencies, or special, well-documented circumstances, etc.

Additional Information for students --

American University Academic Regulations

<http://www.american.edu/provost/registrar/regulations/academicreg.cfm>

The Student Handbook

http://www.american.edu/ocl/upload/student_handbook.pdf

The Community Service Center: Connecting Course and Community Concerns

EDU 319 coursework encourages the application of the knowledge and skills you will learn in class to real-life issues and concerns. This process is commonly called “community-based learning and research” or “service-learning.” In addition to deepening student learning, this approach provides much-needed and appreciated support to nonprofit organizations and schools that are serving local communities and develops a partnership between the campus and the city. **The final project for EDU 319 could be extended into an actual service-learning opportunity. Students in this course are encouraged to carry out their project for credit.**

AU’s Community Service Center (CSC), located in Mary Graydon 273, is positioned to help you explore how and where to incorporate a community-based learning or research project into this course. Office staff can help you identify which DC-area organizations would be a good match for the topic or issue you are pursuing. They have a Nonprofit Directory online and in the office, with information on hundreds of area nonprofits and handouts. They are grouped by issue, such as Housing and Homelessness Organizations, Race and Ethnicity, Women and Gender, Youth Development Groups, Environmental Issues, Youth Programs, Food and Nutrition, Health, International and Multicultural Issues, Latino Organizations, GLBTA, Historic Sites, Criminal Justice, Environmental, Community Development, and others.

The Community Service-Learning Project (CSLP) extra credit option allows students to earn an additional credit to a class when you relate this work to an established three or four-credit course by way of a project, product, or service. The CSLP entails 40 hours of service during the course of the semester at one nonprofit site, as well as a reflection and evaluation session at the end.

For more information about AU’s service-learning option, contact Marcy Fink Campos by email (mfcampos@american.edu) or phone (Extension. 7378). You can also stop by the Community Service Center to meet Nora Cobo, Service-Learning Coordinator, see their resources, or go to their website at www.american.edu/volunteer.

Philosophy of the School of Education, Teaching & Health (SETH)

The faculty of the School of Education, Teaching & Health is committed to excellence in advancing educational theory and practice through the initial and continuing development of reflective, dedicated and proficient teachers, administrators and researchers. Graduates are equipped to meet individual needs, to nurture the strengths and talents of those individuals, and to initiate and provide leadership in classrooms, educational institutions, and in the public policy arena. The mission of the SETH is derived from the faculty's shared conviction that the fundamental task of schooling in America is the advancement of the welfare of children. The SETH faculty wants our teacher education programs to be known for preparing effective teachers who understand and model a commitment to excellence, equity, community and diversity.

The SETH faculty and staff are committed to celebrating diversity and building a community of learners. As we work in collaboration in and out of the classroom:

- ◆ We believe that respecting each other's differences and opinions leads to a positive and open environment,
- ◆ We believe that open discourse promotes reflective and thoughtful educators,
- ◆ We believe that equitable treatment of each other is necessary for a positive, sustained, and working community, and
- ◆ We believe that each and every member of the community can make a valuable contribution to the community.
- ◆ These beliefs in action provide for all students, staff, and faculty a safe, productive, and positive educational community.

*N.B.: Portions of this syllabus have been adapted from previous syllabi crafted by SETH's Vivian Vasquez (fall 2009) and Brec Cooke (spring 2009).