

Courses in Children's Literature

ENG 528: CHILDREN'S BOOK ILLUSTRATORS (4)

Department

The role of art in children's literature; a survey of traditional and contemporary works emphasizing but not limited to the European and American tradition; an examination of how artists interpret and reinterpret the text.

ENG 529: CHILDREN AND POETRY (4)

Department

The subject of this course is twofold: childhood and poetry. Concerning ourselves with the form and content of a diverse selection of poetry for children, we will explore how poets in England and the United States variously perceive, represent, and reimagine childhood in poetry. Beginning with the largely religious and didactic poetry of the 17th and 18th centuries and the rhymed narrative and light verse of the 19th, we will quickly move on to the more stylistically heterogeneous contemporary poetry scene, focusing on recent winners of the Lion and Unicorn Award for Excellence in North American Poetry.

ENG 535: TRADITIONS AND ADAPTATIONS IN LITERATURE FOR YOUNG CHILDREN (4)

Department

Modern literature for young children as it recreates and adapts a variety of literary traditions originating in older oral and written sources. Alphabet books, fables, folktales, Arthurian romance, animal tales and other forms of fantasy, and island adventures, with some consideration of dramatic and film adaptations of traditional stories.

ENG 536: THE FANTASTIC IN CHILDREN'S LITERATURE (4)

Department

The nature of the fantastic in children's literature, from 19th-century classics through Pooh and Oz to works by Sendak, Cameron, L'Engle, Le Guin, and the young adult science fiction and fantasy of Heinlein and Garner.

ENG 538: CULTURAL REPRESENTATION IN CHILDREN'S AND YOUNG ADULT LITERATURE (4)

Chandler

This course will examine contemporary picture books, chapter books, and middle grade novels. What themes emerge in these books? What do the characters look like? Who are their families? What are their obstacles? How do these stories contribute to a larger cultural narrative? What are the elements that render a "multicultural" book universal? Guided by questions such as these class participants will engage in close reading and discussion in an attempt to define this category while identifying particular artistic decisions evident in the texts. Offered in 2019.

ENG 539: CHILDREN'S LITERATURE AND CRITICAL THEORY (4)

Department

The distinctive character of literature written for young people requires a careful and critical approach to the use of existing literary theories; merely applying a theoretical model oriented to peer-directed work (that is, adults writing for other adults) often results in a distorted reading of a children's text. This course will thus serve as an introduction to the literary and critical theories that have developed around notions of subjectivity, authority, readership, and textuality, but will also involve an examination of how these theories may (and must) be adjusted to gain a fuller understanding of works that function not only as aesthetic objects, but also as apprentice texts for the acquisition of both literary and literacy competencies. Special attention will be given to recent developments in cognitive studies and multimodal theories so that we can develop a more nuanced understanding of picture books and children's poetry as well as traditional narrative.

ENG 541: EXPLORING THE BOUNDARIES – BOOKS FOR AND ABOUT BOYS (4)

Department

Writing concerned primarily with the maturation of boys and designed explicitly or implicitly for a reading audience of boys, from the beginnings of children's literature to the present. An examination of ideas about gender, reading, and writing that led to a genre called the "boys' book," the issues of masculinity, sexuality, and socialization that permeate the "boys' book," and the developments that have tended to de-emphasize gender-specific reading audiences in the 20th century.

ENG 542: HISTORY AND CRITICISM OF CHILDREN'S LITERATURE (4)

Coats

An introduction to British and American literature for children, from its roots in the oral tradition and medieval literature through 20th-century works. Required for all students; offered every year.

ENG 544: CHILDREN'S FILM (4)

Department

An exploration of films produced primarily for juvenile audiences, with particular attention to the films' entertainment and didactic value, the treatment of controversial themes, and the depiction of children.

ENG 545: CHILDREN'S LITERATURE IN TRANSLATION (4)

Department

Is translated children's literature a means of bridging cultural differences or of obscuring them? What survives in the process of translation, and what is the spectrum of choices along with translators of children's literature must decide to place themselves? Knowledge of one or more languages besides English is desirable, but not necessary.

ENG 546: THE MODERN YOUNG ADULT NOVEL (4)

Department

A chronological survey of novels published for and about teenagers since *The Catcher in the Rye*, from modern classics to current attention getters. Is there really such a thing as "young adult" literature? How might we read it as scholars, critics, and writers? How does it shape perceptions of gender, race, and class?

ENG 551: ANALYSIS OF AWARD WINNERS (4)

Department

Writers, librarians, publishers, teachers, and readers all await the announcement of the annual winner of The Newbery Award given by the ALSC for "the most distinguished American children's book published the previous year." But who decides what makes a work the most distinguished, how is that decision made, and what is the criteria for bestowing the coveted bronze medal?

This critical study of recent award-winning books focuses on the answers to those questions and, in particular, considers what has made contemporary children's book "most distinguished." It will also familiarize students with criteria for other major awards for children's literature.

ENG 556: EXPLORING THE MARGINS BETWEEN ADULT AND CHILDREN'S LITERATURE – GIRLS' COMING-OF-AGE FICTION (4)

Department

An exploration of 19th- and early 20th-century precursors of today's young adult fiction for girls, beginning with Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* and Susan Warner's *The Wide, Wide World*, with particular attention to works featuring female writers.

ENG 558: MYTH AND FOLKTALE – CHILDREN'S LITERATURE (4)

Department

An examination of myths and folktales from diverse cultures and the ways in which they express and shape collective values, from the Grimm Brothers to African American and Caribbean folktales.

ENG 559: WHEN CHILDHOOD GOES TO HOLLYWOOD (4)

Department

Nearly as long as there have been popular books for children in England and the United States, there have been dramatic adaptations of them. This course explores what happens when "childhood goes to Hollywood." What is gained, and lost, when children's books are adapted for the big screen? In what ways do these cinematic adaptations accurately address the themes, characters, and plot of the original print narrative, and in what ways do they redress them? Are these adaptations designed to replace or supplement the printed text? What does the recent abundance of film versions of children's literature – and their widespread success – say about the way in which childhood is conceptualized and commercialized in the United States? Finally, what is the relationship – or what should the connection be – between works of children's literature and their seemingly inevitable film adaptations?

ENG 560: THE CRAFT OF WRITING FOR CHILDREN (4)

Homzie

Writing books for children and adolescents involves a two-fold trick. The author, usually an adult, must craft a narrative that convinces the reader that they have the authority to report on the authentic experiences of childhood and adolescence. Additionally, they must build a text, using techniques such as figurative language and sensory details, to create a fully realized world and satisfying story. We'll be examining the forms of several genres as well as age categories in order to uncover the tricks of the trade, and how to apply the same approaches in our own writing. Offered in 2019.

ENG 561: GENRE STUDY IN THE CRAFT OF WRITING FOR CHILDREN (4) LaFaye, Sherman
Study of a particular genre or theme, with subject matter varying from year to year. Offered every year.

ENG 562: CREATIVE WRITING WORKSHOP (4) Department
A workshop course in the writing of imaginative literature for children. Genre focus will develop out of student and faculty interests.

ENG 563: MEN, WOMEN, AND DRAGONS – GENDER AND IDENTITY IN FANTASY AND SCIENCE FICTION (4) Department
Fantasy literature has always been a powerful tool for examining how we acquire identities. Science fiction writers have, in the last decades, begun to explore implications of and alternatives to our culture's gender divisions. In this course we will survey the way children's fantasy and science fiction represent and reconceive gender roles and the finding of selfhood.

ENG 564: MOTHERS IN CHILDREN'S AND YOUNG-ADULT LITERATURE (4) Fraustino
Children's and young-adult literature has predominantly been written, published, reviewed, purchased, read aloud at home, and taught in schools by women. Does this make the field a matriarchal culture, with books serving as metaphorical mothers? How have mothers been represented in literature written and published for children and young adults, from the printing press to the present? What attitudes toward mothers and motherhood are reflected by the texts? What maternal ideologies are inscribed in young readers? Using feminist, psychoanalytical, cultural, and other pertinent theoretical perspectives, this course will look at the depiction of mothers in nursery rhymes, fairy tales, childhood lore, picture books, chapter books, and young-adult novels. Besides reading a common list of core texts, students will be expected to explore widely in their own areas of interest and report back to the class on their findings. Offered in 2019.

ENG 565: INQUIRY INTO FAIRY TALES (4) Department
Each term this course will focus on fairy tales' relationship with other constructs or ideas: these might include ideology, other traditional literature, narrative and oral traditions, revisions and updates, or psychology, for instance.

ENG 570: POST MODERNISM AND CHILDREN'S LITERATURE (4) Department
What is postmodernism? Theorists and scholars of children's literature suggest a literary mode with such common features as narrative discontinuity, indeterminacy, fragmentation, decanonization, irony, self-consciousness, joy, pastiche, performance, and interactivity. Postmodern children's literature has gained increasing importance in the field, requiring significant adjustments in approach from writers, readers, and scholars. The course offers an immersion in these fascinating ideas and texts. Readings will range from picture books through children's and young-adult novels that enact the moves and structures of the postmodern mode.

ENG 571: YOUNG-ADULT SCIENCE FICTION – WHERE THE BOYS- AND GIRLS-ARE (4) Department
An examination of the history and development of technological literature (1910-1947) and science fiction (1947-present) written and marketed expressly for the young-adult reader. The seminar also addresses a variety of relevant topics: science fiction and literary theory, series books for young readers, science fiction and technology, gender in/and science fiction, science fiction and American cultural history and development.

ENG 572: STORYTELLING (4) Department
Storytelling literature, the history of storytelling, and the practical applications of storytelling will be surveyed, but the practice of telling stories orally will receive the major emphasis. Students will be introduced to techniques for selecting and learning stories. Performance techniques will be demonstrated by the instructor. While the focus will be on traditional tales, some time will be devoted to an exploration of the telling of original, personal, family, historical, and ghost stories. Students will be expected to read certain texts on the art of storytelling, to familiarize themselves with traditional folktales, to select appropriate stories for telling, and to learn, workshop, and perform at least three stories for the class.

Students will begin the development of a personal style and repertoire of stories.

ENG 573: GENDER AND GIRLS' FICTION (4)

Department

This course uses contemporary theories about gender as a framework for readings of classic texts for girls. Gender theory leads us to new perspectives on both girls' fiction itself and scholarly criticism of that fiction.

ENG 583: ADVANCED CREATIVE WRITING TUTORIAL (4)

Kushner, Wyeth

Graduate tutorial seminar in the generation, examination, and interpretation of texts in children's literature in the light of literary history and theory with attention to the writing of the students in the class. The exact contents of any given seminar will be determined by the needs and interests of its members. Limited to students in the M.F.A. program in children's literature. Prerequisite: permission of instructor. Offered every year.

ENG 598: CAPSTONE SEMINAR (8)

Department

M.A. students may undertake ENG 598: Capstone Seminar in place of ENG 599: Thesis. The capstone seminar consists of a written examination of three short essays and an oral examination based on a reading list and accompanying essay.

ENG 599: THESIS (8)

Department

M.A. students may choose either a scholarly or a creative thesis. Students who choose to do a creative thesis must have taken ENG 510: Creative Writing Seminar or ENG 560: The Craft of Writing for Children and ENG 561: Genre Study in the Craft of Writing for Children or ENG 562: Creative Writing Workshop.