ENGLISH 208C  
CHILDREN’S LITERATURE

MW 1:00 – 2:20  
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COURSE DESCRIPTION:

English 208C introduces students to a range of children's literature, including several  
established classics. Selections are from various historical periods, such as Victorian (1837 – 1901),  
Edwardian (1901 – 1910), the mid-20th century, and the early-21st century. Some may appeal more to  
boys, others more to girls. Some may be categorized as realistic, others as fantastic. These and other  
issues will provide discussion points throughout the course.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

1. To introduce students to significant works of children’s literature, as well as their adaptations,  
   many of which have endured the test of time.
2. To help students to evaluate the children’s literature that they may read in the future, whether for  
   their own pleasure, to their children, or to their students.
3. To help students think about children and childhood.
4. To introduce students to certain critical approaches that are often applied to children’s literature,  
   such as reader response, feminism, structuralism (Propp and Levi-Strauss), and psychological  
   criticism (Freud and Jung).
5. To develop skills in oral reading, critical thinking, and clear writing.
6. Through an on-line component, to help students to articulate their responses.

TEXTBOOKS:

The following textbooks are required:

Lewis Carroll, Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland, ed. by Richard Kelly (Broadview).
Eoin Colfer, Artemis Fowl (Hyperion)
Carlo Collodi, Pinocchio, trans. by Geoffrey Brock (NYRB).
Kenneth Grahame, The Wind in the Willows (Puffin).
C. S. Lewis, The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe (Harper Trophy).
Selections from The Fairy Tales of Charles Perrault and Fairy Tales by the Brothers Grimm.
GRADING AND ASSIGNMENTS:

- **Online Group Discussions** will account for 15% of the final grade. See below.
- **Assignment 1**, which is based on the fairy tales, will account for 20% of the final grade.
- **Assignment 2**, which offers research or creative options, will account for 30% of the final grade.
- One 2 ½ hour **final examination** will account for the remaining 35% of the final grade.
- **Class participation**, including participation in the online “Coffee Club,” will affect the grade positively (up to 3%), as will prepared reading in class (up to 2%). There may be some deduction of marks (up to 5%) if your **attendance** is noticeably irregular.
- One number grade (1%) may be deducted for each day that an assignment is late unless an extension has been granted in advance. **No paper will be accepted after the other students’ papers have been returned to them.**

UW-ACE ONLINE:

There will be a course website which you can access through UW-ACE; see page 7 of this syllabus.

- This website will contain **Class Announcements**, which you should consult regularly.
- The main page contains **Links** to relevant websites, especially film adaptations on youtube.
- You may **Introduce Yourself** to the rest of the class.
- **Downloadable Handouts** will be made available for copying.
- There will be a “**Coffee Club**” where you may wish to ask a question, instigate a discussion, or continue a discussion from class.
- **Online Group Discussions** will be organized online. See below.

ONLINE GROUP DISCUSSIONS:

During the first two weeks, students will be divided into groups of four or five. The **A-Teams** (Groups 1, 2, and 3) will discuss the novels labelled A on the syllabus. The **B-Teams** (Groups 4, 5, and 6) will discuss the novels labelled B. The **C-Teams** (Groups 7, 8, and 9) will discuss the novels labelled C. The deadline for discussing each novel will be 11:55 pm on the **Friday before** we are scheduled to discuss the novel in class (see the Tentative Schedule of Readings). **Please note that this deadline holds, even if we fail behind time.**

It is best if you discuss the works in an interactive way. That is, continue the thread of a previous submission, or start a new thread if you change the focus of what has gone before. **Do not simply repeat the same points that someone else has made.** To help you to articulate your responses, I will discuss some aspects of reader-response theory in class. As a further stimulus, you might consider the following questions:

- What expectations did you have before you began reading the story? E.g., Had you read it before? Seen the Disney film, etc.? When you finished reading, did the novel meet your expectations? Exceed them? Or disappoint them?
- Did you enjoy reading it? Think of reasons why or why not.
- Which episode did you especially enjoy? Which character is especially memorable?
- What puzzled you? Bothered you? Or whatever? Would you read this novel to your children, or encourage them to read it on their own? At what age?
- Do any of our critical approaches strike you as relevant: Structural (Propp, Levi-Strauss)? Psychological (Freud, Jung)? Feminist?
ASSIGNMENTS

NOTE: Please use MLA style for setting out quotations and documenting page references from your sources. Also, use MLA style for setting out your Works Cited list. I will give you some basic points on the MLA style in class; for more information, consult The Little, Brown Compact Handbook.

I mark essays holistically, taking into consideration content, clarity of organization, and correctness of style and technique. Before you submit your paper, be sure to proofread it, checking for errors in typing, spelling, punctuation, and grammar. Consider your readers: Will they have any difficulty following your ideas?

Unless otherwise stated, the page count means double-spaced, typed pages, 12-point font size.

ASSIGNMENT 1:

DUE DATE: Monday, October 19, 2009, at the beginning of class.

TOPIC: This assignment is in three parts. You must do each of the parts, and label them clearly.

1. Select one of the following fairy tales of Charles Perrault: “Blue Beard” (p. 22); “The Sleeping Beauty in the Wood” (p. 32); “Cinderella, or The Little Glass Slipper” (p. 57); “Little Thumb” (p. 81). Write an essay on this fairy tale, focusing your ideas on one of the following critical approaches: Structural, Psychological, Feminist. (This part of the assignment should be 2 – 3 pages in length.)

2. Using basic ideas from part 1, compare Perrault's version of the fairy tale with the corresponding version by the Brothers Grimm: “The Robber Bridegroom” (p. 137); “Briar Rose” (p. 121); “Ashputtel” (p. 157); “Tom Thumb” (p. 141). (This part of the assignment should be 2 – 3 pages in length.)

3. Using basic ideas from parts 1 and 2, compare the fairy tale with at least one adaptation (e.g., Disney, Anne Sexton, Angela Carter, a children's picture book, etc.). (This part of the assignment should be 2 – 3 pages in length.)

ASSIGNMENT 2:

DUE DATE: Wednesday, November 25, 2009, at the beginning of class.

TOPIC: One of the following:

1. You have been asked by the local school board to prepare a set of lessons designed to encourage eleven-year-old boys* to become more avid readers (*OR eleven-year-old girls). Prepare lesson plans for any two of the novels from our syllabus that you might include. The plans should include assigned readings, questions, discussion topics, follow-up exercises, as well as your use of any adaptations and how you choose to approach them. In addition to the two novels, you may also include some poems or stories, such as the ones with which we began the course. Since you may include puzzles, etc., I won't suggest a page limit. However, you should include a 2-page cover letter, setting out for the school board your objectives, your basic methodology, and the rationale for your selections.
Information for Students Using UW-ACE

ANGEL is a web-based course management system that enables instructors to manage course materials (posting of lecture notes etc.), interact with their students (drop boxes for student submissions, on-line quizzes, discussion boards, course e-mail etc.), and provide feedback (grades, assignment comments etc.). The degree to which UW-ACE is utilized in a particular course is left to the discretion of the instructor and therefore, you may find a large variance in how UW-ACE is being used from one course to another.

1. Logging into UW-ACE

Since UW-ACE is a web-based system, you will need a browser. Although you may have success with other Web browsers, we strongly recommend that you use the following for best access results:

2. Choosing a Browser

ANGEL is designed to support the widest variety of client-side operating systems and client-side browsers through its limited use of client-side technologies. While ANGEL products generally function well in many browsers, the following are formally supported and tested:

- With PCs running Windows OS: Internet Explorer, Firefox and Mozilla
- With Macs running OS X: Firefox and Mozilla

Testing is performed on the latest generally available versions for the above platforms and browsers with each General Release of ANGEL products, ensuring full support at that time. For additional information on browser support please visit http://support.angellearning.com.

Note: Internet Explorer for the Mac will not work with ANGEL.

3. Locating UW-ACE on the Web

Once you have started up your browser, type in the following URL:

http://uwace.uwaterloo.ca or go to the University of Waterloo’s homepage and select the UW-ACE hyperlink

Provide your Quest/UWdir userid and password. Once you have logged in, you should see a list of your UW-ACE courses under the Courses header bar. Clicking on the course name will take you to that course.

4. Checking Your Userid and Password

Your password can be checked by going to:
http://ego.uwaterloo.ca/~uwdir/UW-Passwd.html

If your password check fails, you can unlock your password and receive a new one by going to:
http://ego.uwaterloo.ca/~uwdir/UnLock.html

If you still can not get on after checking and resetting your password, please confirm with your instructor that you are on the class roster. Only students with courses using UW-ACE will have access to the site.

5. Getting Help

A UW-ACE student guide can be found by selecting Help on left hand panel of the UW-ACE home page, and selecting the hyperlink ANGEL 7.1 Student Guide -- Quickstart Overview Guide.

Additional queries can be sent to uwacehelp@ist.uwaterloo.ca.