Department of English  
University of Waterloo

Nadine Gingrich  
Spring 1995

English 206C  
Children's Literature

Office: HH 228B  
Extension: 3886 or call the graduate secretary at 3358 and leave a message  
Office Hours: Thursday 10-12

Course Description

Children's literature is not a course in child psychology or development, nor is it a guide to the selection of literature for children. Rather, it is a course that examines the literature created for, or appropriated by, a specific audience, and our focus will be on the literature itself. We will trace the two large functions, didacticism and entertainment, that have traditionally been assigned to children's literature, and we will keep in mind some deceptively simple questions: What is children's literature? Is it different from other literature? How do we, as adults, assess it?

Assignments

There will be two essays in the course each worth 30% of the final grade; one short essay of 5-6 pages will be due June 21 and one longer essay of 8-10 pages will be due July 26. There will be a final examination worth 40% of the final grade.
Schedule

May 3  Introduction: brief history of children's literature and overview of the course

May 10  Fairy Tales: an examination of fairy tales from both the oral and literary traditions*

May 17  *Folk and Fairy Tales*, ed. Martin Hallett and Barbara Karasek (Broadview Press)

May 24  What makes a "classic" text and the establishment of the canon
E.B. White, *Charlotte's Web* (Harper)

May 31  LEARNEDS CONFERENCE - NO CLASS

June 7  C.S. Lewis, *The Silver Chair* (Harper)

June 14  The "Domestic Drama"
Frances Hodgson Burnett, *The Secret Garden* (Puffin)

June 21  "The Adventure Story for Boys"
H. Rider Haggard, *King Solomon's Mines* (Puffin)

June 28  Historical Fiction
Rosemary Sutcliff, *The Lantern Bearers* (Puffin)

July 5  The Contemporary Issues Novel
Katherine Paterson, *Bridge to Terabithia* (Harper)

July 12  Fantasy
Philippa Pearce, *Tom's Midnight Garden* (Harper)

July 19  Madeleine L'Engle, *A Wrinkle in Time* (Dell)

July 26  Ellen Raskin, *Figgs and Phantoms* (Puffin)

*For May 10*, please read the selections in the text from the sections "The Loss of Innocence," "Damsels in Distress," "The Child as Hero," "Villains," and "Animal Bridegroom," as well as the essays by Tolkien, Bettelheim, Rowe, and Stone.

*For May 17*, please read the selections from the section "Brain over Brawn," the tales of Hans Christian Andersen and Oscar Wilde, and the essay by Luthi.