Children’s Literature - English 208C Section 01

English 208C deals with classic works of children’s literature, including fantasy written primarily for children. It is not a course in child psychology or a guide to the selection of books for young readers. Although we will be always mindful of the intended audience, we will examine books written for children as a literary genre. During the course we will discuss the historical development, narrative conventions, and recurring themes/concerns of the genre. We will begin with the oral tradition of folk tales, and move on to consider novels and other texts. Class work will include lecture, discussion, and “workshops” on readings. No marks are assigned for attendance, but participation is expected.

Texts:

*Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*, Lewis Carroll 1865 (Dover Thrift Editions, 1993)
*Mowgli Stories from “The Jungle Book,”* Rudyard Kipling 1894 (Dover Children’s Thrift Classics, 1994)
*Peter Pan*, J.M. Barrie 1911 (Puffin Books, 1988)
*The Sword in the Stone*, T.H. White 1938 (Lions, 1971)
*The Dark is Rising*, Susan Cooper 1973 (Collier 1986)

1 additional novel, your choice from a list to be provided or as negotiated with instructor

Assignments:

15% Midterm - May 30 (on material from *Folk and Fairy Tales*)
10% Short Essay (2 pages) - June 18 (topics to be handed out)
15% Book “Report” on your additional text (3-4 pages, details to be handed out) - by July 9, preferably earlier in the term
25% Long Essay (5-6 pages) - July 25
35% Final Exam - final exam period
Reading Schedule:

May

2 Intro
7 - 28 Folk and Fairy Tales
   30 Midterm

June

4 From Folk and Fairy Tales: “Illustrations.” Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland
   6 Alice
   11 Mowgli Stories
   13 - 18 Peter Pan (Short Essay due, June 18)
   20 -27 Sword in the Stone

July

2 - 4 Charlotte’s Web
   9 - 11 Dark is Rising (Book “Report” due by July 9)
   16 Tuck Everlasting
   18 Tuck Everlasting/BFG
   23 The BFG
   25 Review (Long Essays due)

Essays will be marked for the quality of literary interpretation and of writing; the examination will be marked for the knowledge of the texts displayed and for the ability to find connections between them. Essays are due on or before the assigned dates; 3 marks will be deducted per each day of unarranged lateness. Be aware of the University of Waterloo’s policy regarding plagiarism, “the act of presenting the ideas, words, or other intellectual property of another as one’s own.” Essay topics and the use of external resources will be discussed in class and on hand-outs.