

SYLLABUS

This syllabus is tentative. It may change.

Class

Psychology 453, Psychology of Story Comprehension, Spring Term 2009
Wed., 12:30 - 2:20 p.m., PAS 3026

Instructor

Agnieszka Polanowski Fecica (PAS 4012/4206)
Office Hours: Wednesday 10:30-11:30 (PAS 4206) or by appointment.

Contacting the Instructor

Please use UW-ACE to send e-mails connected with the class. To set up a meeting, send an e-mail proposing a meeting time. I will either confirm the proposed time or propose another time.

Course description

This course explores different aspects of story comprehension. While the first part of the course explores general aspects of story comprehension, the second part of the course focuses exclusively on the development of narrative and reading comprehension in children.

To succeed in this class you will need to attend class, read assigned articles, and complete a series of assignments. If you miss a class, you are responsible for getting information about what you missed from other students. The instructor does not provide notes or outlines to students who have missed classes.

Class readings

You can find a copy of all assigned class readings in PAS 4028 (the 4th floor photocopy room).

Course requirements and grading

Your final grade will be based on:

- Class Participation (10%) which includes (but is not limited to) attendance.
- Thought Papers (10%)
- Book Summary & Discussion (5%)
- Presentation (30%)
- Final Paper (45%)

All written assignments are to be uploaded to UW-ACE and handed in to the instructor as hard copies (i.e. printed out on paper). Uploaded assignments should be in MS word or RTF format. All assignments should be written in 12pt Times New Roman font, double spaced, with all margins set at 1 inch (2.54 cm). Page limits do not include title pages.

Note on APA format

The final paper will require you to use APA (American Psychological Association) format, the style described in the 5th edition of the *APA Publication Manual* (2001). Copies of the APA manual are at the Dana Porter Library (Call Number is **BF76.7.P83 2001**).

Policy on late assignments

Assignments MUST be turned in when due. The corresponding files should be uploaded to UW-ACE before class on the date due. Unless you have an appropriate doctor's note, or there is a death in your family (or some equally severe situation) assignments will not be accepted late.

[No broken printers, no hard-drives failures, computer crashes. Save it often, e-mail it to yourself as an attachment to have a backup, etc.]

ASSIGNMENTS

1. Thought Papers. Worth 10%. Due at the beginning of each class.

Write a thought paper based on the weekly readings outlined in the course syllabus. Thought papers are 1 page long casual essays intended to be reactions, constructive extensions, and integrations of the main ideas of the reading. Discuss the most provocative or interesting key idea in the reading from your point of view. You can also discuss how the current reading relates to something else relevant that you've read or thought about. Submit your thought papers at the beginning of each class.

2. Book Summary & Discussion. Worth 5%. Due May 13.

The point of this assignment is to encourage you to think about stories and story comprehension from a child's point of view, as well as to consider why some stories become more "popular" than others. Write a 1-2 page summary and discussion of one of the books you favoured as a child and explain why you liked it. Briefly, describe the story. Consider the following in your discussion of the book: Was it a popular children's book? How easy was it to comprehend? Was it a picture book? What made the book so likeable? The day this assignment is due, you will take turns informally summarizing and discussing your favourite books.

3. Presentations & Discussion Leader. Worth 30%

Max time per presentation is 30 minutes. Worth 30%

Select a day from the class schedule outlined in the syllabus, and present the readings assigned for that day to the class. You should do the presentation in Power Point, summarizing and stressing the implications of the work. Tell us what you liked and what did not you like about the research described in the paper. After the presentation, you will lead the class in a discussion of the paper you just presented. Include a slide featuring 5-8 questions designed to guide class discussion. Your mark will be based on: 1) the quality of your presentation, and 2) the 5-8 questions you suggest to guide class discussion.

Please let me know as soon as you have decided which paper to present. If the paper has already been reserved by someone else, then you will need to select a different paper. Presenters do not need to submit a weekly summary of the readings they are presenting.

4. Final Project: Worth 45%

Write a 8-10 page research paper based on your own interests. Pick a topic related to narrative or reading comprehension.

- a) Write up a 1-2 page proposal. **Worth 5%** **Due June 24**
- b) Final draft of paper. **Max pages = 10. Worth 40%** **Due July 31**

Note on avoidance of academic offences

All students registered in the courses of the Faculty of Arts are expected to know what constitutes an academic offence, to avoid committing academic offences, and to take responsibility for their academic actions. When the commission of an offence is established, disciplinary penalties will be imposed in accord with Policy #71 (Student Academic Discipline). For information on categories of offences and types of penalties, students are directed to consult the summary of Policy #71 which is supplied in the Undergraduate Calendar (section 1; on the Web at

<http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy71.htm>). If you need help in learning how to avoid offences such as plagiarism, cheating, and double submission, or if you need clarification of aspects of the discipline policy, ask your course instructor for guidance. Other resources regarding the discipline policy are your academic advisor and the Undergraduate Associate Dean.

Students who believe that they have been wrongfully or unjustly penalized have the right to grieve; refer to Policy #70, Student Grievance, <http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy70.htm>. Also see "Avoiding Academic Offences" (http://arts.uwaterloo.ca/arts/ugrad/academic_responsibility.html)

TENTATIVE CLASS SCHEDULE (This schedule may change!!!)

Week 1	May 6	Discuss course, and do introductions.
Week 2	May 13	Book Summary Assignment due. Hsu, J. (2008). The secrets of storytelling: Why we love a good yarn. <i>Scientific America Mind</i> , 46-51.
Week 3	May 20	Start of Individual Student Presentations Mar, R. A. & Oatley, K. (2008). The function of fiction is the abstraction and simulation of social experience. <i>Perspectives on Psychological Science</i> , 3, 173-192. Sugiyama, M. S. (2001). Food, forgers, and folklore: The role of narrative in human subsistence. <i>Evolution and Human Behavior</i> , 22, 221-240.
Week 4	May 27	Wolf, M. (2007). Reading lessons from Proust and the squid. <i>Proust and the Squid: The Story and Science of the Reading Brain</i> (pp. 3-21). New York: Harper. & Gerrig, R. (1993). Two metaphors for the experience of narrative worlds. <i>Experiencing narrative worlds</i> (pp. 1-25). New Haven: Westview Press.
Week 5	June 3	Dijkstra, K., Zwaan, R. A., Graesser, A. C., Magliano, J. P. (1994). Character and reader emotion in literary texts. <i>Poetics</i> , 23, 139-157.
Week 6	June 10	Zwaan, R. A. (1999). Situation Models: The leap into imagined worlds. <i>Current Directions in Psychological Science</i> , 8, 15-17. & Zwaan, R. A. (2004). The immersed experiencer: Toward an embodied theory of language comprehension. <i>The Psychology of Learning and Motivation</i> , 44, 35-62.
Week 7	June 17	Perfetti, C. A., Landi, N., & Oakhill, J. (2005). The acquisition of reading comprehension skill. In M. J. Snowling & C. Hulme (Eds.), <i>The science of reading: A handbook</i> (pp. 227-247). Oxford: Blackwell. Lynch, J. S., et al. (2008). The development of narrative comprehension and its relation to other early reading skills. <i>Reading Psychology</i> , 29, 327-365.

Week 8	June 24	<p>Proposals due.</p> <p>Nation, K. (2005). Children's reading comprehension difficulties. In M.J. Snowling & C. Hulme (Eds.), <i>The science of reading</i> (pp. 248-265). Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.</p> <p>Nation, K., Clarke, P., Marshall, C. M., & Durand, M. (2004). Hidden language impairments in children: Parallels between poor reading comprehension and specific language impairment? <i>Journal of Speech, Language, and Hearing Research</i>, 47, 199–211.</p>
Week 9	July 1	Canada Day – No class
Week 10	July 8	<p>Wolf, M. (2007). Genes, gifts, & dyslexia. <i>Proust and the Squid: The Story and Science of the Reading Brain</i> (198-211). New York: Harper.</p> <p>Kim, O., & Kendeou, P., van den Broek, P., White, M. J., & Kremer, k. (2008). Cat, Rat, and Rugs: Narrative Comprehension in Young Children with Down Syndrome. <i>Journal of Developmental and Physical Disability</i>, 20, 337-351.</p>
Week 11	July 15	Glenberg, A.M., Gutierrez, T., Levin, J.R., Japuntich, S., & Kaschak, M.P. (2004). Activity and imagined activity can enhance young children's reading comprehension. <i>Journal of Educational Psychology</i> , 96, 424-436.
Week 12	July 22	<p>Brown, L. K. (1988). Fiction for Children: Does the Medium Matter? <i>Journal of Aesthetic Education</i>, 22, 35-44.</p> <p>De Jong, M. T. & Bus, A. G. (2004). The efficacy of electronic books in fostering kindergarten children's emergent story understanding. <i>Reading Research Quarterly</i>, 39, 378-393.</p>
Week 13	July 29	Hirsh-Pasek, K., Golinkoff, R. M., & Eyer, D. (2003). Literacy: Reading between the lines. <i>Einstein Never Used Flash Cards</i> . Rodale Press. To be determined.
		Final papers due August 5th .