

English 3320: Literature for the Middle Grades

Spring 2011

MWF: Irby 304, 8;8:50 a.m.



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Office Hours: MWF 10-11 a.m. and 2-4 p.m.

Course description

This class will be conducted as a survey of children's literature that is considered appropriate for grades 5-8, primarily in the English tradition. We will examine various genres of children's literature, including prose, picture books, poetry, and films.

The goals of this course are to:

- improve our grasp of the complexities of literature for children in the middle grades by engaging in literary and cultural criticism as we read and analyze the texts selected
- consider how our chosen texts represent the child and the stage of childhood and how literature for children reflects the social or cultural contexts in which it was written
- study early specimens of literature for children in order to better understand the conventions, values, and anxieties that have shaped children's literature in the past and continue to inform contemporary texts

- develop practical critical thinking skills as we analyze the complex situations presented in literature and probe our texts for new meanings, both in class discussions and in writing assignments
- discuss issues of text selection for use in the elementary classroom, focusing primarily on the literature itself and its content rather than pedagogical methods. Students must keep in mind that this course, as an English rather than an Education course, is designed to benefit future teachers of children's literature by offering training primarily in literary analysis.

Required texts and materials

- From the Mixed-up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler , E.L. Konigsberg
- Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry, Mildred Taylor
- Hatchet , Gary Paulsen
- Just as Long as We're Together, Judy Blume
- Out of the Dust, Karen Hesse
- Sees Behind Trees, Michael Dorris
- The Amazing Maurice and His Educated Rodents, Terry Pratchett
- When My Name Was Keoko, Linda Sue Park
- The Arrival, Shaun Tan
- The Graveyard Book, Neil Gaiman
- The Diary of a Young Girl, Anne Frank, Otto Frank
- The Devil's Arithmetic, Jane Yolen
- The Wall, Peter Sís
- The Case of the Missing Marquess, Nancy Springer

Our required reading for the course also includes online texts of which you will not have to purchase hard copies. I will post files of the texts on myUCA for you to access.

You are also required to have:

- a UCA e-mail account that you check *daily*
- access to a good dictionary and a handbook with up-to-date information on MLA format to aid you in your writing assignments
- opinions and insights that you develop and voice in class. The success of this course depends in large part on its members' willingness to seriously and actively engage the material and participate in discussions.

Policies

Scholastic Dishonesty Academic Integrity and Scholastic Dishonesty. The University of Central Arkansas affirms its commitment to academic integrity and expects all members of the university community to accept shared responsibility for maintaining academic integrity. Students in this course are subject to the provisions of the university's Academic Integrity Policy, approved by the Board of Trustees as Board Policy No. 709 on February 10, 2010, and published in the Student Handbook. Penalties for academic misconduct in this course may include a failing grade on an assignment, a failing grade in the course, or any other course-related sanction the instructor

determines to be appropriate. Continued enrollment in this course affirms a student's acceptance of this university policy.

Other University Policies. Please be sure to familiarize yourself with the policies outlined in the UCA Student Handbook, particularly those pertaining to sexual harassment and academics.

Authorized Absences. Students are required to come to class on time and to complete all assignments. Daily attendance will be taken via sign-in sheet. You are responsible for providing evidence and/or appropriate documentation to substantiate "authorized absences." Excused absences can include illness requiring a doctor's visit, the serious illness of an immediate family member or illness of a dependent, the death of a relative, etc. Please direct any questions concerning what constitutes an excused absence to me. If you know in advance that you will miss a class, you are responsible for informing me. You are allowed three unexcused absences. Each subsequent unexcused absence will result in the deduction of two percentage points from your final grade. Please use your three absences wisely—they are not intended for those days when you feel like sleeping in, but rather for days when you cannot come to class but your absence is not excused. Nine or more absences, excused or otherwise, provide grounds for the student to be dropped from the course.

Keep in mind that absences due to illnesses that do not necessitate a doctor's visit (unless chronic, as documented by a doctor) or trips out of town for weddings or family vacations are not excused absences. Please also try to avoid scheduling routine medical check-ups, such as dental cleanings or yearly physicals, during class time—I will not excuse these absences.

Students who arrive to class after half of the class period (calculated by the duration of the class period in minutes) or more has passed will be counted absent and will not be allowed to sign the sign-in attendance sheet. Chronic tardiness may be penalized by counting each third tardy as an unexcused absence.

If you are absent on the day of an exam, you are responsible for contacting me as soon as possible to schedule the make-up exam. If your absence is excusable, you are responsible for providing documentation to substantiate this at the time of the make-up exam. Five late points will be deducted from the exam grade if the absence is not excused (i.e., you overslept). Five late points may also be deducted if you do not contact me in a timely manner to schedule the make-up exam, whether your absence is excused or not.

Students who miss class are responsible for obtaining information regarding missed class notes, material, and assignments. It is my policy to email students information regarding missed class notes only for excused absences and only when the student has sent a request via email specifying student name, course number and section, and class date(s) missed. I strongly recommend that students also talk with their classmates about what they have missed.

Classroom Behavior. Disruptive classroom behavior is defined as anything that would interfere with an instructor's ability to conduct the class or the ability of other students to profit from the instructional program. *Please remember specifically* that you should silence or turn off all cell phones before class, and that all individuals and the opinions they express in class are to be treated with respect during class discussions.

Paper Format. Unless otherwise specified, *all* homework and paper assignments should be typed (letter-quality printing required) in 12-point Times New Roman font with one-inch margins and double-spaced on white bond paper, according to MLA guidelines. Documentation must be provided in MLA format.

Late Papers. Papers that are turned in late without an excused absence/absences are subject to a deduction of 3 grade points per day that they are late.

Appropriate Attribution. Any assignment that fails to include clear and appropriate attribution of sources will receive a grade of zero ("0").

Grades. Grades are not negotiable. Your final course grade will be based on your work in the course. If you are concerned about a grade, see me during office hours or make an appointment to meet with me.

Acknowledging Assistance. All drafts and supporting documents for papers and presentations must be your writing—that is, your own ideas and your own words. If you work with a tutor or get feedback on your work from a classmate or friend, you should plan on discussing your writing, but let the other person know that all writing must be your own. Any paper that shows evidence of assistance and fails to acknowledge that assistance will be considered a case of scholastic dishonesty and reported as such.

Handouts. The handouts used in this course are copyrighted. "Handouts" are all materials generated for this class, which include but are not limited to exams, assignment prompts, syllabi, in-class materials, sample papers, worksheets and guides posted online, and peer critique sheets. Because these materials are copyrighted, you do not have the right to copy handouts unless I expressly grant permission.

E-mail, Phone, and Fax. I will not discuss grades on e-mail or over the phone and, unless otherwise specified, I will not accept assignments attached to e-mail messages. The English department will not accept papers or excuses for absences faxed to me.

Students Needing Support Service

The University of Central Arkansas adheres to the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act. If you need an accommodation under this Act due to a disability, please contact the UCA Office of Disability Services, 450-3613.

The University Writing Center

The UCA Writing Center, located in Thompson 109, offers students one-on-one tutoring and online assistance with their writing. For more information, see the web site: www.uca.edu/writingcenter.

Statements of the Professional Education Unit

Conceptual Framework. Faculty members involved in the preparation of professional educators, as well as professional education candidates, public school representatives, and members of the

community share a vision for the Professional Education Unit at the University of Central Arkansas (UCA). This vision is one of Enhancing Educator Efficacy through Reflective Decision-Making. The vision encompasses the development of candidates' abilities to examine problems, formulate options, consider decisions, and evaluate outcomes while embracing an awareness of and sensitivity to human diversity. The vision is achieved by candidates' acquisition of reflective decision-making skills through self-understanding, course work, and field and internship experiences.

Use of Technology. Candidates will demonstrate the basic academic skills of computer applications through the use of Microsoft Office and through accessing the Internet and email through class assignments.

Diversity. The entire course focuses on meeting the cognitive, social, and emotional needs of diverse learners. In addition to examining the influence of societal factors on learning, candidates will investigate elements of effective multicultural education and practices appropriate for students with varying learning styles, English language learners, and students with exceptionalities. (See course objectives)

Professional and Ethical Conduct Policy. Because the standards of the education profession exceed those addressed in other university or college policies, the COE Professional Education Unit has adopted a Professional and Ethical Conduct Policy to address those professional and ethical behaviors. In essence, this policy states that students must adhere to the prescribed professional and ethical standards of the profession for which they are preparing. The policy document provides a definition of professional and ethical misconduct, guidelines for reporting misconduct, and an appeal process. It is located on the "policies" link of the College of Education website.

Course Requirements and Grade Determination:

No extra credit will be offered in the class. Grades—including final averages—will not be rounded up, except in the case of 59.5/ 69.5/ 79.5/89.5.

Final grade values:

A	90-100	B	80-89
C	70-79	D	60-69
F	59 and below		

Throughout the semester, you will complete a film adaptation project, write one 4-5-page researched response paper, give one formal in-class presentation, and take three exams. *All papers must be typed and submitted as a hard copy unless I instruct you otherwise.* More detailed descriptions of the papers will be given in class as the semester progresses. The exams will be objective, covering the material that we have discussed in class. They will include fill-in-the-blank, multiple choice, identification, and short-paragraph-answer questions.

Exam #1	15%
Film adaptation project	20%
Exam #2	15%
Presentation (given in class on an author from the selection sheet)	15%

Final exam	15%
Response paper (4-5-page essay responding to an assigned question)	20%

Schedule of Reading, Assignments, and Paper Due Dates

This schedule is subject to change at the professor's discretion. The readings and assignments listed under each date are those that you will be expected to have completed *by that date*.

Friday, January 14: Introduction to course.

Monday, January 17: Martin Luther King, Jr. Day—no class.

Wednesday, January 19: From the Mixed-up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler, chs. 1-5.

Friday, January 21: From the Mixed-up Files, chs. 6-end of novel.

Monday, January 24: (discuss presentation assignment; sign up for authors) Just as Long as We're Together, chs. 1-17

Wednesday, January 26: Just as Long as We're Together, chs. 18-29.

Friday, January 28: Just as Long as We're Together, 30-end of novel.

Monday, January 31: Hatchet, chs. 1-5.

Wednesday, February 2: Hatchet, chs. 6-12.

Friday, February 4: (begin presentations) Hatchet, chs. 7-end of novel.

Monday, February 7: Sees Behind Trees, chs. 1-5. Introduce film adaptation project.

Wednesday, February 9: Sees Behind Trees, chs. 6-end of novel.

Friday, February 11: The Case of the Missing Marquess, chs. 1-8. Discuss upcoming exam (see above in the syllabus for info on exam format).

Monday, February 14: The Case of the Missing Marquess, chs. 9-end of novel; TBA reading on film adaptation and pedagogy—posted as a file on MyUCA.

Wednesday, February 16: Exam #1.

Friday, February 18: Introduction to graphic novels and sequential art. TBA reading—posted as a file on MyUCA.

Monday, February 21: The Arrival—read the entire work.

Wednesday, February 23: The Arrival, continued.

Friday, February 25: *The Wall*—read the entire work.

Monday, February 28: *The Wall*, continued.

Wednesday, March 2: Introduction to historical fiction. TBA reading—posted as a file on MyUCA.

Friday, March 4: Film adaptation project due. *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*, chs. 1-4.

Monday, March 7: *Roll of Thunder*, chs. 5-8.

Wednesday, March 9: *Roll of Thunder*, chs. 9-end of novel.

Friday, March 11: *Out of the Dust*, pp. 1-76.

Monday, March 14: *Out of the Dust*, pp. 77-149.

Wednesday, March 16: *Out of the Dust*, pp. 150-end of novel.

Friday, March 18: Exam #2.

Monday, March 21: Spring break, no class.

Wednesday, March 23: Spring break, no class.

Friday, March 25: Spring break, no class.

Monday, March 28: *Diary of a Young Girl*, pp. 1-112.

Wednesday, March 30: *Diary of a Young Girl*, pp. 113-224.

Friday, April 1: *Diary of a Young Girl*, pp. 225-end of text.

Monday, April 4: *The Devil's Arithmetic*, chs. 1-10.

Wednesday, April 6: *The Devil's Arithmetic*, chs. 11-end of novel.

Friday, April 8: *When My Name Was Keoko*, chs. 1-13.

Monday, April 11: *When My Name Was Keoko*, chs. 14-24.

Wednesday, April 13: *When My Name Was Keoko*, chs. 25-end of novel. Be sure to read the author's note.

Friday, April 15: *The Amazing Maurice and His Educated Rodents*, chs. 1-5.

Monday, April 18: *The Amazing Maurice*, chs. 6-9.

Wednesday, April 20: *The Amazing Maurice*, chs. 10-end of novel.

Friday, April 22: Research paper workshop; bring three copies of your *completed* rough draft to class.

Monday, April 25: *The Graveyard Book*, pp. 1-165.

Wednesday, April 27: Final paper due. *The Graveyard Book*, pp. 166 (“Interlude”)—end of novel.

Wednesday, May 4: final exam, 8-10 a.m.