

English 3320: Literature for the Middle Grades  
Spring 2013  
MWF: Irby 304, 8-8:50 a.m.

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Instructor: Dr. Sonya Fritz

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Office Hours: T/R 10 a.m. to 12 noon, MWF 10-11 a.m. and 3-4 p.m., and by appointment

Important note: I will be going on maternity leave in late February/early March. At that time, Holly Friedman will take over the teaching of the course through the end of the semester. Professor Friedman will be sitting in on class periods before I leave in order to get acquainted with students and the course. Her contact information and other relevant information will be provided for you later in the semester. Our goal is to make this transition as easy and seamless as we can, and to offer students the most effective and meaningful instruction possible throughout the entire semester.

### 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 graphic novels, poetry, historical fiction, and adventure stories.

Throughout the semester we will read a number of books together and analyze them in class, considering and discussing not only what pedagogical uses and socializing influences these books can have for children, but also analyzing them as rich works of literature. I challenge students to think of each book we read as complex and sophisticated text so that they can learn to notice and understand the often-subtle differences between books that can shape their meanings and the impacts they have on children.

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 some earlier specimens of literature for children as well as contemporary literature 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 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

- Harriet the Spy, Louise Fitzhugh
- The Secret Garden, Frances Hodgson Burnett
- The Graveyard Book, Neil Gaiman
- Love that Dog, Sharon Creech
- The Invention of Hugo Cabret, Brian Selznick
- The Wall, Peter Sís
- Smile, Raina Telgemeier
- Hatchet, Gary Paulsen
- Bud, Not Buddy, Christopher Paul Curtis
- Inside Out and Back Again, Thanhha Lai
- Esperanza Rising, Pam Muñoz Ryan
- The Devil's Arithmetic, Jane Yolen

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 Blackboard for you to access.

You are also required to have:

- a UCA e-mail account that you check *daily* so that I can get in touch with you if necessary
- 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.

It is important for all of us to respect one another’s time and arrive promptly for class. 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. Students who arrive to class after attendance has been taken are responsible for checking with me after class to make sure their attendance has been recorded. Chronic tardiness will be penalized by counting each third tardy as an unexcused absence. Students should come to class planning to stay for the duration of the period. If you cannot do so, do not come to class. Leaving class early is disruptive and disrespectful. See me if you have questions about this.

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. Unless other arrangements have been made with me, any exam that is not made up by the deadline for submitting final grades to the registrar will receive a grade of zero (0).

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, as all I can offer students are any Power Point slides and/or handouts used during the class period.

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 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. Students who are asked to leave class for disruptive behavior will be counted absent for that day.

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 (see pp. 1178-1191 in our textbook for info on MLA format).

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

Other late work. Any homework assigned is due at the beginning of the class period on the assigned due date. Late homework will not be accepted with the exception of excused absences.

Appropriate Attribution. Any assignment that fails to include clear and appropriate attribution of sources will receive a grade of zero ("0"). **DO NOT USE OR EVEN CONSULT ANY SECONDARY SOURCES FOR YOUR WORK, INCLUDING THE INTERNET, UNLESS OTHERWISE INSTRUCTED.** Any exams or other assignments—in-class or homework—that reflect unauthorized aid will receive a grade of zero ("0").

Grades. Grades are not negotiable. Your final course grade will be calculated 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.

Bringing visitors to class. Students must receive permission from me in advance in order to bring any visitors to class. Unless otherwise specified, students are not allowed to bring children under the age of 12 with them to class. Please see me if you have any questions about this.

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 want to work with a tutor or get feedback on your work from a classmate or friend, you can discuss your writing, but let the other person know that all writing and ideas must be your own. Any assignment that shows evidence of assistance and fails to acknowledge that assistance will be considered a case of scholastic dishonesty and reported/punished as such.

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. I am happy to answer via email any student questions—including questions about assignments—that will take me less than 5 minutes to answer. Any questions that require a longer and more involved answer will be deferred to a face-to-face meeting. The English department will not accept papers or excuses for absences faxed to me.

Office hours. I make myself available to students during the office hours listed above. However, I encourage students to schedule appointments ahead of time if they want to meet with me during office hours in order to guarantee that I will not be meeting with other students at that time.

Feedback on student work. I want all students to meet their full potential in this course this semester. I encourage students to ask for clarification if they are confused about an assignment and to feel free to come to me for help on their work. However, I will not pre-grade, edit, or proofread

students' work for them; I will offer feedback, but only when students formulate and articulate specific questions about their work that they want me to address. I do this because I want all students to function as active thinkers and learners throughout the semester; this is not happening if I am doing the work of cataloging every aspect of a paper that a student needs to change or improve. Likewise, students should understand that getting feedback on their work does not guarantee that they will earn a certain grade on the assignment.

Classwork. Any classwork (such as peer review workshop) that students miss due to unexcused absences cannot be made up for credit. Students who miss classwork that is worth a grade because of an excused absence are responsible for contacting me as soon as possible to schedule the make-up work. Students who do not contact me in a timely manner to schedule the make-up work will lose the right to complete it.

Electronic devices. All electronic devices used in class, including laptops and e-readers, must have internet capabilities turned off. Students who use electronic devices in an inappropriate way during class will be asked to leave and will lose the privilege of using electronic devices in class. Cell phones must remain off (not simply on vibrate) and out of sight in one's pocket or bag for the duration of the class.

Evaluations. Student evaluations of a course and its professor are a crucial element in helping faculty achieve excellence in the classroom and the institution in demonstrating that students are gaining knowledge. Students may evaluate courses they are taking starting on the Monday of the twelfth week of instruction through the end of finals week by logging in to myUCA and clicking on the Evals button on the top right.

Class preparedness. Students need to complete the assigned reading before class and bring assigned reading materials to class in order to better engage in discussion and class-work. Failure to bring the appropriate assigned reading materials to class and/or failure to demonstrate completion of the assigned reading can result in an unexcused absence for that day's class. Unexcused absences accrued in this way are subject to all of the penalties and consequences outlined in the attendance policy.

## 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](http://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.

Final grade values:

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

Mere completion of a written assignment will not earn students an A on that assignment. Work is evaluated based on its quality and demonstrated effort. Here is a basic description of grade evaluation for written assignments:

- A Outstanding—excels in every way
- B Superior—meets expectations for the assignment and reflects strong effort, significant thoughtfulness, and sufficient development, but is not as polished in its ideas or as well-written as an A paper

- C Adequate—meets all basic requirements but in a shallow way: does not sufficiently develop ideas, lacks careful and thoughtful engagement with the assignment, or does not demonstrate strong effort
- D Inadequate—does not meet all basic requirements for the assignment
- F Failing—entirely unsuccessful in fulfilling the assignment’s expectations

More detailed rubrics for assignments will be provided.

Throughout the semester, you will complete two response papers, 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 and the presentation 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 multiple choice, passage identification/explication, and paragraph-answer questions.

Exam #1	15%
Response paper #1 (4-5 pages, no research)	20%
Exam #2	15%
Presentation (given in class on an author from the selection sheet)	15%
Final exam	15%
Response paper #2 (5-6 pages, researched)	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 11: Introduction to course.

Monday, January 14: Harriet the Spy, chapters 1-5.

Wednesday, January 16: (discuss presentation assignment; sign up for authors) Harriet the Spy, chapters 6-10.

Friday, January 18: Harriet the Spy, chapters 11-end of novel.

Monday, January 21: Martin Luther King, Jr. Day—no class.

Wednesday, January 23: The Invention of Hugo Cabret, chapters 1-7. (discuss response paper #1 assignment)

Friday, January 25: The Invention of Hugo Cabret, chapters 8-chapter 4 of Part Two.

Monday, January 28: The Invention of Hugo Cabret, chapter 5 of Part Two – end of the novel.

Wednesday, January 30: The Secret Garden, chs. 1-9.

Friday, February 1: The Secret Garden, chs. 10-18.

Monday, February 4: The Secret Garden, chs. 19-end of novel.

Wednesday, February 6: The Graveyard Book, chapters 1-3 (begin presentations)

Friday, February 8: The Graveyard Book, chapters 4-6. Discuss upcoming exam (see above in the syllabus for info on exam format).

Monday, February 11: The Graveyard Book, chapter 7-end of novel.

Wednesday, February 13: Exam #1.

Friday, February 15: Introduction to graphic novels and sequential art. Read the two articles posted on Blackboard.

Monday, February 18: Smile, chs. 1-3.

Wednesday, February 20: Smile, chs. 4-5.

Friday, February 22: Peer review workshop—bring *two* copies of your *completed* rough draft to class.

Monday, February 25: Smile, chs. 6-end of novel. Response paper #1 due.

Wednesday, February 27: The Wall—read the entire work.

Friday, March 1: Love That Dog, pp. 1-34.

Monday, March 4: Love That Dog, pp. 35-67.

Wednesday, March 6: Love That Dog, pp. 68-end of novel (read “Some of the poems used by Miss Stretchberry” as well).

Friday, March 8: Hatchet, chs. 1-5.

Monday, March 11: Hatchet, chs. 6-12.

Wednesday, March 13: Hatchet, chs. 7-end of novel.

Friday, March 15: Exam #2.

Monday, March 18: Spring break, no class.

Wednesday, March 20: Spring break, no class.

Friday, March 22: Spring break, no class.

Monday, March 25: Introduction to multiculturalism and historical fiction in children's literature. Read files posted on Blackboard.

Wednesday, March 27: Bud, Not Buddy, chs. 1-8.

Friday, March 29: Bud, Not Buddy, chs. 9-13.

Monday, April 1: Bud, Not Buddy, chs. 14-end of novel. Be sure to read the "Afterward".

Wednesday, April 3: Esperanza Rising, chs. 1-5 (pp. 1-99).

Friday, April 5: Esperanza Rising, chs. 6-10.

Monday, April 8: Esperanza Rising, chs. 11-14.

Wednesday, April 10: The Devil's Arithmetic, chs. 1-6.

Friday, April 12: The Devil's Arithmetic, chs. 7-13.

Monday, April 15: The Devil's Arithmetic, chs. 14-end of novel.

Wednesday, April 17: Inside Out and Back Again, pp. 1-88.

Friday, April 19: Peer review paper workshop; bring *two* copies of your *completed* rough draft to class.

Monday, April 22: Inside Out and Back Again, pp. 89-176.

Wednesday, April 24: Inside Out and Back Again, pp. 177-end of novel. Be sure to read the author's note. Response paper #2 due.

Wednesday, May 1, 8-10 a.m.: final exam.