

Education 465-4:

CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

Intersession, 1995

Prof. Meguido Zola

PREREQUISITE:

60 hours of credit

RATIONALE

Children's literature? Children's literature? Children's literature? Is there, in fact, something that can be legitimately called children's literature? If there is, is it different from other forms of literature and, if so, why and in what ways? And does it have its own standards and yardstick of excellence?

Why bring literature and children together, anyway? And which books should we bring to which children. And when?—is there, for instance, a way of fitting book to child (or child to book) like the glass slipper to Cinderella. And to what ends? And in what different ways?

These and related questions are surely at the very centre of the educational enterprise, both at home and at school, from the earliest years of infancy to the last stages of adolescence. And the answers to these questions speak to our most basic notions of what it is to be human, what it is to be educated. Or, as Jean-Jacques Rousseau put it in his Confessions: "I do not know how I learned to read. I only remember my first books and their effect on me; it is from my earliest reading that I date the unbroken consciousness of my own existence."

PURPOSE

The major purpose of the course is to enable you to:

- Get in touch with and reflect on your own stories and storying experiences through childhood and adolescence: this will prepare you to think about other people's ideas on storying, reading, and children's literature.
- Ponder whether there is, in fact, something that can legitimately be called 'children's literature'; whether this literature is different from adult literature and, if so, why and in what ways; and what makes good, bad and indifferent literature for children.
- Learn to survey children's literature through a study of genre; and examine some major genres—e.g., folk & fairy tale, the picture book, verse & poetry, the novel, etc.;
- Learn to look at children's books according to their fit to children's stages and sequences of development; examine in some depth children's books for one or more particular age grouping of special interest to you—e.g., toddlers, pre-readers, beginning readers, etc.
- Learn to examine children's books through their themes and issues; look at some sample themes and issues in depth and see how they are explored in children's books; learn the uses of a theme approach and an issues approach to the study of children's literature.
- Critically examine why and how children and books should be brought together, viz.:
 - *learn about story and storytelling; learn why, when and how to use storytelling; experience the processes of storytelling [i.e., searching for and selecting a story, learning it, and telling it to an audience]; and reflect on ways to work with story;
 - *learn about: reading and reading aloud; learn why, when and how to use reading and reading aloud; experience and practise reading aloud; learn about literature-based learning and literature-based curricula.

FORMAT

The course will comprise a range and variety of learning experiences. These include: individual study, research, and field-work with children; focussed practice of instructional strategies and procedures, with peer review and feedback; small-group and whole-class discussion, projects, and presentations; lectures, workshops, and demonstrations.

The course will function as a forum and as a catalyst not only for its own agenda but also for the work of each individual student as it relates to the goals of the course. Students will fulfill the general objectives of the course and, in addition, each student will become an expert in an aspect of the field of his/her choosing in consultation with the instructor.

REQUIREMENTS

The course requirements comprise the following:

- regular class attendance and participation
- completion of readings
- completion of assignments
- demonstration of competency in the fulfilment of selected assignments.

EVALUATION

The completion of course requirements will form the basis for evaluation. The final evaluating process comprises both self-assessment and the instructor's evaluation.

READINGS

Trelease, Jim. <i>The New Read-Aloud Handbook</i> . Penguin. ISBN 0140468811
Chambers, Aidan. <i>The Reading Environment</i> . Thimble Press. ISBN 0903355361
Stone, Elizabeth. <i>Black Sheep and Kissing Cousins</i> . Penguin. ISBN 0140119779
Barton, Bob & David Booth. <i>Stories in the Classroom</i> . Pembroke. ISBN 0921217439

In addition to the required readings, supplementary readings will be recommended to the class and/or to selected groups and/or individuals at appropriate times, as relevant.

A detailed outline of topics and schedule of readings and other assignments will be made available at the first class, along with a list of recommended readings.

EDUCATION 465-4 CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

The two main purposes of this course are:

1. To introduce you to a small representative sample of the range of literature available to children today and to give you an opportunity to explore and understand children's literature in greater depth, e.g. children's traditional literature, folk and fairy tale.
2. To introduce you to ways of bringing children and books together through such strategies as: reading aloud, and other simple forms of presenting literature; storytelling and dramatic presentation; setting up and running independent reading programs.

PREREQUISITE: 60 credit hours.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

Barton, Bob. *Tell Me Another*. Pembroke, 1986.

Bettelheim, Bruno. *The Uses of Enchantment: The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales*. Vintage, 1989.

Butler, Dorothy. *Cushla and Her Books*. The Horn Book, 1980.

Chambers, A. *The Reading Environment*. Thimble Press, 1991.

Landsberg, M. *Michele Landsberg's Guide to Children's Books*. (2nd ed.) Penguin Books, 1991.

Trelease, Jim. *The New Read-Aloud Handbook, 2nd edition*. Penguin Handbooks, 1989.

OPTIONAL TEXT:

Yolen, Jane. *Touch Magic: Fantasy, Faerie & Folklore*. Putnam Pub., 1981.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

To complement your professional readings in the Study Guide and the texts, you will be required to:

- read and annotate a broad range of children's books, according to course guidelines and in the light of your needs and interests.
- engage in a variety of practical experiences with children; e.g., reading aloud, storytelling, book talks and discussions.

There are four assignment submissions each worth 25% of the final grade.

02/22/95

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