

EDUCATION 465: CHILDREN' LITERATURE

INSTRUCTOR: Ken Roberts

An eleven part series with two main intents:

- A) To learn something about literature for children
- B) To learn something about bringing children and literature together

Session 1,
May 9th A BRIEF LOOK AT THE HISTORY OF CHILDREN IN WESTERN SOCIETIES
AND AN OVERVIEW OF CHILDREN'S LITERATURE OVER THE CENTURIES

A historical study of childhood and adolescence and of literature for children and young adults. A sampling of the range of literature which has flourished prior to modern times.

Assignment: Compare two folk/fairy tales from different cultures which contain a common element (i.e. similar characters, similar method for the resolution of a problem, etc. Come prepared to discuss these in class.

NOTE: With the exception of the diary, all assignments are expected to be completed by the next class session. Unless otherwise stated, the assignment need not be handed in, merely prepared for oral discussion. It is expected, however, that preparation findings will be covered in the diary. Please note, as well, that some assignments are more difficult than others. You will probably wish to read ahead to make sure your work load is evenly distributed.

Session 2,
May 12th FOLK LITERATURE

The study of a genre of literature - folk and other orally derived literature. The session will include hints for making oral literature come alive for young people.

Assignment: Prepare and present an oral story based on a picture book. The story should be suitable for grades K-3 and should last between 3-6 minutes.

Session 3,
May 16th THE PICTURE BOOK: A PAST, A FUTURE, A FORM

The picture books as . . . Changes in intent and style. The coming of age of a form.

Assignment: None

Session 4,
May 19th ARTHUR RANSOME

An in-depth look at the work of Arthur Ransome, a pivotal figure in the development of modern children's literature. Guest speaker will be Kit Pearson.

Assignment: None

Session 5,
May 26th

EARLY READERS

Limited vocabulary, limited interest? The development of early readers.

Easily read books without controlled vocabulary. School text readers, publishing facts and problems. Canadian readers.

Assignment: Read three children's novels, each representative of a different genre (fantasy, realistic fiction, humor, etc.). The books to be read must be approved by the instructor. Write annotations (to be marked for style, format, and accuracy of documentation) suitable for publication in a review journal.

Session 6,
May, 30th

THE NOVEL

A) The study of a genre of literature - the novel - and sub-genres e.g. fantasy, realism, humor, etc., as well as a look at themes and issues within the novel genre.

B) A continuation of methods for bringing children and books together and for using different approaches in presenting literature.

Assignment: Prepare and present an oral story for young people grades 4 - 7. The story should be 4-10 minutes in length.

Session 7,
June 2nd

THE NOVEL

A continuation of Session 6.

Assignment: Read and be prepared to discuss orally at least four Canadian children's books (two picture books/easy readers and two novels) published within the past four years. Note: only two of the books should be winners of major literary awards such as the Canadian Council Awards or the C.L.A. awards.

Session 8,
June 6th

CANADIAN LITERATURE

A history of Canadian literature, a practical look at Canada and the problems it poses for publishers, and a discussion of the the current realities in terms of Canadian children's materials.

Assignment: None

Session 9,
June 9th

NON-FICTION LITERATURE FOR CHILDREN

An examination of the problems involved in producing non-fiction books for children. A look at the criteria to be used when examining books written for children.

Assignment: Produce a publisher's submission for a non-fiction book for young readers. The subject of the proposed book must be one not adequately covered by existing in-print material (i.e. tying shoelaces). Note: A publisher's submission is not complete copy but a reasonable explanation of the topic and the approach - as well as rationale. Due June 16th.

Read at least one "problem" novel and one young adult novel. Come prepared to discuss.

Session 10,
June 13th

YOUNG ADULT FICTION

The study of a recently conceived genre. Also discussed will be issues such as bibliotherapy (for all ages), censorship, and demand versus suitability.

Session 11,
June 16th

A TREAT: STORYTELLING AND STORY DRAMA FOR ALL AGES

A workshop/seminar on storytelling and story drama.

FINAL ASSIGNMENT: DUE JUNE 16th AT THE CLASS SESSION

During the term you should keep a diary of your readings, thoughts about your "prepared to discuss" items and what you felt, thought after a session - and how your previous thoughts might have changed. So long as the diary is readable, it need not be typed. In fact, I would prefer at the moment impressions. The diary need not be a strenuous assignment if maintained throughout the course. If it is not maintained throughout, it's utility will be negligible. While style and presentation are not as important in the diary, all books should be properly documented. Content and evidence of work are important.