



Course Outline

Course Title: ENGE2360 /UGED 2194 Children’s Literature

Course Catalog description:

This course provides a framework for understanding the themes and motifs of children's literature. It also looks at representations of children in literature. We will analyse some essential, central texts as well as contemporary popular books for children. The uses of fantasy and the educational aspects of books for children will be discussed, along with notions of childhood and adulthood. Through close reading of set texts, students will be able to engage in critical techniques applicable to most literature. This is because the best texts for children satisfy sensitive adult readers too.

Learning outcomes:

Students who are successful in this course will be able to:

Comprehend the history of children’s literature (i.e. literature addressed to young readers) in the West

Analyze what developments in children’s literature indicate about Western views of ‘childhood’ in general.

Apply their knowledge of the subject matter in both written contexts (two short essays) and spoken contexts (tutorial participation and class presentations)

Course syllabus (Topics)	Contents/ fundamental concepts
History of childhood as a concept in the West	From child as ‘miniature’ adult to childhood as a distinctive, significant phase of human development
History of children’s literature in the West	1700-present, including fairy tales and nursery rhymes
Children’s literature in 19 th century England and USA	Parenting (fathers and mothers), home life, school life (boys and girls, teachers, peers, learning social roles), the role of religion during this time, the influence of Darwin’s theory of evolution, the expansion of imperialism/colonialism
Children’s literature in 20 th century England and USA, including film and illustrated children’s books if we have time	The rise of consumerism, the continuing rise of the Middle Class, the influence of WW1 and WW2



Assessment type	Percentage
Two short essays (about 5 pages each)	70%
Two class presentations	20%
Tutorial participation and some quizzes, as needed	10%

Required readings: There is no required text in this class. Reading assignments will be provided through Blackboard or via internet websites. Reading assignments will be about 40 pages per week, which is not that much for entertaining children’s literature!

Some other resources:

An Introduction to Children's Literature, Peter Hunt. (Oxford University Press, 1994).

The Cambridge Companion to Children’s Literature, ed. M.O. Grenby and Andrea Immel. (Cambridge University Press, 2009).

Feedback for evaluation:

Students can always contact the professor by email and expect their emails to be answered. The English Department, under the auspices of the Arts Faculty, conducts a detailed course evaluation at the end of the term.

Course Schedule (tentative)		
Week 1	History of childhood as a concept in the west (‘miniature adult’ theory of childhood vs. ‘childhood as a special time of life’ theory) Origins of published children’s literature in the West (c. 1700s); nursery rhymes	Some short poems by William Wordsworth and William Blake
Week 2	Fairy Tales (esp. Little Red Riding Hood)	Some famous Western fairy tales (Cinderella, Snow White, Sleeping Beauty, Little Mermaid, etc.)
Week 3	Mid-19 th century British children’s literature	Focus on <i>Alice in Wonderland</i> and <i>Alice Through the Looking Glass</i> (excerpts)
Week 4	Mid to late 19 th century British young adult literature; discussion of gender (boys’/girls’ education)	Focus on <i>Tom Brown’s Schooldays</i> and <i>A Little Princess</i> (excerpts)
Week 5	Mid to late 19 th century American young adult literature; discussion of gender	Focus on <i>Little Women</i> (excerpts)
Week 6	Transformations in the role/depiction of parents in children’s literature at end of 19 th century	Focus on <i>Huckleberry Finn</i> , <i>Peter Pan</i> , and Beatrix Potter (excerpts)



Week 7	Children’s Literature and the British Empire (end of 19 th century); also Charles Darwin and the influence of the theory of evolution	Focus on <i>The Jungle Book</i> (excerpts)
Week 8	Early 20 th century British children’s and young adult literature	Focus on <i>Winnie the Pooh</i> ; also <i>Wind in the Willows</i> ; <i>Doctor Dolittle</i> , <i>Mary Poppins</i> (excerpts)
Week 9	Early 20 th century American children’s and young adult literature	Focus on <i>The Wizard of Oz</i> and <i>Little House in the Big Woods</i> (excerpts) ; poems by Elizabeth Madox Roberts
Week 10	20 th century young adult fantasy literature (mainly British); the influence of two World Wars	C.S. Lewis (Narnia) and J.R.R. Tolkien (<i>Hobbit</i> and <i>Lord of the Rings</i>) – excerpts
Week 11	Mid-20 th century American children’s literature	<i>Charlotte’s Web</i> , Dr. Seuss, and Charlie Brown (Peanuts) -- excerpts ; we will also try to look at some famous children’s illustrated books
Week 12	Late 20 th century British children’s literature (the nature of the middle class)	Roald Dahl selection, Harry Potter selection
Week 13	Children’s Literature and film	We will discuss the history of children’s films and students will need to watch a film

Professor/Lecturer/Instructor:	
Name:	Jason Gleckman
Email:	gjason@cuhk.edu.hk

Academic honesty and plagiarism

Plagiarism is not acceptable practice. Copies of the two major essays need to be sent to Veriguide.

Attention is drawn to University policy and regulations on honesty in academic work, and to the disciplinary guidelines and procedures applicable to breaches of such policy and regulations. Details may be found at <http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/>.

With each assignment, students will be required to submit a signed **declaration** that they are aware of these policies, regulations, guidelines and procedures. For group projects, all students of the same group should be asked to sign the declaration.

For assignments in the form of a computer-generated document that is principally text-based and submitted via VeriGuide, the statement, in the form of a receipt, will be issued by the system upon students’ uploading of the soft copy of the assignment. Assignments without the receipt will not be graded by teachers. Only the final version of the assignment should be submitted via VeriGuide.



Department of English

Grade A / Excellent: Outstanding performance on ALL learning outcomes.

Demonstrates the ability to synthesize and apply the principles or skills learned in the course in a manner that would surpass the normal expectations at this level and typical of standards that may be common at higher levels of study. The 'A' grade should be reserved for truly excellent work that exceeds the level expected for the majority of students and are expected to be achieved only by a small minority

Grade A- / Very Good: Generally outstanding performance on ALMOST ALL learning outcomes.

Demonstrates the ability to synthesize and apply the principles or skills learned in the course in a manner that would fully fulfill the normal expectations at this level and occasionally reaches standards that may be common at higher levels of study.

Grade B+ / Good (Plus): HIGH performance on all learning outcomes, OR HIGH performance on some learning outcomes which compensates WELL for slightly less satisfactory performance on others, resulting in overall substantial performance.

Demonstrates the ability to apply WELL the principles or skills learned in the course in a comprehensive manner that would sufficiently fulfill the normal expectations at this level WELL.

Grade B / Good: SUBSTANTIAL performance on all learning outcomes, OR SUBSTANTIAL performance on some learning outcomes which compensates for slightly less satisfactory performance on others, resulting in overall substantial performance.

Demonstrates the ability to apply the principles or skills learned in the course in a MORE COMPREHENSIVE manner that would sufficiently fulfill the normal expectations at this level.

Grade B- / Good (Minus): GOOD performance on all learning outcomes, OR GOOD performance on some learning outcomes which compensates for slightly less satisfactory performance on others, resulting in overall substantial performance.

Demonstrates the ability to apply the principles or skills learned in the course in a COMPREHENSIVE manner that would sufficiently fulfill the normal expectations at this level.

Grade C+ / Fair (Plus): VERY SATISFACTORY performance on the majority of learning outcomes.

Demonstrates the ability to apply the principles or skills learned in the course in a SOMEWHAT SUSTAINED manner that would meet the basic requirement at this level.

Grade C / Fair: SATISFACTORY performance on the majority of learning outcomes.

Demonstrates the ability to partially apply the principles or skills learned in the course in a manner that would meet the basic requirement at this level.

Grade C- / Fair (Minus): SOMEWHAT SATISFACTORY performance on A NUMBER OF learning outcomes.

Demonstrates the ability to SOMEWHAT apply the principles or skills learned in the course in a manner that would meet the BARE basic requirement at this level.

Grade D+ / Pass (Plus): BARELY SATISFACTORY performance on A FEW learning outcomes.

Addresses the course inadequately by meeting the basic requirement at this level only in some areas while responding minimally with possibly tangential content in others.



Grade D / Pass: ALMOST BARELY satisfactory performance on VERY FEW learning outcomes.

Addresses the course inadequately by meeting the basic requirement at this level only in very few areas while responding very minimally with possibly tangential content in others.

Grade F / Failure: Unsatisfactory performance on a number of learning outcomes, OR failure to meet specified assessment requirements.

Fails to address the course and likely does not understand what the course requires. In other words, the work completely misses the point.