

Asst. Prof. Katherine Wakely-Mulroney
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Wednesdays, 9:30-12:30
HSS Seminar Room 9

HL2042, Semester 2 AY2019-2020

Children's Literature: *Texts, Theories, Contexts*



Description

This course explores shifting attitudes towards childhood, children's literature, and their attendant critical and theoretical discourses from the nineteenth century to the present. From Lewis Carroll's *Alice* books, which heralded a new "Golden Age" of children's literature, to Cold-War-era fantasy, comic songs, and Japanese anime, students will consider a variety of different texts and the notions of childhood they reflect and generate. What linguistic and narrative strategies do adult writers, illustrators, and filmmakers draw on in their attempts to speak to, and for, young audiences? What assumptions do we, as adults, bring to our encounters with children's texts? Using Philip Nel and Lissa Paul's seminal *Keywords for Children's Literature* (2011), students will develop the critical vocabulary necessary to discuss children's fiction, poetry, and film in its aesthetic, ideological, and historical contexts. Students will also cultivate a strong theoretical framework for the study of children's literature by engaging with field-defining scholarship by Jacqueline Rose, Perry Nodelman, and others.

Required Texts

- Frances Hodgson Burnett, *The Secret Garden*. London: Penguin Classics, 2013.
- Norton Juster, *The Phantom Tollbooth*. New York: Random House, 1993.
- Roald Dahl, *Matilda*. New York: Puffin Books, 2007.
- Michael Ende, *The Neverending Story*. Trans. Ralph Manheim. London, Puffin Books, 1997.
- Lewis Carroll, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland and Through the Looking-Glass*. London: Penguin Classics, 2008.
- Readings by A. A. Milne and Shel Silverstein will be posted on NTULearn

NOTE: All secondary readings are taken from *Keywords for Children's Literature*, eds. Philip Nel and Lissa Paul (New York: New York University Press, 2011), available as an ebook via the NTU Library Catalogue.

Assessments

Participation: 15%
Short Essay: 10%
Term Paper: 25%
Final Exam: 50%



Deadlines and Late Penalties

The Short Essay is due on **Wednesday, February 26th**, and the Term Paper is due on **Wednesday, April 15th**. In each case, please submit a hard copy of your work at the beginning of class, and a soft copy via Turnitin (uploaded no later than 9:30 on the due date). Late work will be penalized one half-mark per day late (an A paper submitted one day late would drop to an A-, etc.) and will not receive written feedback. Late work will only be accepted within 48 hours of the deadline.

Schedule

1. Jan. 15th - Introduction

2. Jan. 22nd - Reading Children's Literature

PRIMARY READING:

- Chapters 1-13 of Frances Hodgson Burnett, *The Secret Garden* (1911)

SECONDARY READING:

- Beverly Lyon Clark, "Audience" (14-17)
- Karen Sanchez Eppler, "Childhood" (35-41)
- Peter Hunt, "Children's Literature" (42-47)



3. Jan. 29th - The Natural World

PRIMARY READING:

- Chapters 14-27 of Frances Hodgson Burnett, *The Secret Garden* (1911)

SECONDARY READING:

- Philip Hollindale, "Nature" (161-164)

4. Feb. 5th - Children's Poetry

PRIMARY READING:

- A. A. Milne, "Binker", "In the Dark" (1927), "Vespers" (1924)
- Selections from Shel Silverstein, *Where the Sidewalk Ends* (1974), *A Light in the Attic* (1981)

5. Feb. 12th - The Kingdom of Wisdom

PRIMARY READING:

- Norton Juster, *The Phantom Tollbooth* (1961)

SECONDARY READING:

- Elisabeth Rose Gruner, "Education" (70-74)

6. Feb. 19th - Children and Animals

In-class screening of My Neighbor Totoro (Studio Ghibli, 1988)

7. Feb. 26th - The Gifted Child

PRIMARY READING:

- Roald Dahl, *Matilda* (1988)

SECONDARY READING:

- Elizabeth Bullen, "Class" (48-52)
- Lissa Paul, "Literacy" (141-145)

8. Mar. 11th - Picturebook Workshop (readings TBD)

9. Mar. 18th - The Book of Books

PRIMARY READING:

- Chapters 1-12 of Michael Ende, *The Neverending Story* (1979)

SECONDARY READING:

- Dierdre Baker, "Fantasy" (79-85)

10. Mar. 25th - Infinity and Order

PRIMARY READING:

- Chapters 13-26 of Michael Ende, *The Neverending Story*

11. Apr. 1st - Down the Rabbit Hole

PRIMARY READING:

- Lewis Carroll, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865); *Through the Looking-Glass* (1872)

SECONDARY READING:

- Angela Sorby, "Golden Age" (96-99)

12. Apr. 8th - Curiouser and Curiouser

PRIMARY READING:

- Lewis Carroll, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865); *Through the Looking-Glass* (1872)

SECONDARY READING:

- Richard Flynn, "Culture" (62-66)
- June Cummings, "Marketing" (146-50)

13. April. 15th - Alice and Pop Culture

