

**LIS 693 English Children's Literature (3)**  
**Fall Session, 2010**  
**Instructor: Rebecca Knuth**  
**Syllabus**

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Office hours: Tuesday 3-6:30, Wed. 2:00-4:30, whenever my door is open or by appointment Office: Hamilton Library 3D

DESCRIPTION/SCOPE OF COURSE: This course is on the development (in England) of children's literature as a genre—its history, classics, and the influence and contributions of iconic authors and illustrators. Topics/critical issues to be discussed include contrasting visions of childhood, the power of traditional literature (folktales, legends, nursery rhymes), the commodification and commercialization of literary characters/texts, the popularized presentation of texts and authors in films, and the ability of texts to entertain, criticize society, present values, and help children to find meaning. Also, the role of English children's literature in developing national consciousness and values, Englishness. **NO PREREQUISITES.**

STUDENTS FOR WHOM THE COURSE IS INTENDED: This course is intended for librarians who plan to provide or already are providing library services to children in public or school libraries; pre-school, elementary, or junior high school teachers; and anyone else who is interested in children and their literature.

LIS PROGRAM LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- \* to understand the philosophy, principles and ethics of library & information studies
- \* to understand the development and communication of knowledge
- \* to attain basic competencies and knowledge that are essential for providing, managing, and designing information services in a variety of information environments

COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students who complete this course will:

- have read important classics of English children's literature and popular modern works
- have learned about the history and development of children's literature in England and the life and times of the authors
- have been exposed to contrasting visions of childhood
- have gained awareness of the power of traditional literature (folktales, myths, legends, nursery rhymes) and its influence on children's literature
- have examined the commodification and commercialization of literary characters/texts through popularized presentation of texts and authors in books, films, and products
- have been exposed to the ability of texts to entertain, criticize society, present values, and help children to find meaning.
- have probed the role of children's literature in developing national consciousness and values.

COURSE/TEACHING PHILOSOPHY I believe that instructors and students form communities in which they share in learning. Each person's enthusiasm, expression of thoughts and perspectives, and positive and supportive behavior contributes to a learning environment where people can expand their worlds and build a foundation for future learning. As an instructor, my role is to participate as one of the learners while facilitating student learning by structuring experiences and content.

TEACHING METHODS: Includes readings, written assignments, lectures, videos, speakers, small group & team work, discussions, presentations

TEACHER'S EXPECTATIONS: All assignments should be double-spaced, 10 or 12 font. Students will come to class having done the readings and completed assignments due that day. All students should bring copies or the originals of their assignments to class for use in discussions. Students will turn their assignments in at the end of class. If a student has not completed the assignment, he/she should still come to class and let me know that it will be late—don't miss class. It is wise to keep copies or back-up files of assignments in case of loss. Students should contact instructor if unable to attend a class session; make-up work may be assigned.

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS: Students are expected to use word processing for assignments and use Power Point, automated systems (UH Catalog, indexes, etc.) and the WEB to enhance the content of assignments.

## COURSE INFORMATION

### TEXTS

Dickerson, Matthew and David O'Hara. *From Homer to Harry Potter*.

Dickens, Charles. *Oliver Twist*

Carroll, Lewis. *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking Glass (make sure you have both)*

Barrie, J. M. *Peter Pan*.

Potter, Beatrix. *Tale of Peter Rabbit, The Tale of Benjamin Bunny*, and the *Tale of the Flopsy Bunnies*

Burnett, Frances Hodgson. *The Secret Garden*

Milne, A.A., *Winnie-the-Pooh*

Tolkien, J. R. R. *The Hobbit*

Lewis, C. S. *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*

Rowlings, J. K. *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*.

Readings in packet; materials required for assignments

GRADES Grades will be determined by assignments, including essays oral presentations, and classroom participation. Weightings: **5 % each for Assignments 2 and 7.... 10 % each for Assignments 1, 3, 4.... .15% for 5, 6....25% for Ass. #8. 5% for class participation** (Attendance, evidence of preparation, contributions to discussion, presentations).

SESSION	DISCUSSION TOPICS ACTIVITIES	READINGS
1 Aug. 25	Introduction to children's literature Introduce Syllabus VHS King Arthur's Britain	
2 Sept. 1	Traditional Literature: British Nursery Rhymes and Folk tales & myths Discussion: positive or possible negative influence on children of folktales  FILM: "King Arthur: His Life and Legends" (DVD)	Martin Hallett & Barbara Karasek, eds. <i>Folk and Fairy Tales</i> (selected sections): Child as hero 98-99  British Folktales: "Jack the Giant Killer/Jack and the Beanstalk" and "Dick Whittington and His Cat"  Bettelheim, Bruno. <i>Uses of Enchantment: The Struggle for Meaning</i> 306-323  Tolkien's "On Fairy-Stories" 263-284 Robin Hood Knuth, Preface & Ch. 1
3 Sept. 8	Creating the Good Child Views on the child  <i>John Newbery, Newbery Award Criteria &amp; Purpose (annual medal for most distinguished American children's text—named for famous British children's author</i>	Knuth, Ch. 2  John Newbery 1745 <i>History of Little Goody Two-Shoes</i> <i>John Newbery and the Story of the Newbery Medal</i>  "Rosamund"  "History of the Fairchild Family"
4 Sept. 15	Charles Dickens & His Times Child as innocent Children's lit. as social criticism  FILM: "Biography: Charles Dickens" (DVD) or FILM: "Charles Dickens: The Man Who Asked for More" (DVD)	Dickens, Charles. <i>Oliver Twist</i> . First 20 chapters  Ass. #1: Essay discuss how Dickens uses <i>Oliver Twist</i> as a forum for social criticism (2-3 pages)
5 Sept. 22	Indoctrination  Film: "My Boy Jack"	Knuth, Ch. 3  <i>Scouting for Boys</i> : excerpts

6 Sept. 29	<p>Romanticism Views of Childhood</p> <p>***Alice and pop culture _____</p> <p>Lewis Carroll &amp; Background on the <i>Alice</i>.</p> <p>Alice as turning point in English children's literature</p> <p>DVD: Lewis Carroll</p>	<p>Wullschlager: Lewis Carroll the Child as Muse</p> <p>Lewis Carroll 1865 <i>Alice's Adventures in Wonderland and Through the Looking Glass</i></p> <p>Carpenter, Humphrey. "Alice and the Mockery of God," pp. 44-69 in <i>Secret Garden: A Study of the Golden Age of Children's Literature</i>.</p>
7 Oct. 6	<p>Illustrators &amp; Picture Books: Criteria for excellence</p> <p>Ideas about English childhood</p> <p>***Caldecott's Life and Books _____</p> <p>***Greenaway's Books &amp; why the name of Kate Greenaway is considered by some to be synonymous with an English childhood _____</p> <p>DVD: Whispers Through the Willows</p>	<p>Knuth Ch. 4</p> <p>Readings on illustrated children's books and evaluation criteria; Criteria for Greenaway Medal (Annual medal for the outstanding British illustrated book for children and young people) &amp; Caldecott Medal: (annual medal for most distinguished American picture book)</p> <p>Randolph Caldecott 1878 <i>The Diverting History of John Gilpin [in Commons]</i></p> <p>Ass # 2 Essay: Compare and Contrast the criteria for the Greenaway Medal and the Caldecott. (2 pages)</p>
8 Oct. 13	<p>Edwardians</p> <p>FILM: Beatrix Potter: Artist, Storyteller and Countrywoman"</p> <p>Extra credit: Miss Potter</p>	<p>Knuth, Ch. 5</p> <p>Potter, Beatrix 1901 <i>Tale of Peter Rabbit, The Tale of Benjamin Bunny</i> and the <i>Tale of the Flopsy Bunnies</i>. [in Commons]</p> <p>E. Nesbit, <i>The Story of the Treasure Seekers</i> (will be in readings packet)</p>
9 Oct. 20	<p>J.M. Barrie and <i>Peter Pan</i> (the boy who never grew up; imagination and coming to terms with the real world)</p> <p>***J.M Barrie and the Lost Boys _____</p> <p>DVD: "Finding Neverland"</p>	<p>J.M. Barrie 1903 <i>Peter Pan</i></p> <p>Wullschlager J. M Barrie, <i>The Boy Who Would Not Grow up</i></p> <p>FILM: Disney's Peter Pan</p> <p>Ass. #4 : Essay: What did you think about the play/book and Disney's version? Do you think the film was able convey the essence of <i>Peter Pan</i>? (2-3 pages)</p>
10 Oct. 27	<p>A.A. Milne &amp; <i>Winnie the Pooh</i> Bonus features on PP Disk ***Disneyfication of Children's classics _____</p> <p>Commercialization</p> <p>DVD: Walt</p>	<p>A.A. Milne 1926 <i>Winnie the Pooh</i></p> <p>Wullschlager: A.A. Milne the Fantasy Tamed</p> <p>Ass #5: Presentation. Many of the classics in British children's literature have been transformed into popular icons and aggressively marketed. Investigate marketing strategies and products for one text or series of texts. (each student will do a different one, 10 minutes).</p>

Nov. 3	F. H. Burnett and <i>The Secret Garden</i> Becoming a better person & the magic within ***Life of Burnett _____	Chapter 6 Frances Hodgson Burnett 1911 <i>The Secret Garden</i>  Ass. #3: Essay: What did the children find in the garden? Why was the garden the central image in the book? (2-3 pages)
13 Nov. 10	C.S. Lewis Archetypes, good and evil  FILM: "The Magic Never Ends: The Life and Work of C.S. Lewis" (DVD)  Extra credit: Shadowlands	<i>From Homer to Harry Potter</i> 15-92  C. S. Lewis 1961 <i>The Lion, The Witch, and the Wardrobe</i>
14 Nov. 17	Tolkien and his works Fantasy as a genre; creating an entirely new world  FILM: "JRR Tolkien and the Birth of the Lord of the Rings (DVD)  Extra credit: Ringers	<i>From Homer to Harry Potter</i> 93-165  J.R.R. Tolkien 1937 <i>The Hobbit</i>  Essay #6: To be assigned
15 Nov. 24	Roald Dahl  DVD: Roald Dahl  ***The Controversial Enid Blyton _____	<i>From Homer to Harry Potter</i> 109-165 Knuth Ch. 7  Ass #7: Informal Presentation: Each person picks a different Dahl book; prepare a 5 minute synopsis. Prepare questions. (5-10)
16 Dec. 1	Rowlings and the phenomenon of Harry Potter  Discuss final essays  FILM: "J.K. Rowling and the Birth of Harry Potter" or "Discovering the Real World of Harry Potter  Censorship of children's literature	From Homer to Harry Potter, , 169-205, 227-260  Rowlings, J. K. <i>Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone</i>  Ass. #8 Essay: this essay will demonstrate that you have assimilated course content and can apply understandings gleaned from assignments, readings, discussion, lectures, films, and activities. Argue <u>either</u> that <i>Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone</i> (and/or the whole series) will become a classic text(s) in British children's literature <u>or</u> that it fails to live up to the other texts in this course. Compare contrast it with the classics we have studied. (4-5 page)
17 Dec. 8	Englishness Be prepared to discuss Englishness & the notion of children's literature as a new kind of folklore Evaluations	Ch. 8