

The University of Maryland, College Park  
College of Education

***Introduction to Children's Literature***

*EDCI 443: Section 0101*  
*Mon/Wed. 11:00 – 12:30*  
*Benjamin 2121*

Course Syllabus  
Fall 2008

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Conceptual Framework

This course is a requirement for the teacher education program. The intent of the teacher education program at UMCP is to prepare **reflective practitioners** for a diverse society through research based professional programs. Our shared vision is consistent with our mission as a Research I institution that views **Research and Inquiry, Diversity, Collaboration, and Technology** as foundations to our conceptual framework. For more information please visit, [http://www.education.umd.edu/teacher\\_education/downloads/framework.doc](http://www.education.umd.edu/teacher_education/downloads/framework.doc)

The Elementary Education program strives to help students develop a knowledge base that is shared by teaching professionals. The College of Education (COE) Conceptual Framework provides a foundation for the development of this knowledge base. The COE Conceptual Framework is integrated with standards from the *Elementary Education Performance Based Assessment Plan*, which address the **planning, delivery, and assessment** of effective instructional practice. Through this framework, students learn that reflective practitioners make effective instructional decisions based upon their interactions with several types of professional knowledge.

First, reflective practitioners need **knowledge of curricula, subject matter, and appropriate pedagogical techniques** for imparting subject matter knowledge. In addition, reflective practitioners need **knowledge of learners**, including knowledge of student characteristics and cognitions as well as knowledge of motivational and developmental aspects of how students learn to read. Reflective practitioners also need **knowledge of educational goals and assessment** techniques to effectively monitor student progress. Finally, reflective practitioners need **knowledge of the social and cultural context** to understand how issues of equity (e.g., cultural and linguistic differences, gender, socioeconomic status) influence the processes of teaching and learning about literature in elementary schools.

Course Overview

This undergraduate course provides an introduction to literature written for young readers (kindergarten-middle school). You will learn to analyze texts using literary as well as sociopolitical perspectives. The course is

organized by genres with an emphasis on diversity. We will read “classic” children’s books as well as more contemporary materials.

In particular, you will

- Read and reflect on texts from a variety of genres and traditions
- Learn how to use literary criteria to select and evaluate children’s literature
- Think critically about representations of race, ethnicity, class, gender and/or sexuality in texts for children
- Identify authors and illustrators of classic and contemporary children’s texts
- Exhibit a familiarity with a range of children’s literature awards
- Utilize professional resources related to the study of children’s literature

### **Required Texts**

- Bang, M. (2000). Picture This: How Pictures Work. NY: SeaStar. ISBN 1587170302
- Brown, M. W. (1947). Goodnight Moon. NY: HarperCollins. ISBN: 0064430170.
- Collier, B. (2000). Uptown. NY: Henry Holt. ISBN: 0805057218.
- Horning, K. (1997). From Cover to Cover: Evaluating and Reviewing Children’s Books. NY: HarperCollins. ISBN: 006446167X.
- Lowry, L. (1993). The Giver. NY: Houghton Mifflin. ISBN: 0618256288.
- Murphy, J. (2003). An American Plague. NY: Clarion Books.
- Rowling, J. K. Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone NY: Scholastic. ISBN 043936213X
- Ryan, P. M. (2000). Esperanza Rising. NY: Scholastic. ISBN: 043912042X.
- Sachar, L. (1998). Holes. NY: Dell Yearling. ISBN: 0440414806.
- Scieszka, J. & L. Smith. (2002). 10<sup>th</sup> Ann. Ed. The Stinky Cheese Man and Other Fairy Stupid Tales. NY: Viking. ISBN: 0670035696.
- Tatar, M. (1996). The Classic Fairy Tales: Texts, Criticism. NY: W. W. Norton. ISBN: 0393972771.
- Vasquez, V. (2003). Getting beyond “I like the book: Creating space for critical literacy in K-6 classrooms. Delaware: International Reading Association. ISBN: 0-87207-512-5.
- White, E. B. (1952). Charlotte’s Web. Illus. by Garth Williams. NY: Harper & Row. ISBN 0064400557

### **Choose One: Newbery Winners**

- Curtis, C. P. (1999). Bud Not Buddy. NY: Delacorte. ISBN 0440413281
- Kadohata, C. (2004). Kira-Kira. NY: Atheneum. ISBN 0689856393
- Lowry, L. (1989). Number the Stars. NY: Bantam. ISBN 0440227534
- Taylor, M. (1976). Roll of Thunder, Hear my Cry. NY: Dial. ISBN 014034893X
- Paterson, K (1977). Bridge to Terabithia. NY: HarperCollins. ISBN 006073941X

## **Course Expectations and Requirements**

Class attendance and preparedness are essential to the success of the course. You will be evaluated in large part on your contributions to making the class successful, it is essential that you come on time, stay for the entire class and come prepared.

### **Quizzes: 30 points**

There will be 6 brief quizzes at the very beginning of some classes. Each quiz will be worth 5 points (you may drop your lowest score). If you are late to class you will miss the quiz. Quizzes cannot be made up for credit unless you provide a doctor's note.

### **Participation 10 points (your Newbery group project is included in your participation grade)**

I expect you to attend all scheduled classes and to participate in discussions. Be on time. Late arrivals disrupt other students and our class time. Consistent tardiness will result in a lowered grade for the course. Your participation grade includes a weekly assignment, one brief presentation, and a variety of assignments due each class day.

### **Daily Assignments 10 points**

To facilitate class discussion you are expected to come prepared with a weekly assignment sheet completed (Please see attached description). This is your opportunity to put your thoughts on paper and make it easier for you to speak in class. I will collect some of your daily assignments, and not others. When I collect them, I will either return them with a check mark, or with a score out of 5. The ones that I score can be substituted for a quiz grade that you are not happy with. **Make copies of the attached Daily assignment sheet!**

### **Expert Author Presentation 5 points**

Each class session, students will serve as experts on an assigned author for that week.

- Each student will present a **3-5 minute** power-point presentation on a particular author and provide a one-page two-sided handout for each student in the class and for the instructor.

### **Critical Reading Logs (see attached description): 30 points (10 points each)**

### **Disney Film Analysis (see attached description) 5 points**

### **Final Exam/Self-Evaluation: 10 points**

**Other things you need to know:**

All assignments are due at the beginning of class on the date listed in the syllabus. Again, please do not send attachments via email. Late assignments are generally not accepted. If you have a special circumstance and won't be able to meet the deadline, let me know *before* the assignment is due and we will discuss your request.

Please use APA style when citing sources. An online guide can be found at [http://www.lib.umd.edu/guides/citing\\_apa.html#specific](http://www.lib.umd.edu/guides/citing_apa.html#specific)

**Honor Statement:**

The University of Maryland, College Park has a nationally recognized Code of Academic Integrity, administered by the Student Honor Council. This Code sets standards for academic integrity at Maryland for all undergraduate and graduate students. As a student you are responsible for upholding these standards for this course. It is very important for you to be aware of the consequences of cheating, fabrication, facilitation, and plagiarism. For more information on the Code of Academic Integrity or the Student Honor Council, please visit <http://www.shc.umd.edu>. To further exhibit your commitment to academic integrity, remember to sign the Honor Pledge on all examinations and assignments: "I pledge on my honor that I have not given or received any unauthorized assistance on this examination (assignment)."

**Grading Scale 100 points possible:**

**A = 91-100**

**B = 81-90**

**C = 71-80**

**D = 70 and below**

- A excellent mastery of the subject and outstanding scholarship.
- B good mastery of the subject and good scholarship.
- C acceptable mastery of the subject and the usual achievement expected.
- D marginal performance, and it does not represent satisfactory progress toward a degree.
- F failure to understand the subject and unsatisfactory performance.

**Note:**

- Please let me know how I can assist you if you require any special accommodations in the course.
- Please turn cell phones **completely** off during class – phones vibrating in book bags and the sending/receiving of text messages is disruptive to learning.
- Papers will not be accepted electronically; **hard copies only**.
- **Bring in at least 3 books by your author for your author presentation.**
- Do not cut and paste sections of book reviews that you read on the internet! Read the books and write your own!
- For power points, reduce the amount of text per slide. Slides should capture highlights from your hand-out, not the exact same text.

Course Outline

<b>SEPT.</b>	3	<b>Introduction to the Course</b>
	8	<b>Reading and Responding to Literature I</b>

Cover to Cover, Ch. 1, 7, 8  
\*Weekly Assignment due

10 **Reading and Responding to Literature II**  
Charlotte's Web

15 **Reading Critically I**

Getting Beyond, Ch. 1 & 2

“10 ways to check for racism and sexism in children’s literature”

<http://www.birchlane.davis.ca.us/library/10quick.htm>

\*Weekly assignment, Getting Beyond the Book. Please answer reflection question #1 (p. 4-5). “What kinds of books do you recall...”

17 **Reading Critically II**

Getting Beyond, Ch. 3, 4 & 6

“Taking a critical stance”<http://www.indiana.edu/~langed/faculty/chapter.html>

\*Bring an everyday text to class with you (e.g., advertisement, see Vasquez Chpt. 2 for more ideas).

22 **Fairy Tales & Myth I**

Tales, “Little Red Riding Hood”; “Cinderella”

“The Concept of Childhood and Children’s Folktales”

\*Weekly assignment, Tales

*Trina Schart Hyman/Paul O. Zelinsky/ Joseph Bruchac*

24 **Fairy Tales & Myth II**

Tales, “Hansel & Gretel”, “The Old Wives’ Tale”, “Sex and Violence”

*Paul Goble/Leo & Diane Dillon*

29 **Fairy Tales & Myth III**

Tales, “Beauty & the Beast”; “The Little Mermaid”; Tales, “Breaking the Disney Spell”;

Cover to Cover, Ch. 3

*Ed Young/Pat Mora*

**OCT.**

1 **A Critical Look at Non-Print Media I**

Hastings, A. “Ethnic and Gender Stereotyping in Recent Disney Animation”

In class film, Mickey Mouse Monopoly

6 **A Critical Look at Non-Print Media II**

Disney movie analysis assignment - **Due**

8 **Picture Books I**

Picture This

Goodnight Moon

\*Weekly assignment, Goodnight Moon

*David Weisner / Margaret Wise Brown*

13 **Picture Books II**

Cover to Cover, Ch. 5

Uptown

\*Bring a book that you intend to review for your reading log

*Allen Say /John Steptoe*

- 15 **Picture Books III**  
Stinky Cheese Man  
 \*Reading log #1 due  
 \*No Weekly Assignment
- 20 **Picture Books IV**  
 Browsing and discussing a collection of books
- 22 **Newbery Award Winners**  
Selected Title  
 \*Weekly assignment due, Newbery winner
- 27 **Newbery Award Winners (cont'd)**
- 29 **Transitional Books**  
Cover to Cover, Ch. 6  
 \*Bring a transitional reader (e.g., Lobel's Frog & Toad).  
*Dr. Seuss/Cynthia Rylant*
- NOV. 3 **Historical Fiction I**  
 Dorris, M. "Why I'm not Thankful for Thanksgiving"  
 Dow, J. & B. Slapin, "Deconstructing the myths of the first Thanksgiving."  
 Available at <http://www.oyate.org/resources/shortthanks.html>  
 "Books to avoid about Thanksgiving." Available at  
<http://www.oyate.org/resources/booklist.html#avoid>  
 \* Weekly Assignment, "Why I'm Not Thankful" or "Deconstructing"  
*Michael Dorris/Paul Fleischman/ Laurence Yep*
- 5 **Historical Fiction II**  
Esperanza Rising  
 \*Reading Log #2 due
- 10 **Non-Fiction/Biography I**  
An American Plague  
 \*Weekly Assignment, An American Plague  
*Jim Murphy/Andrea & Brian Pinkney*
- 12 **Non-Fiction/Biography II**  
Cover to Cover, Ch. 2  
 \*Bring a picture book biography  
*Gail Gibbons*
- 17 **Fantasy I**  
Harry Potter  
 \*Weekly Assignment, Harry

*J.K. Rowling/Virginia Hamilton/Jane Yolen*

- 19 **Fantasy II**  
 \*Bring an artifact from popular culture related to Harry Potter (e.g., movie ad, newspaper article, game, etc.).  
 \**Reading log #3 due*

- 24 **Science Fiction**  
The Giver  
 \*Weekly Assignment, The Giver  
*Nancy Farmer/Madeline L'Engle*

- 26 **Censorship**  
 \*Bring a newspaper article, website, etc. that deals with censorship of children's literature.

**Contemporary Realistic Fiction**

Holes

*Walter Dean Meyers/E.L.Konigsburg/Betsy Byars*

- DEC. 1 **Contemporary Realistic Fiction II**  
 Cowhey, M. (2005). "Heather's Moms Got Married." Rethinking Schools, 19: 16-19. Available online at [www.rethinkingschools.org](http://www.rethinkingschools.org)
- 3 TBD
- Final Class** 8 Hand out Final Exam
- 15 **Final Exam due in my mailbox by 12 pm.**

**"How to Review a Book"**

From, Horning, K. (1997). From Cover to Cover: Evaluating and Reviewing Children's Books. NY: HarperCollins.

**Step #1 Careful and Close Reading**

- Place the book in a broad category (non-fiction, transitional book, etc.).

**Step #2 Note Taking/Fact Checking**

- As you read take notes about the book
- If you are reviewing a non-fiction book you may want to consult other books about this topic for comparison.
- Is there anything in the book that doesn't ring true that you might investigate?
- Your review should include the contents, scope and style of the book, and suggest its potential audience.

**Step #3 Rough Draft**

Divide your paper into the three categories listed below. (Horning, p. 186).

**Descriptive**

- Objective statements about the book.

**Analytical**

- Statements about literary and artistic elements, including evaluation, comparison and mention of contributions to the field.

**Sociological**

- Judgments based on nonliterary considerations, such as potential controversial elements or predictions about popularity. Issues about diversity and representations would go here.

Using your notes, make up a list of all the points you would like to include in your review, placing each one in its corresponding category. Descriptive points might lead you to ask questions that lead to analysis. For instance, if the book has color photographs, how do they support the text? Are they well placed?

**Step #4 Writing the Review**

Reviews are brief (100-400 words) so you must decide what to include

- Which points relate to the book as a whole?
- Which ones will give readers a sense of the book's style or unique qualities
- Which ones best support your overall objective assessment of the book?

Try for an opening sentence that sets the tone for your entire review, one that captures the attention of the reader.

**Step #5 Revising the Review**

Read over your work critically.

- Is there too much or too little description?
- Did you forget to mention something important?
- Is it too long?
- Use active verbs (She is a strong character who wants to be a teacher versus The strong heroine plans to teach).
- Look for redundancy. Have you said the same thing twice in different ways?

**Children's Literature Reading Log**

Throughout the semester, you will keep a critical reading log of books. This assignment will be typed (12 point font) using 1.5 line spacing. Each response should include the following information:

- APA citation
- Summary
- Critical Evaluation

Your log will be graded on the depth of your responses and the quality of your critical evaluation of the texts/articles. Please proofread your work. If there are more than three spelling, grammatical and/or citation errors, your paper will be returned to you. Please see attached example.

**Reading Log #1 (10 points)****Award Winning Picture Books**



**Part I:**

You will read a minimum of 4 award-winning or honor books. Pick one picture book from each of the following award lists

- Boston Globe Award
- Caldecott Award
- Coretta Scott King Award
- Pura Belpre or the Americas Award

Your critical evaluation should describe the illustrations in terms of the media used, design, etc. and how the illustrations add to or detract from the story. See chapter 5 in Horning's *Cover to Cover*.

**Part II:**

Your reading log will conclude with a reflection (one paragraph) on what you've learned about children's picture books. Highlight the key issues that came up as you read the articles and the literature.

**Reading Log #2 (10 points)****Race, Ethnicities & Children's Literature****Part I:**

You will read and write a summary (1 paragraph) of at least one scholarly article about the history, selection and/or use of multi-ethnic literature.

Articles should come from scholarly journals such as, *Children's Literature in Education*, *The New Advocate*, *Children's Literature Quarterly*, and *Language Arts*. You can also find articles in books such as Violet Harris's *Using multi-ethnic literature in the K-8 classroom*.

**Part II:**

You will then review, using the criteria from either of the articles and/or the course handout, three children's books. You want to capture the diversity of any particular group (socio-economic circumstances, occupations, lifestyles).

- Picture book
- Novel
- Nonfiction

**Part III:**

Your reading log will conclude with a reflection (one paragraph) on what you've learned about multi-ethnic literature. Highlight the key issues that came up as you read the articles and the literature.

**Reading Log #3 (10 points)****Non-Fiction**

You will read and analyze at least 3 **nonfiction** books. Your selections should reflect diversity and **MAY** be drawn from the following sources.

Orbis Pictus

<http://www.ncte.org/elem/awards/orbispictus/115475.htm>

National Council of Social Studies Notable Trade Books for Young People (NCSS) (1)

<http://www.socialstudies.org/resources/notable/>

National Science Teachers Association Outstanding Science Trade Books (NSTA) (1) <http://www.nsta.org/ostbc>

## Weekly Assignment

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Write down your initial observations about this text. You might write about the worth of the piece, memories it calls to mind, speculations about the writer, or condemnation or approval of the ideas presented.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. Identify at least one passage in the text that you would like to talk about in class.

Page #:

Why did you pick this particular passage?

3. Identify at least two questions about the book/article (not whether the material is “appropriate” for children) that you would like to discuss in class.

## Disney Film Analysis

Pettit, R. (2001). Study guide [Mickey Mouse Monopoly: Disney, Childhood and Corporate Power](http://www.mediaed.org/videos/CommercialismPoliticsAndMedia/MickeyMouseMonopoly/studyguide/html), Retrieved Sept. 04, 2006, from <http://www.mediaed.org/videos/CommercialismPoliticsAndMedia/MickeyMouseMonopoly/studyguide/html>.

### **Option #1 Gender in Disney Films**

#### Part 1

You will create a chart for this part of the assignment. Create a list of all characters in the film. Categorize each of the characters in the film by gender (if identifiable) and by whether they play a major or minor role.

Describe each of the characters, especially those in major roles, according to some selection of the following traits:

- stereotypical masculine traits: achievement-oriented/ambitious, self-reliant, self-confident, independent, responsible, decisive, rational, dominant/aggressive/violent
- stereotypical feminine traits: obedient, submissive, dependent, anxious to please, emotional, nurturing, affectionate, gentle, understanding, sensitive, sacrificing, family oriented, obsessed with physical appearance

What conclusions can you draw from your content analysis? Write briefly about what you found (2-3 paragraphs). Stick to the film you viewed not your general feelings about Disney or other Disney films. Some questions to think about include:

Are the major roles in this Disney film given primarily to males or females? Are the male and female characters in Disney films stereotypically masculine and feminine in their traits and behaviors? For the lead character in each film, what is his/her primary goal or wish to be realized in the course of the film? Does this vary by gender?

### **Option #2 Race/Ethnicity in Disney Films**

#### Part 1

You will create a chart for this part of the analysis. Create a list of all characters in the film. Categorize each of the characters in the film by race/ethnicity (if identifiable) and by whether they play a major or minor role.

Describe each of the characters, especially those in major roles, according to some selection of the following traits:

- positive traits/sympathetic character
- negative traits/unsympathetic character

What conclusions can you draw from your content analysis? Write briefly about what you found (2-3 paragraphs). Stick to the film you viewed not your general feelings about Disney or other Disney films. Some questions to think about include,

What is the racial/ethnic identity of the major sympathetic characters? What is the racial/ethnic identity of the major unsympathetic characters? What characteristics seem to be associated with each identifiable racial/ethnic

characterization? If the race/ethnicity of any characters are not easily identifiable, do you think they are nonetheless portrayed in the mold of white Americans (e.g., no identifiable accent / standard American accent, middle-class American values, etc.?)

