

# CLA Master Class 2013

## Reading Picturebooks: A Graduate Level Course

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### OVERVIEW

The *Reading Picturebooks* course I have offered at the University of Georgia serves as a semester-long investigation of picturebooks as *literary, artistic, and social texts*. We celebrate the pleasures of picturebooks as engaging, entertaining, and informative texts while also taking a critical look at not only their composition but also their placement in individuals' hands and larger community as a whole.

Throughout a sixteen-week semester, we focus on the synergistic relationships between written and iconic narratives. We hone in the various types of and approaches to picturebooks,; investigate children's book creators as individuals, art-

ists, and social activists; as well as explore our own capacities to evaluate, integrate, and create picturebooks for personal and academic use. Additionally, we explore the various ways in which children respond to picturebooks. Simply put, we revel in the possibilities of picturebooks.

Virtual or in-person workshops with noted children's literature artists, the inclusion of an "artist-in-residence," holding class in a local independent bookstore, as well as integrating attendance at children's literature conferences into the course all augment this holistic approach to picturebooks and the ways in which picturebooks are part and parcel of life.

### A SAMPLING OF SUCCESSFUL ACTIVITIES

- ◇ Weekly Artistic Studio/Workshops with our local "artist-in-residence" from the School of Art
- ◇ Illustrator Gallery "Opening Night" (Illustrator or Authorstrator showcase)
- ◇ Critically analyzing picturebooks
- ◇ Creating and sharing individual picturebooks
- ◇ Designing reading and writing instructional activities involving picturebooks for an online magazine, [Literacyhead](#)
- ◇ Designing picturebook text sets based on artistic media and the social issues that are often depicted through different artistic media
- ◇ Museum Walks (Connecting Art and Picturebooks)
- ◇ Pre/Post Analysis of picturebooks or Bookstore "Scavenger Hunts"

### WEEKLY TOPIC POSSIBILITIES

<i>Various Viewpoints: Conceptions of Picturebooks</i>	<i>Graphic Narratives Or Picturebooks?</i>
<i>History of Picturebooks</i>	<i>Children's Responses to Picturebooks</i>
<i>Artistic Style &amp; Design</i>	<i>Evaluating Award Winning Picturebooks</i>
<i>Artistic Media</i>	<i>Illustrating Society: Picturebooks and Social Justice</i>
<i>Postmodern Picturebooks</i>	<i>Digital/ digitized picturebooks</i>
<i>Visual Literacy &amp; Design in Classrooms</i>	<i>Parallel Structures: Writing and Illustration as Parallel Composing Processes</i>

### STUDENTS' RESPONSES

- ◆ *This is the kind of class that you go home thinking about at night. I found myself talking about this class to friends that could care less about illustrations but I wanted them to care because I was so excited about what I was learning.*
- ◆ *I am excited that I can now do a more thorough, not to mention balanced, reading of picturebooks with my students. Also, they will greatly benefit from learning to read and interpret illustrations because it will add to their reading comprehension.*

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#### A FEW KEY READINGS

- ◆ Bang, M. (2000). *Picture this. How pictures work*. San Francisco, CA: Chronicle Books
- ◆ Dewey, J. (2009/1934). *Art as experience*. New York, NY: Perigree Books/Penguin. (select chapters)
- ◆ Kiefer, B. (1994). *The potential of picture books. From visual to aesthetic understanding*. Upper Saddle River, NY: Pearson. (select chapters)
- ◆ Lewis, D. (2001). *Reading contemporary picturebooks*. New York, NY: RoutledgeFalmer (selected chapters)
- ◆ Nikolajeva, M., & Scott, C. (2001). *How picturebooks work*. New York, NY: RoutledgeFalmer (selected chapters)
- ◆ Salisbury, M., & Styles, M. (2012). *Children's picturebooks: The art of visual storytelling*. London: Laurence King Publishing.
- ◆ Sipe, L. (2008). *Storytime. Young children's literary understanding in the classroom*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- ◆ Stevens, N. (2001). *Tikvah: Children's book creators reflect on human rights*. New York, NY: SeaStar Books
- ◆ Various articles

#### A FEW SUPPLEMENTAL READINGS

- ◆ Arizpe, E., & Styles, M. (Eds.) (2003). *Children reading pictures: Interpreting visual texts*. London: RoutledgeFalmer
- ◆ Carle, E. (2007). *Artist to artist: 23 illustrators talk to children about their art*. New York, NY: Philomel Books
- ◆ Evans, D. (2008). *Show & Tell: Exploring the fine art of children's book illustration*. San Francisco, CA: Chronicle Books.
- ◆ Evans, J. (Ed.). (2009). *Talking beyond the page. Reading and responding to picturebooks*. London: RoutledgeFalmer.
- ◆ Marcus, L. S. (2002). *Ways of telling. Conversations on the art of the picturebook*. New York, NY: Dutton Books
- ◆ Nodelman, P. (1988). *Words about pictures. The narrative art of children's picture books*. Athens, GA: The University of Georgia Press.
- ◆ Pantaleo, S. (2008/09). *Exploring student responses to contemporary picturebooks*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- ◆ Ray, K. W. (2010). *In pictures and in words. Teaching the qualities of good writing through illustration study*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- ◆ Various articles