

LLED 5318/7318: CULTURALLY DIVERSE CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

Fall 2011

Thursday
5.00 PM to 7:45 PM
116 Aderhold Hall

Dr. Joel Taxel
125 Aderhold Hall
706-542-4526 (office)
706-546-7220 (home)
jtaxel@uga.edu

This course provides an in-depth look at culturally diverse children's literature, past and present, the issues that surround it, and strategies for fostering response and understanding in K-8 classrooms.

Course Objectives include:

1. Fostering an awareness of currently available literature about, and resources related to, culturally diverse groups in the United States
2. Gaining a deeper understanding of ourselves as readers as we read and respond to a variety of culturally diverse children's literature
3. Exploration of some of the literary, aesthetic, sociopolitical, and cultural issues and controversies related to culturally diverse children's literature
4. Exploration of strategies for reading and responding to culturally diverse children's literature in K-8 classrooms

Course Novels

- Bruchac, J.: *Heart of a Chief*
- Curtis, C.: *The Watson's Go to Birmingham – 1963*
- Erdrich, L.: *Birchbark House*
- Haddix, M.P.: *Uprising*
- Howe, J.: *The Misfits*
- Kadohata, C.: *Kira-Kira*
- Levine, G.: *Ella Enchanted*
- Myers, W. D.: *Monster*
- Ryan, P.: *Esperanza Rising*
- Soto, G.: *Baseball in April and Other Stories*
- Taylor, M.: *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*
- Woodson, J.: *Locomotion*

Additional Course Readings can be found on the course eLearning site.

Undergraduate/Graduate Status

The Graduate School requires that undergraduate and graduate students have different expectations and assignments in split-level courses such as ours. These distinctions will be in terms of the expectations for the Response Journal, and other assignments.

Course Requirements:

I. Attendance and Participation

Attendance and *active participation* in class discussions are required. You need to be in class in order to learn from classmates, and for them to learn from you. While I do understand that health, work, and family responsibilities at times may preclude attendance, you must make every effort to be in class. If it is necessary for you to miss class, I ask that you let me know in advance.

This class is built around discussion of the assigned material, both literary and professional. The success of the class depends on what each of us brings to class and the manner in which we bring it. Therefore it is essential that you have read, thought, and written about assigned readings *prior* to class.

You also are expected to read the responses of the members of your group prior to class.

Active participation is defined as: 1) providing evidence that you have read the assigned material; 2) engaging in thoughtful and reflective oral and written response to the readings; 3) demonstrating respect for the ideas of others; 4) working productively in small groups.

II. Response Journal

Response journals are central to all that we do in this class and constitute 50% of the grade (by far the largest of all assignments). My intent is to make the journal a vehicle for us to reflect on complex and important ideas and issues raised by our reading, and to set the stage for our class discussions.

Please post your response to each week's readings on our e-Learning site as a Word document (be sure to name your file). Half of the group will posted on Tuesdays at 9 AM, the other half on Wednesdays at 9 AM. Further details will be provided in class.

Your responses should contain your reactions to the course novels and to the professional articles we read. All students are expected to read and respond to *all* of the literary works assigned.

Undergraduate students are expected to read all assigned material and are required to respond to each novel, plus one of articles/chapters. *Graduate* students are expected to respond to all assigned materials.

Responses should not attempt to cover all aspects of the reading in question. I am interested in things that pique your interest and emotions. *Please don't summarize the books, or the arguments in the articles.* Comments about novels might include thoughts about the memories and feelings the work evokes, the author's construction and development of the plot, or the setting, or the theme[s], or the characters, or the book's perspective on social relations, life and living, etc. (again, please *do not* try to cover all of these!). Graduate students are encouraged to synthesize the ideas and concepts presented in the articles.

Because I am interested in *your* personal reactions, please do *not* spend time trying to anticipate or predict the responses of children to these books, or discussing the ways the books might be used in the classroom. These are critical issues and will be discussed in class. However, they are *not* to be the focus of the journal.

In responding to the assigned chapters and articles, please focus on matters that you find interesting, provocative or annoying, that affirm or conflict with your beliefs, or what you have learned through experience, etc.

Alternative forms of response are welcomed (e.g., double entry journals, poetry, dialogues between characters, letters to or from characters, etc.). Please do not utilize the same response form in every response. In other words, try to vary the form of your response.

In all cases, it is essential that you make specific references to the material you are discussing.

Please begin by recording the complete bibliographic information in APA style for the book or article at the top of the page. For details on APA style, please go to:

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>

Use of the WWW

There are the many wonderful children's literature resources on the WWW. These include a variety of links containing biographical information about authors, essays on critical issues related to the work, lesson plans, etc.

Please include one excellent website for each of our *literary* readings (i.e., not the articles). Please explain why you selected this site (no more than 3 sentences please!).

Completed responses containing my comments should be placed in your journal.

The *Response Journal* is worth 50 points, due on the last day of class (12/1).

III. Author/illustrator Study

This assignment is intended to allow you to explore in depth the work of an author or illustrator from a "parallel cultural" group. Please be careful in making your choice and speak to me about your choice before beginning your work. Select approximately 5 to 7 (for undergraduate students) or 7 to 10 (for graduate students) picture books by your author/illustrator. If your author is a novelist or a poet, I will negotiate the number of books with you on an individual basis.

Your author/illustrator study should include the following sections:

I. Rationale for your selection

Please provide a brief rationale (approximately 1 page, 1.5 spacing) for your decision to select your author/illustrator. For example, what is there about the author/illustrator that led you to choose him or her? What specifically is there about the content, theme, style of writing or illustration, perspective on life and living, characters, etc. that led to your decision?

II. Respond to the books you have selected

Write a personal response to each of the books you selected. These need not be as detailed as those you write for our assigned novels (e.g., *no more than 1/2 page* for each

book). Please include discussion of the book's illustrations, especially if you have selected an illustrator. Be sure to list the bibliographic information before your response.s

III. Synthesis:

Write a synthesis of the work of your author/illustrator in which you analyze the primary characteristics of his/her work. For example, does your author write about the same characters, settings, time periods, etc.? Does your author write about common themes (e.g., the importance of family, resistance to oppression, coming of age)? If you have selected an illustrator, does he or she have a distinctive style? How does your illustrator's art contribute to each book? Please provide specific examples from selected works.

Your synthesis should be *no more than* 3 pages (1.5 spacing).

IV. Web Sources

Locate at least 5 sources on the web that relate directly to the author/illustrator you have selected, or an important aspect of his of her work. Please provide a 2 or 3 sentence (maximum) description of this site that point to its outstanding features.

V. Literary connections

Locate 5 to 7 books or poems that relate directly to specific books written/illustrated by the subject of your study. These can be fiction or non-fiction. For example, if Donald Crews is your author/illustrator, you might connect his book *Freight Train* to *The Little Engine that Could* or Paul Fleischman's *Time Train*. If Mildred Taylor is your author, you could connect any of her books to Jacqueline Woodson's *Show Way*. Please include a short explanation of the rationale for your connection.

These author studies should posted on our class e-Learning site so that we can share the results of each others' labors.

The author/illustrator study is worth **20** points and is due *no later than* 10/13.

IV. Final Course Reflections

In lieu of a final exam, please provide an overview of your reactions to the course. Although this paper will be personal and subjective, I expect you to make *specific references* to readings (both professional and literary), class discussions, key course ideas, etc., which stand out in your mind. I suggest that you begin by carefully re-reading your entire journal. You are encouraged to draw freely (including quotes) from the responses in your journal, as well as from articles, novels, and our class discussions. Among the things you may wish to reflect on are: your own responses to literature and if/how they have changed over the semester; how the course has influenced your thinking about the nature of literature in general and culturally diverse children's literature in particular; the issue of authenticity and writing outside of one's culture; its importance in children's lives (and ours as well); book selection and censorship; implications for classroom practice and for those who write, edit, and publish books for children, etc.

This paper must include a list of references, and should be *approximately* 10 to 12 pages (for undergraduate students) and 12 to 15 pages (for graduate students) (1.5-spaced) NOT COUNTING REFERENCES. The paper is worth 30 points and is due *no later* than 12 PM on 12/9.

Academic Honesty

Our class will strictly adhere to UGA's guidelines for academic honesty. If you are unfamiliar with them, I strongly urge you to read about the policy, especially section 5, Go to: <http://www.uga.edu/honesty/>. It is your responsibility to seek explanations concerning issues of academic honesty, including the proper attribution and quotation of source material from journals and the WWW. Penalties for dishonesty range from deductions and failure on an assignment, failure of the course, to dismissal from the university.

The criteria I utilize in evaluating all assignments are:

- Evidence of thought and reflection
- Attention to specific issues in chapters/articles and details in literary works
- Inclusion of specific details to substantiate assertions and claims about the reading
- Thoroughness
- Completeness
- Promptness (i.e., all assignments are submitted in a timely fashion)
- Careful proofreading

Additional considerations about grading

I anticipate that you all will do excellent work in this class, but I do have views on what "excellent" means.

- *A* means excellent work that shows you have not only met the requirements of the assignment, but also are challenging yourself and displaying reflection, creativity, and initiative in your work.
- *B* means good work that adequately meets the requirements of the assignment in a thoughtful and adequate way.
- If I feel that your work does not meet the level of either an *A* or *B*, I will request a conference so we can discuss ways to improve your performance in the class.

If you are unsure about any assignment or other aspect of the class, I invite you to schedule an appointment with me.

Final Grading Scale

A: 92-100 total points
A-: 90-91 total points
B+: 88-89 total points
B: 80-87 total points
C+: 78-79 total points
C 70-77 total points
D 60-69 total points

F 59 or less

Cell Phones

Please turn them off when you enter class.

DATE	TOPIC	READINGS/ASSIGNMENTS
8/18	Course Introduction	
8/25	Literature & Response I	Galda: Readers, Texts, Contexts Cherland: Gendered Readings Curtis: <i>The Watsons go to Birmingham-1963</i>
9/1	Literature & Response II	Apol: "Literary Theory & Literature in the Teacher Education Classroom" Cai & Sims: Multicultural literature: Towards a clarification of a concept literature in the Teacher Education Classroom" Woodson: <i>Locomotion</i>
9/8	The Politics of Culturally Diverse Children's Literature I	Sims Bishop: Selecting Literature for a Multicultural Curriculum Tsou: Gender issues in young children's literature http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_hb6516/is_3_45/ai_n28566596/ Sims Bishop: Reflections on Authenticity Myers: <i>Monster</i>
9/15	The Politics of Culturally Diverse Children's Literature II	Yolen: Empress of Thieves Woodson: Who Can tell My Story? Paterson: Cultural Politics from Writer's Point of View Ryan: <i>Esperanza Rising</i>
9/22	Culturally Conscious Literature	Harris: African American Children's Literature: The First 100 Years Taylor: Newbery speech Taylor: <i>Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry</i>
9/29	Whose Story?: The Selective Tradition I	Meltzer: Selective Forgetfulness Articles by Yolen, Ingber, West et. al. on <i>Encounter</i> Erdrich: <i>Birchbark House</i>
10/6 Mid-semester	The Selective Tradition II: Literature about Slavery	Short stories by Julius Lester: "Long Journey Home"/"Ben" Hamilton: "The people could fly" Response to self-selected PSB related to slavery (e.g., books about Harriet Tubman, Frederick Douglas, etc. (prepare book talk) <i>Turn in journal</i>
10/13	Literature about	Yamate: Asian American Children's Books

	Asian Americans	Response to a self-selected PSB about Asian Americans (prepare book talk) Kadohata: <i>Kira-Kira</i> Author/illustrator study due
10/20	Literature about Native Americans	Reese: Native Americans in Children's Literature Price: The Indian Wars Response to a self-selected PSB about Native Americans (prepare book talk) Bruchac: <i>Heart of a Chief</i>
10/27	Literature about Latino Americans	Barrera & de Cortes: Mexican American Children's Literature Response to a self-selected PSB (prepare book talk) Soto: <i>Baseball in April</i>
11/3	Gender Issues	Ashpet/Ashputtle Yolen: America's Cinderella Lieberman: "Some Day My Prince Will Come" Parsons: Evolving Ella Levine: <i>Ella Enchanted</i> http://www.nytimes.com/2011/12/30/opinion/does-stripping-gender-from-toys-really-make-sense.html?ref=opinion http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/12/29/the-50-best-moments-for-w_n_1175695.html#s580221&title=Miss Representation
11/10	Gender & Social class	Jones: "Grass houses: Representations and reinventions of social class through children's literature" Haddix: <i>Uprising</i>
11/17	Teaching "dangerous discourses"	Lewis et. al.: Dangerous Discourses Stewig: Self-Censorship of Picture books about Gay and Lesbian Families Howe: <i>The Misfits</i>
11/24	Thanksgiving	
12/1	Children's Literature in the 21 st Century/Class Wrap-up	Hade: Curious George Gets Branded Sequel madness: http://www.thedailybeast.com/newsweek/2011/05/15/summer-movie-special-sequel-madnes.html http://www.nytimes.com/2011/12/29/movies/sequels-ruled-hollywood-in-2011.html?hpw Hade: Reading Multiculturally <i>Journal due</i>
12/9	Final Exam due	5 PM