

**Kent State University**  
**Department of Teaching, Leadership, & Curriculum Studies**

**Survey of Children's Literature CI 67317/77315**  
**Fall 2008**



**Instructor: Dr. W.C. Kasten, Professor**  
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**Secretary: Ms. Karen Brothers, 330-672-2836**

**Office Hours: Monday, 3:00 – 5:00pm; Wednesday, 3:00 – 4:15pm;**  
**other times by appointment only.**

**Course Objective: To understand the world of children's literature for grades K-8 and how to use it effectively and joyously with students.**

**More specifically:**

- **To understand the role of books in a literate world;**
- **To understand the role of literature in culturally responsive teaching and with literature from many cultures;**
- **To understand and promote healthy responses to literature for children.**
- **To understand all major genres in the field, their definitions, uses, how to select high quality titles, and the awards involved.**
- **To understand the role of key literacy components including reading aloud, shared and guided reading, independent reading, literature and discovery circles, and the use of writing with children's literature.**
- **To explore critical literacy and interactive learning.**

**Texts:**

**Required - all**

**Kasten, W.C., Kristo, J.V. , & McClure, A.A. (2005). Living Literature: Using reading and language arts to support literacy. Columbus, OH: Pearson Education.**

**Required ONE of these (Critical literacy literature circles):**

Lewison, M. , Leland, C. & Harste, J. (2008). *Creating critical classrooms: K-8 Reading and Writing with an Edge*. Erlbaum.

This selection is from the leading critical theorists, from Indiana University, who all have extensive educational experience.

McLaughlin, M., & De Voogd, G.L. (2004). *Critical literacy: Enhancing Students Comprehension of Text*. New York: Scholastic.

A nice layout of the issues and practices of critical literacy.

Vasquez, V.M. (2004). *Negotiating critical literacies with young children*. Erlbaum.

Based on the author's teaching of kindergarten.

**Required ONE of these (Historical Fiction Literature Circles):**

Holm, Jennifer L (2006). *Penny from Heaven*. New York: Random House.

Klages, Ellen (2006). *The green glass sea*. New York: Puffin.

Lisle, Janet Taylor (2000). *The art of keeping cool*. New York: Aladdin.

**Required ONE of these (Discovery Circles):**

Campbell, Susan (2005). *Black potatoes*. Houghton Mifflin.

Freedman, Russell (1995). *Immigrant kids*. Puffin. Clarion.

Freedman, Russell (2005). *Children of the Great Depression*.

Murphy, Jim (1998). *A young patriot*. Clarion.

## **Assignments**

In this course there will be both long term assignments and short term assignments. All long term assignments are handed in on webct email. All short term assignments are handed in on the class discussion board on webct.

### **Long Term**

These assignments are traditional kinds of assignments in children's literature classes.

1. **Critical Literacy** – As you can infer from the readings, our course will have a strong focus on a hot topic in literature called critical literacy. The second text you choose will help you understand CL and plan this assignment. You will create a series of three related lessons around one piece of children's literature. This could be a novel, picture book, poem, or nonfiction title. Your lessons can include additional books if needed. You choose the age group(s) for which the lessons are intended.

Lesson plans have the following parts: Objective, materials, detailed procedures, and evaluation. If you have not previously done lesson plans, see instructor for a sample lesson plan.

This assignment is presented to your class near the end of the semester. After evaluation, your plans are posted on the webct discussion board for your classmates.

Evaluation of this lesson is three parts: the lesson, the student responses, the action. You need to have access to some students in order to complete this. If you cannot do that, the high-quality lessons alone will still earn you a strong passing grade of 90%. The books you use here could be part of other assignments in the course.

This assignment is worth 20 points. Due date is on the webct calendar.

2. **English language learner assignment** - This assignment is one high quality lesson for ELL's that includes one or more high quality texts. Age group is your choice. Lesson could exceed one day. A well written lesson plan is again required. If you need a sample lesson plan, ask instructor. One the webct homepage, resources have been made available to you to help you think of ideas for this lesson. You are not required to use these resources. The lesson should include both reading and writing, and can include anything else. Experiences should all be consistent with effective practices. The book you use here could also be part of your text set.

This assignment is worth 10 points. Evaluation is posted on the webct homepage. Due date is on the webct calendar.

3. **Annotated Text Set** – Wide reading is an expectation in any literature class, but here you are invited to target your reading towards something you know you will teach, such as a *theme* (change, environmental awareness, peer relations, Understanding other cultures, Children Around the World, Women's issues; Human Oppression) or a *topic* (World War II, the Civil War, Slavery, Medieval times). What you will present is your annotated text set of at least 10 titles: at least half should be novels, nonfiction should be represented; poetry and traditional literature, and international literature if it fits the text set. Annotations need to be original and summarize the book. You may include a periodical. You can add website resources over and above your number of titles.

All of this is accompanied by a one page explanation of your rationale for this text set and how you plan to use it in teaching. You will present in class on your text set. You will post the assignment on the webct bulletin board following evaluation.

This assignment is worth 25 points. The evaluation of the assignment is posted on the webct homepage. Due date is on the webct calendar.

4. **Literature and Discovery Circles** – These are ongoing in the course, three times. The in and out of class commitment to this time, and the response journal during the experience constitute 15 points of your grade (5 points each). Evaluation includes member's participation, response journal, and especially the presentation. One of the two juvenile titles we read could become part of your text set.

Schedule and due dates are all posted on the webct calendar.

### **Short Term Assignments**

Two kinds of short terms assignments are used in this course.

**Browsing.** A goal of any literature course like this is for students to not only read widely but become aware of many titles and authors. To accomplish this, there are occasions when browsing is required prior to class sessions. You visit a public library with a good children's collection. Applying the criteria for high quality selections in that genre from your Living Literature readings, you bring to class 10 selections you will share with classmates.

On the 7 browsing days (poetry, traditional literature, nonfiction, picture books, contemporary fiction, historical fiction, and fantasy/science fiction), you arrive at class and automatically set up your books for classmates to see. You will be asked about your books. The expectation is that you have applied criteria, read the picture books, some of the poetry selections if it's an anthology, some of the stories if it's a traditional literature anthology, and sampled the novels having read some to get a sense of the writer's style. You should be aware of the award in the genre and know if your books won any of those.

Of course the beauty here is that while browsing, you are finding what you need for your text set and other assignments!

Browsing is worth 10 points in the course. Evaluation criteria are on the webct homepage.

**Integrated Learning.** 10 integrated learning experiences are part of the course. Each week you have one, you will find the component on the webct homepage. Directions are included. You are welcome to view them all in advance of that week. All these lesson are submitted prior to class each week on the class bulletin board. Your classmates a able to view and save your ideas in many cases.

Integrated learning assignments are worth 2 points each for a total of 20 points in the course. Expectations are explained in each component.

**The Notebook.**

No, not the movie or the book by Sparks. The notebook is not an assignment, but rather an invitation. Since many assignments that may result in creative ideas could be of interest to others, you are invited to download the postings and archive them for yourself, with electronically or otherwise.

**Class Reflections.**

Many things are being tried out in this course for possible use in the second edition of your text. Your input is sought, and valued. The directions for this at the end of the course are on the webct homepage.

**Students who are not officially registered for a course by published University deadlines are not eligible to attend class sessions or to receive credit or a grade for the course.**

**Students with disabilities are required to present notification of their needs the first class session; the student disabilities office on campus furnishes students with the needed letter to instructors detailing any accommodations needed.**

**Notice: Many students in our program have room in their prospectus to take an individual investigation. Students who have completed this course are invited to do an independent study/individual investigation in order to prepare a manuscript based on their AR study for submission to a journal. Credit for this I.I. is based on the manuscript and submission, not contingent upon its acceptance. See course instructor for details either during or after the course is completed.**



