

Hofstra University  
School of Education , Health and Human Services  
Department of Teaching, Literacy and Leadership

**LYST 220 Section A: Literature in the Lives of Young Children (3sh)**

Fall 2011

Thursdays 6:30pm – 8:20pm

Hagedorn Hall Room 180

**Professor Joan Zaleski, Ph.D.**

267 Hagedorn Hall

[joan.zaleski@hofstra.edu](mailto:joan.zaleski@hofstra.edu)

Office Hours: Tuesdays 3:30pm – 5:30pm and Wednesdays 2:30pm – 3:30pm.

(516) 463-5372 (office/voice mail)

(516) 463-6196 (department fax)

Dept. Office: 128 Hagedorn, (516) 463-5098

Mailroom: 178 Hagedorn



**Course Description:**

This course focuses on the “grand conversations” that takes place around text, specifically how talking about what we read through conversation with self and with others helps create deeper meaning and insights, fosters more natural and aesthetic response, and helps create more literate and democratic classroom communities. In this course we will consider issues, strategies, structures, and frameworks related to using literature in the classroom that encourage such conversations, and build dialogue through reading aloud, independent reading, and literature circles.

**Objectives** for this course include:

- Developing an understanding of reader response theory through critically and aesthetically reading from a wide variety of children’s literature;
- Participating in intensive reading with others in literature circles, or discussion groups;

- Developing strategies for engaging readers in meaningful response;
- Developing an appreciation for the work of authors and illustrators of children's books;
- Developing a critical awareness for selecting books and materials for young children that encourage personal response and reflect racial, ethnic, class, and gender diversity in the classroom

**Outcomes** for this course include:

- Students will be able to differentiate reading aesthetically and efferently.
- Students will be able to critique their own experiences as a reader and determine what these experiences might mean for their own students.
- Students will be able to identify a wide variety of authors, poets, and illustrators to share with their students.
- Students will be able to employ a wide variety of response strategies to the texts they read.
- Students will be able to critically select books for reading aloud and for literature discussions.
- Students will be able to assess the qualities of classroom and group literature discussions.

**Shared Texts:**

These two books can be purchased at the campus bookstore:

1. The Wonder of It All: When Literature and Literacy Intersect. By Nancy J. Johnson & Cyndi Giorgis. Heinemann. (2007).
2. Mini-Lessons for Literature Circles. By Harvey Daniels and Nancy Steineke. Heinemann. (2004). ISBN: 0-325-00702-0

Further articles will be assigned and distributed in class.

The children's picture books and novels we will read this semester will be available in any bookstore, real or on-line, and in your school or public library.

**Course assignments and requirements:**

1. **"ENTRANCE" POEM:** Each week, part of our beginning ritual will be sharing a favorite/meaningful poem with the class. There is no schedule for this sharing. It is expected that you will also respond to poems that are shared with comments and connections of your own. Due throughout the semester. Your engagement in this participation and discussion counts toward your final grade.
2. **LITERATURE CIRCLES/DISCUSSION GROUPS.** For each of these literature circle experiences, you will 1) write a **"literary letter"** that demonstrates your thinking, your questions, your connections about your reading and 2) share with me in your letter what forms of response you feel might be appropriate for students who read each of these books, what question you might use in encouraging discussion following a read aloud, or what other book you might pair with this book in a text set.

- The first book discussion will begin with a class reading of the book, *Flying Solo*, by Ralph Fletcher. Available in paperback or in Kindle edition from Amazon or the public library. September 22, 27. Literary letter due on September 27.
- A second book discussion will focus on books to read aloud.
  1. *The Giver*. By Lois Lowry. Delacorte. 2006.
  2. *Where the Mountain Meets the Moon*. By Grace Lin. Little Brown. 2011.
  3. *The Doll People*. By Ann M. Martin & Laura Godwin. Hyperion. 2000.
  4. *Ella Enchanted*. By Gail Carson Levine. Trophy. 1997.

A symbolic representation of your group's reading experience will be shared in class on November 3 . October 13, October 20. Literary letter due on November 3.

- A third literature circle will take place around the reading of a book selected from the World of Words website [www.wowlit.org](http://www.wowlit.org) Details will be discussed in class. November 10, December 1. Instead of a literary letter, you will post your comments on the World of Words website by December 10 to be shared in class that night.
3. **GUIDED RESPONSE TO NOTABLE BOOKS IN THE LANGUAGE ARTS.** You will prepare a plan for responding to three different children's books from the NCTE list of Notable Books in the Language Arts: one for pre-school, one for K-2, and one for 3-5. This will be submitted as a paper due on. An in-class presentation of one book will be due in class on October 27.
  4. **FINAL PROJECT: CREATING A PERSONAL TEXT SET OF CHILDREN'S BOOKS:** Beginning the first week of the semester, you will begin gathering together children's books that reflect who you were/are/want to be. A full presentation of the books that come from your bookshelf of personal connections will take place on the last night of class with both a visual and a brief paper describing the choices you made. Due: December 15

### Tentative Schedule

Date	Reading Assignment
9.8	<b><i>Introductions</i></b> Read for 9.15: (Handout) <i>Acid Test of Literature</i> by Louise Rosenblatt.  Begin your personal text set for next week by bringing in one book or item that is/will be on your bookshelf.
9.15	<b><i>Why Children's Literature?</i></b> Read for 9.22: Ch. 1 in <i>The Wonder of It All</i> , The Presence of Literature in Literacy Learning AND Ch. 2 in <i>The Wonder of It All</i> , The Presence of Literature to Build Community.

9.22	<p><b>Literature in a Balanced Reading Program</b> Read for 9.27: (Hand-out) Kathy Short - <i>The Search for Balance in a Literature-Rich Program</i> AND Ch. 4 in <i>The Wonder of It All, The Presence of Literature to Create Readers.</i></p> <p>Literature Circles: <i>Flying Solo</i></p>
9.27 (Tuesday)	<p><b>Literature in a Balanced Reading Program</b> Read for 10.6: (Handout) Short, Kauffman, and Kahn – “<i>I Just Need to Draw</i>”: <i>Responding to Literature Across Multiple Sign Systems</i></p> <p>Literature Circles: <i>Flying Solo</i></p>
10.6	<p><b>Responding to Literature</b> Read for 10.13: Ch. 3 in <i>The Wonder of It All, The Presence of Literature to Nurture Response.</i></p> <p>Literary letters due today. Select a chapter book to read in literature circles.</p>
10.13	<p><b>Guiding Response to Literature</b> Read for 10.20: (Hand-out) Jeane Copenhaver – <i>Running Out of Time: Rushed Read-Alouds in a Primary Classroom.</i></p> <p>Literature Circles</p>
10.20	<p><b>Reading Aloud</b> Read for 11.3: Ch. 5 in <i>The Wonder of It All, The Presence of Literature to Inspire Writing.</i></p> <p>Literature Circles</p>
10.27	<p><b>Mid-term: Guided Reading Responses</b></p>
11.3	<p><b>Reading As a Writer</b> Read for 11.10: Ch. 7 in <i>The Wonder of It All, The Presence of Literature to Cultivate Wonder</i></p> <p>Symbolic representations of your chapter book shared in class and your literary letter due today.</p>
11.10	<p><b>Nurturing the Imagination</b> Read for 12.1: Ch. 6 in <i>The Wonder of It All, The Presence of Literature to Promote Inquiry</i></p> <p>Select a book to read from the WOW website for sharing on 12.10</p>
11.17	<p><b>NO CLASS – NCTE CONFERENCE</b></p>

11.24	<b>NO CLASS – HAPPY THANKSGIVING</b>
12.1	<b><i>Reading Non-Fiction</i></b> Read for 12.8: Ch. 1 in <i>Mini-Lessons for Literature Circles</i> , Joining the Book Club, AND read through and select a mini-lesson that speaks to working with elementary students. We will discuss the importance of these mini-lessons and what we've learned about literature circles in class next week.  Non-fiction Literature Circles
12.8	<b><i>Reflecting on Literature Circles And Sharing Global Literature</i></b>
12.15	<b>Final: Personal Text Sets</b>

**Grades:** Being a fully engaged reader and an active participant in “grand conversations” will be evidence of your growth as a learner. A final grade of **A** for this course will be based upon your active engagement in class discussions and group work, the positive contributions you make toward building classroom community, along with your completion of all assignments when they are due. Final pieces of writing should be carefully checked for clarity, fluency, and correctness before being submitted. During this semester, you will be allowed two excused absences for sickness or school-related activities. Any absences beyond that will result in lowering your grade by one point for each additional absence, or may require you to drop the course. Lack of class participation, multiple absences, chronic lateness, late or incomplete assignments, and evidence of not doing the readings will result in a final grade of **B**, or less.

**For further reading on using literature in the classroom:**

Chambers, Aiden. (1996). The Reading Environment: How Adults Help Children Enjoy Books. Stenhouse.

Fox, D.L. and Short, K.G. (eds.)(2003). Stories Matter: The Complexity of Cultural Authenticity in Children's Literature. National Council of Teachers of English.

Daniels, H. (2004) Literature Circles: Voice and Choice in Book Clubs and Reading Groups.(Second Edition). Stenhouse.

Moss, J. F. (2002). Literary Discussion in the Elementary School. National Council of Teachers of English.

Peterson, R. & Eeds, M. (2007). Grand Conversations: Literature Groups in

Action.(Updated Edition). Scholastic Teaching Resources.  
Short, Kathy; Harste, Jerome; Burke, Carolyn. (1996). Creating Classrooms for Authors and Inquirers. Second Edition. Heinemann.

**Journals providing good sources of reviews and articles about children's literature:**

- The Horn Book
- Booklinks
- Language Arts (NCTE journal)
- The Reading Teacher (IRA journal)

**Recommended websites with good information about promoting children's books, authors, and awards:**

[www.cbcbooks.org](http://www.cbcbooks.org)

The website for The Children's Book Council in NYC. Links to posters, bookmarks, and author/illustrator websites.

[www.ala.org](http://www.ala.org)

The website for the American Library Association. Links to Caldecott and Newbery Awards, as well as other awards given by the ALA. Resources for teachers on censorship and intellectual freedom issues.

[www.ncte.org](http://www.ncte.org)

The website for the National Council of Teachers of English. Includes many resources for classroom teachers, such as lesson plans, strategies, ideas for using literature in the classroom. Also an important organization for supporting intellectual freedom and addressing censorship issues.

[www.p12.nysed.gov/ciai/common\\_core\\_standards/](http://www.p12.nysed.gov/ciai/common_core_standards/)

An important website to review the grade-by-grade NYS Common Core Learning Standards of English Language Arts and Literacy.

[www.wowlit.org](http://www.wowlit.org)

The World of Words website, which provides resources for teachers interested in finding and using culturally authentic international children's and young adult literature.

All students are expected to abide by the University's Policy on Academic Honesty, which can be found in the Hofstra University Bulletin. Procedures for Handling Violations of Academic Honesty by students at Hofstra University are detailed in Faculty Policy Series #11(rev. 2004) for undergraduates and Faculty Policy Series #11G (rev. 2004) for graduate students.

If you have any documented disability-related concerns that may have an impact upon your performance in this course, please meet with me within the first two weeks of the current semester, so that we can work out the appropriate accommodations.

Accommodations are provided on an individualized, as-needed basis after the needs, circumstances and documentation have been evaluated by Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD). SSD is located in 212 Memorial Hall and can be reached at 516-463-7075 or [ssd@hofstra.edu](mailto:ssd@hofstra.edu).

### Literary Letters

Literary Letters are another form of responding to literature. A literary letter offers readers opportunities for meaning making through a written conversation with another reader. This conversation can be between a teacher and a student or between students. The letters are informal but reflective in tone, often tentative in nature, and usually consisting of the following:

- personal connections to own life experiences
- comparisons to other books by the same author
- wonderings about aspects of the story, why something happened, trying to understand a character's actions or statements
- inferences - filling in gaps of the story that are left unsaid by the author
- predictions - what does the reader see happening next in this story or after the story ends
- just the normal "book gossip" that real readers use when talking about books

The teacher's role in responding to literary letters is to:

- support emerging understandings of readings, to be accepting of the reader's meaning making, not to judge whether the reader "got" the right meaning, but to listen for how the reader supports his/her interpretation. Ex: "I had not thought of it that way before, but I can see how you might feel that way."
- look for evidence of personal connections, etc, mentioned above and to respond to those statements with ones of your own that may either confirm or extend the reader's understandings. Ex: "I also like historical fiction. I often feel like I'm living history through the character's eyes."
- suggest other books the reader may enjoy. Ex: "You might want to talk to Brian. He's reading another book by Avi that you might enjoy. I think you'd like the combination of adventure story and historical fiction that Avi creates."