

Introduction to British and American Children's Literature

Our first encounters with literature take place in childhood, a time filled with stories that range from songs, fairy tales, and bedtime stories to novels of fantasy, science fiction, and adventure. As children, the stories we hear become the life around us and help us learn our cultural and social norms. This influence is true of any language and culture but is especially true of English because it unites the wide-ranging English-speaking countries throughout the world.

Our class will explore these influences and discuss how they have shaped modern English language and culture. By reading several examples of Children's Literature, students will expand understanding of key vocabulary, grammar, and cultural references. Students will be asked to participate in online discussions and to share their own reading experiences with the rest of the class.

By the end of this course, students will have broadened their understanding of Children's Literature and its influence on the English culture.

Syllabus

Week	Topic	Sample Texts
Week 1	Introduction to Children's Literature	
Week 2	Oral Traditions	Hansel & Gretel, Little Red Riding Hood, Cinderella
Week 3	Oral Traditions	Hansel & Gretel, Little Red Riding Hood, Cinderella
Week 4	Fairy Tales and Folk Tales	The Little Mermaid, The Three Billy Goats Gruff, The Three Little Pigs
Week 5	Fairy Tales and Folk Tales	The Little Mermaid, The Three Billy Goats Gruff, The Three Little Pigs
Week 6	Fairy Tales and Folk Tales	The Little Mermaid, The Three Billy Goats Gruff, The Three Little Pigs
Week 7	Review	
Week 8	Midterm Exam	Online
Week 9	First Books for Children	ABC Books, Goodnight Moon, Hop on Pop, Counting Books, Mother Goose
Week 10	Picture Books	The Very hungry Caterpillar, Where the Wild Things Are, Corduroy
Week 11	Picture Books	The Very hungry Caterpillar, Where the Wild Things Are, Corduroy
Week 12	Early Readers	Chester, The Cat in the Hat, Sylvester, Frog and Toad
Week 13	Early Readers	Chester, The Cat in the Hat, Sylvester, Frog and Toad
Week 14	Review	
Week 15	Project Presentations/ Final Exam	Online
Week 16	Online support and consultations	

Course Requirements

Class Texts:

Textbook – Passages from The Norton Anthology of Children's Literature: The Traditions in English by Jack Zipes (2005) **Available online through Blackboard**

Class Readings – Varied and available on Blackboard for reading or downloading

Children's Books – Some texts will be available through the class digitally but others will need to be borrowed, purchased, or downloaded by students

Computer:

Regular and reliable access to the Blackboard website

Language Ability:

Students need to be able to read and understand English at an intermediate level and be able to discuss concepts and ideas in English

Grading

Participation:

40%

Online – Answer two (2) discussion questions (20%) each week and contribute at least four (4) substantive responses to other students' answers (20%)

Midterm Exam:

30%

Online exam covering the language, vocabulary, and analyzing methods discussed in class

Final Exam:

30%

Online exam covering the language, vocabulary, and analyzing methods discussed in class. It is cumulative and will cover the whole semester

Final Thoughts

This class is designed to familiarize students with the history of Children's Literature and to help fill in some of the cultural gaps necessary for true English understanding and usage. Children's Literature over the years has sparked movements, creativity, and culture but most importantly, Children's Literature is fun. I will work hard to capture the excitement, wonder, and awe that make the stories so captivating. I really look forward to hearing your thoughts and ideas on stories that have helped shaped not only my life but English.