

# Children's Literature

Spring 2020  
Marquette University  
Prof. Wadsworth

ENGLISH 4715-101  
Tuesday–Thursday  
11:00-12:15  
3 cr.hrs.

*“Learning how to read is a lifetime, and life-defining, experience.”*  
--Seth Lerer, *Children's Literature*

*“I can explain all the poems that were invented—and a good many that haven't been invented just yet.”*

-Humpty Dumpty, in Lewis Carroll, *Through the Looking Glass*

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# CHILDREN'S LITERATURE



This course fulfills the humanities requirement for the **Cognition, Memory and Intelligence** theme in the **Discovery Tier** of the Marquette Core Curriculum. It also fulfills the **Writing Intensive** requirement for students who entered Marquette in summer 2018 or later.

## Course Description

ENGL 4715. Children's Literature. 3 cr. hrs.

How does writing for children negotiate the boundaries between instruction and entertainment? How does it engage with controversial social issues? How is it situated in the broader currents of British and American cultural history? How is it gendered and classed? Students survey an array of texts written for children but compelling for adult readers too. Students are introduced to a range of critical approaches that reveal complexity, sophistication and surprises in these seemingly "simple" texts. Readings may include fairy tales, "Alice in Wonderland," "Little Women," "The Adventures of Tom Sawyer," "Treasure Island," "Peter Pan", "The Secret Garden," "The Wind in the Willows," "Charlotte's Web," and "Harry Potter," along with other classic as well as recent contributions. Prereq: [ENGL 1001](#) or [HOPR 1955H](#).

## Overview

"I don't know whether you have ever seen a map of a person's mind." This quotation from *Peter Pan* by James M. Barrie hints at some of the fundamental questions underlying all children's literature: How do children think? What do they remember? How do they learn? What do they understand? What engages and amuses them? This course introduces students to the study of children's literature from the seventeenth century to the present through a variety of critical and theoretical approaches that have aided scholars in interpreting how the language of children's literature functions with respect to memory and other cognitive processes that connect the adult writer to the child reader.

Pairing classic and contemporary works of fiction with literary-historical and critical material, readings for the course will be guided by the following questions while maintaining a focus on the role of memory, cognition, and the adult perception of the child's mind: How does children's literature reflect and respond to changing notions of children and of childhood? How does it negotiate the divide between the desire to instruct and entertain juvenile readers? How do texts written for children respond to controversial social issues? How does the relationship between words and images operate in illustrated texts? How do the texts construct gender, race, ethnicity, and class? How does children's literature respond to children as marginalized "others"? How does writing for children address the power differentials upon which this marginalization rests? How can children's literature function as both a "window" and a "mirror" for child readers?

## Required Texts

### Primary Texts:

- Louisa May Alcott, *Little Women* (Penguin Classics)
- Joseph Bruchac (Speak)
- Varian Johnson, *The Parker Inheritance* (Arthur A. Levine Books)
- E. L. Konigsburg, *From the Mixed-Up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler* (Atheneum Books)
- Celia C. Pérez, *Strange Birds: A Field Guide to Ruffling Feathers* (Puffin Books)
- Ellen Raskin, *The Westing Game* (Puffin Modern Classics)
- Robert Louis Stevenson, *Treasure Island* (Signet Classic)

### Secondary Texts:

- Hintz, Carrie and Eric L. Tribunella, *Reading Children's Literature: A Critical Introduction*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition (Broadview Press).
- Lissa Paul and Philip Nell, [\*Keywords for Children's Literature\*](#) (New York University Press). Raynor e-Book. Selected entries.

All books are available through BookMarq. Because we will use these books collectively in class, it is crucial that you bring a hard copy of the assigned edition to class each day. Please do not use e-readers or online editions, as digital texts can make it very difficult to keep up with class discussion.

## Learning Objectives

Upon completing this course, students should be able to:

- Explain how children's literature developed within broader philosophical, literary, and social contexts.
- Analyze assumptions and theories about childhood, cognition, memory, intelligence, and human development that underlie key works of children's literature.
- Demonstrate skills in reading and interpreting multiple dimensions of literary texts, including the verbal, the pictorial, and the physical, or material.
- Evaluate a range of current critical issues in the study of children's literature, including attention to gender, race, class, and disability.
- Write critically and knowledgeably about the style and content of literary texts aimed at young readers.
- Use relevant print and digital resources to conduct primary and secondary research in the field of children's literature.

In addition, the course meets the following Core Learning Outcomes:

### **LEADERS IN DISCOVERY**

Marquette students will advance understanding of the world by identifying significant questions and then searching for answers based on a systematic process of discovery that is rooted in intellectual inquiry and the Jesuit liberal arts tradition.

### **GLOBAL PROBLEM SOLVERS**

Marquette students will be well practiced in cooperative and cross-disciplinary problem-solving skills and they will be able to present innovative solutions that draw from theological, philosophical, qualitative and quantitative perspectives to address the increasingly blurred lines between local and global challenges.

## Course Requirements

My expectation is that you will make your best effort to complete or fulfill the following requirements:

- ✓ Conscientious attendance
- ✓ Active listening
- ✓ All assigned readings and related quizzes and exit tickets
- ✓ Engaged participation in synchronous class discussions and online discussion forums
- ✓ Four short writing assignments
- ✓ Two longer papers with brief presentations

**Note:** In order to receive credit for the course, all assessed course requirements must be completed.

## Grading Structure

<b>Engagement</b>		20%
Quizzes and Exit Tickets	10%	
Participation in Discussion Forum	10%	
<b>Short Writing Assignments</b>		40%
<input type="checkbox"/> Literacy Narrative	10%	
<input type="checkbox"/> Haggerty Museum Assignment	10%	
<input type="checkbox"/> Alphabet Book Analysis	10%	
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Strange Birds</i> Blog Post	10%	
<b>Major Papers</b>		40%
“Reading Critically” Paper	20%	
<input type="checkbox"/> Research Bibliography		
<input type="checkbox"/> Outline and Draft		
<input type="checkbox"/> Discussion Leading		
<input type="checkbox"/> Final revision		
“Comparative Analysis” Paper	20%	
<input type="checkbox"/> Works Cited		
<input type="checkbox"/> Outline and Draft		
<input type="checkbox"/> Final revision		
<hr/> <hr/>		
Total		100%

## Attendance

Attendance is mandatory and will be taken every day. Attendance will be documented in D2L; students should monitor their attendance records in D2L on an ongoing basis. **Students are allowed a total of four absences in this course (excused or unexcused).** Any student exceeding four absences may be Withdrawn for Excessive Absences (WA) prior to the semester calendar deadline for the spring term. If a student remaining in the course exceeds the number of allowable absences, the final overall course grade will be lowered ½ a letter grade (A to A-, etc.) per absence for each additional absence above the allowable number (four). *[Additional Covid-related policies to come.]*

## Assignments

Completed assignments should be uploaded to the designated D2L dropbox before the class meeting in which they are due unless otherwise indicated.

### 1. D2L Activities

#### 1.A. Quizzes

Reading quizzes will be given from time to time as a way of ensuring that reading assignments are completed in a timely fashion. The questions, formulated on the expectation that you have done the reading indicated on the syllabus for each class meeting, require only short responses. Quizzes will be announced at least one class meeting in advance.

#### 1.B. Exit Tickets

In many instances, class sessions will end with a short exercise on D2L. These “exit tickets” are similar are usually interactive web-based activities that end with a brief write-up. They are an important part of the Participation & Engagement component of your grade.

#### 1.C. Discussion Forums

Each class meeting begins or ends with an activity in the Discussions area of D2L. Instructions will be provided in that forum, which is linked to the weekly Content area of D2L. Your responses in the Discussion Forums are an important part of the Participation & Engagement component of your grade.

### 2. Short Assignments

#### 2.A. Literacy Narrative (750 words)

*Briefly:* What role did books and reading play in your childhood years? What are your earliest memories of stories and / or storytelling? How did you learn to read? What were your favorite books and / or stories when you were younger? How did your reading / listening / viewing /playing preferences change over the course of your childhood? What connections were you aware of between children’s books and stories in other media, such as TV, movies, games, and even amusement parks? Why does children’s literature matter to you? ***These questions are designed to be prompts for reflecting on your memories of childhood reading and the various ways children’s literature (broadly defined) engaged and influenced you. You do not need to answer every question!***

#### 2.B. Haggerty Museum Assignment (500 words)

After viewing the selections at the Haggerty Museum, write a concise but detailed description of the piece followed by an analysis of its representation of child(ren)/childhood, using the “Historical Models of Childhood” section in *Reading Children’s Literature* as a point of reference. Which model best describes the child depicted in your selected work of art? Why? In what ways does the artist’s depiction depart from the textbook models? In what ways do aesthetic and affective or emotional responses contribute to your overall experience of the work art (including your understanding, interpretation, and / or enjoyment of it).

## 2.C. Alphabet Book Analysis (1000 words)

Select one of the designated alphabet books from the Baldwin Collection of Historical Children’s Books and write a brief analysis of what the book—as a *didactic* text—teaches children in addition to the ABC’s. In what ways, if any, does the book bear traces of the ideologies prevalent in the time and place in which it was written? In what ways is the text *hegemonic*? In what ways is it *subversive*? Be sure to consider the illustrations as well as the text and take into account the *subtext* as well as the overt messages communicated by the book.

## 2.D. Blog Post (500 words)

Modeled on the chapter-a-week blog [Little Women at 150](#), this short but polished writing assignment will be a 500-word blog post highlighting one or more facets of the Discovery Tier theme *Cognition, Memory, and Intelligence* in relation to Celia Pérez’s novel *Strange Birds: A Field Guide to Ruffling Feathers*. Each student will be given one chapter on which to write an entry and provide a graphic (original or public domain) to accompany the entry.

## 3. MAJOR PAPERS

Two papers, of 1500-2000 words each, are required in this course: “Reading Critically” and “Comparative Analysis” Each one will include several milestones, with work that is handed in. Separate handouts detailing the topics of each paper and a step-by-step timeline for completion will be distributed prior to the first milestone for each paper.

3.1. Bibliography / Works Cited

3.2. Outline and Rough Draft

3.3. In-Class Oral Component (Discussion leader / prompter)

3.3. Final Paper

All writing assignments must conform to the guidelines of the *MLA Style Manual* (or the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*). This includes the general format of the document (typed, double-spaced, one-inch margins, etc.), the register of language (formal, academic), as well as the manner in which you acknowledge the source of quotations and other material that warrants attribution (parenthetical documentation).

### ***Commitment to Inclusion and Equity***

I am committed to creating a learning environment that supports a diversity of thoughts, perspectives, and experiences, and honors your identities (including race, gender, class, sexuality, religion, ability, etc.). I also understand that the current crisis of COVID, economic disparity, and health concerns could impact the conditions necessary for you to succeed. My commitment is to be an advocate and resource for you and to help you meet the learning objectives of this course. I do this to demonstrate my commitment to you and to the mission of Marquette to be people for and with others and to care for each individual as a whole person (*Cura Personalis*). If you feel your performance in the class is being impacted by your experiences outside of class, please don't hesitate to come and talk with me.

### **Communication**

Marquette University’s policy on email is as follows: “E-mail is an appropriate and preferred method for official communication by Marquette with students unless otherwise prohibited by law. The university has the right to send official communication to students by e-mail with the assumption that students will receive, read and, if necessary, act in a timely manner based upon these e-mails.”

If I need to contact you outside of class, I will use your Marquette email address, and expect that you will read and respond to this communication in a timely manner. Additionally, please recognize standard email etiquette. Initial emails to me should contain (minimally) a subject, greeting and closing.

I will attempt to respond to students within 24 hours. If you have not received a reply from me within 24 hours, please resend the email.

Please review [Netiquette at Marquette](#) prior to completing any course work.

Since this is a fully online course, your communications with me and other students are critical to your learning experience. Please be respectful to others as you communicate.

In addition to the Netiquette at Marquette policy, I would like to ask you to be cautious of dominating any discussion, keep an open mind and be sure to proofread and edit prior to publishing anything to D2L.

## Academic Integrity

In the spring of 2006 the university approved an Academic Honesty Policy that is now applicable to all courses (<https://bulletin.marquette.edu/undergrad/academicregulations/#academichonestypolicy>). The Bulletin serves, in effect, as the University's contract with its students. Accordingly, we are obligated to adhere to the protocol described in this policy. Acts of academic dishonesty may include, but are not limited, to the following:

- Copying material from a web page and submitting it as one's own work.
- Quoting extensively from a document without making proper references to the source.
- Plagiarizing (submitting the work of another as one's own ideas) or falsifying materials or information used in the completion of any assignment, which is graded or evaluated as the student's individual effort.
- Intentionally interfering with any person's scholastic work (e.g., by damaging or stealing papers, computer files .or library materials).
- Submitting the same work for more than one course without the consent of the instructors of each course in which the work is submitted.
- Using another student's device to submit work that is yours on their behalf or having another student submit work of theirs under your name.

To ensure compliance with the academic integrity policy of Marquette University, I reserve the right to verify the originality of all written work using plagiarism detection tools such as TurnItIn.

## Additional Policies

**EXTENSIONS:** An extension of 24 hours may be requested on any paper. All such requests must be made 48 hours in advance of the deadline on the Calendar of Readings.

**LATE WORK:** If you anticipate difficulty completing an assignment by the published due date, please contact me to discuss the situation as soon as you are aware of a potential conflict or obstacle.

**TECHNOLOGICAL MISHAPS:** For your own security, always back up your work as you write, and always keep a spare copy of the paper you hand in.

**EMAIL:** I will attempt to respond to email received Monday-Friday within 48 hours. Information about grades will not be released via e-mail.

**CHANGES TO SYLLABUS:** Portions of this syllabus are subject to change. Any alterations will be announced in class and posted to D2L.

## Student Resources

- [STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES AND OFFICES](#)
- [BECOMING A SUCCESSFUL ONLINE STUDENT](#)

➤ OFFICE OF DISABILITY SERVICES

Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact the Office of Disability Services to discuss accommodations. The Office of Disability Services is located in the 707 Building (on 11<sup>th</sup> and Wisconsin), Room 503. Please note that alternate testing arrangements must be made well in advance.

➤ OTT MEMORIAL WRITING CENTER

The Ott Memorial Writing is located in Raynor Library with additional satellite locations around campus. Appointments can be booked online. For further information, see [www.marquette.edu/writing-center](http://www.marquette.edu/writing-center).

## Schedule of Readings and Assignments

Date	Primary Texts	Read / Discuss	Notes
Jan. 26	A Round of Introductions and Picture Books		Read syllabus and familiarize yourself with course D2L site. Review “Ideology” entry in <a href="#">Keywords for Children’s Literature</a> (Raynor e-book)
Jan. 28	Children’s Poetry	“Introduction to Students” and Ch. 3 in <i>Reading Children’s Literature</i>	
Feb. 2	Fairy Tales	Perrault and Grimm, “Little Red Riding Hood”; <i>Reading Children’s Literature</i> , Ch. 4-5 through p. 205	Links to fairy tales are on D2L.
Feb. 4	Alcott, <i>Little Women</i>	Ch. 1-4; <i>Reading Children’s Literature</i> , Ch. 1	Literacy Narrative Due to D2L Dropbox.
Feb. 9	<i>Breathe</i>	<i>Breathe</i>	<i>Breathe</i>
Feb. 11	Alcott, <i>Little Women</i>	Ch. 5-9; <i>Reading Children’s Literature</i> , Ch. 2, pp. 81-94	
Feb. 16	Alcott, <i>Little Women</i>	Ch. 10-13; <i>Reading Children’s Literature</i> , Ch. 2, pp. 94-113	Haggerty Assignment Due to D2L Dropbox
Feb. 18	Alcott, <i>Little Women</i>	Ch. 14-18; <i>Reading Children’s Literature</i> , Ch. 6, pp. 233-42	
Feb. 23	Alcott, <i>Little Women</i>	Ch. 19-23; <i>Reading Children’s Literature</i> , Ch. 11, pp. 443-41 and 446-69	Alphabet Book Analysis Due to D2L Dropbox
Feb. 25	Stevenson, <i>Treasure Island</i>	Part I; <i>Reading Children’s Literature</i> , Ch. 6, pp. 242-69	
March 2	Stevenson, <i>Treasure Island</i>	Part II; <i>Reading Children’s Literature</i> , Ch. 11, pp. 442-45	
March 4	Stevenson, <i>Treasure Island</i>	Part III	Research Workshop



March 9	Stevenson, <i>Treasure Island</i>	Part IV	<b>Bibliography</b> for “Reading Critically” Paper <b>Due</b> to D2L Dropbox
March 11	Stevenson, <i>Treasure Island</i>	Part V	<b>Outline</b> of “Reading Critically” Paper <b>Due</b> .
March 16	Stevenson, <i>Treasure Island</i>	Part VI; <i>Reading Children’s Literature</i> , Ch. 13	
March 18	Bruchac, <i>Code Talker</i>	Ch. 1-11; <i>Reading Children’s Literature</i> , Ch. 7	<b>Rough Draft</b> of “Reading Critically” Paper <b>Due</b> . <b>In-Class Peer-Review Workshop</b>
March 23	Bruchac, <i>Code Talker</i>	Ch. 12-19; <i>Reading Children’s Literature</i> , Ch. 8	
March 25	Bruchac, <i>Code Talker</i>	Ch. 20-29	<u>“Reading Critically” Final (Revised) PAPER DUE</u>
March 30	Konigsburg, <i>From the Mixed-Up Files . . .</i>	Ch. 1-5; <i>Reading Children’s Literature</i> , Ch. 9	
April 1	Konigsburg, <i>From the Mixed-Up Files . . .</i>	Ch. 6-10	
April 6	Raskin, <i>The Westing Game</i>	Ch. 1-10	
April 8	Raskin, <i>The Westing Game</i>	Ch. 11-20; <i>Reading Children’s Literature</i> , Ch. 13	
April 13	Raskin, <i>The Westing Game</i>	Ch. 21-30	
April 15	Johnson, <i>The Parker Inheritance</i>	Ch. 1-8	
April 20	<i>Breathe</i>	<i>Breathe</i>	<i>Breathe</i>
April 22	Johnson, <i>The Parker Inheritance</i>	Ch. 9-16	
April 27	Johnson, <i>The Parker Inheritance</i>	Ch. 17-24; Ch. 12	<u>“Comparative Analysis” Draft Due</u>
April 29	Pérez, <i>Strange Birds</i>	Ch. 1-13	<u>“Comparative Analysis” Final PAPER DUE</u>
May 4	Pérez, <i>Strange Birds</i>	Ch. 14-26	Blog Posts <b>Due</b> (through Ch. 26)
May 6	Pérez, <i>Strange Birds</i>	Ch. 27-40 + appendices	Blog Posts <b>Due</b> (through Ch. 40)



## Class Covenant

To ensure that class-time is productive, to aid in your own success in the course, and to contribute to the success of the course as a whole, students will abide by the following terms.

1. Based on the units for this course, you should spend a minimum of 3 hours outside of class-time working on reading and other assignments for each 75-minute class meeting. This means that most of the time you put into the class will be spent reading, writing, and thinking about the material on your own. Taking this class means you are committed to spending at least 5 hours per week outside of class-time on coursework for this class. Reading for this class involves reading not only for plot (what happens in a work of fiction) but for technique or craft, historical and cultural contexts, connections to other texts and topics discussed in class, and relevance to our own historical and cultural moment.
2. The learning that takes place in the hour and a quarter we spend together twice each week depends not only on your preparation outside of class but on your being prepared to listen, engage, and share your ideas in class. This means that you must bring the assigned text(s) to each class session in book form (hard copy, unless otherwise noted), put away your devices and work for other classes, focus on the texts and subject matter at hand, and make a conscious effort to participate.
3. While class-time will be primarily devoted to discussion, our discussions will be framed and supplemented by brief explanations (“lecture”). To assist you in recalling information presented in this format as well as ideas that emerge during discussion, note-taking with pen or pencil in a physical notebook is highly recommended. If you need to take notes on a laptop instead, you may do so, but you may not have browsers or applications other than a word processor open during class. Cell phones must, of course, be silent and remain in pockets or backpacks at all times while class is in session.
4. This class will be free of derogatory comments regarding race, ethnicity, nationality, religion, sexual orientation, gender expression, and socio-economic status.
5. Additional terms to this covenant may be suggested by any member of the class. The class as whole will decide whether to accept or reject proposed additions to this agreement.

Syllabus Note: I wish to acknowledge Dr. Koritha Mitchell (Ohio State), whose writings on pedagogy inspired and helped shape this the class covenant.

### Friendly Reminders

- You must have the assigned text(s) in hand at each class session unless otherwise noted.
- Please do not “multitask” during class time. *It is very important to be fully present to one another and to the course material.*