

ENGLISH 478: LITERATURE FOR CHILDREN

Cr. 3

Ruff:

This course provides students the opportunity to read or reread selected classics of children's literature, including works by Lewis Carroll, Louisa May Alcott, Mark Twain, A. A. Milne, Jean De Brunhoff, Madeleine L'Engle, Dr. Seuss, and others. Through a close reading of the texts, we will consider what makes certain literary works, expressly written for an audience of adults reading to children or children reading to themselves, profoundly interesting and important for readers of all ages, for parents, educators, psychologists, political scientists, literary and cultural historians, as well as children. We will consider how and why literature for children originated as a distinct literary genre, and what cultural and historical conditions contributed to its emergence. We will attempt to determine what children's literature most typically and most wisely reveals about the condition of children and the experience of childhood. Special attention will be paid to two sub-genres of children's literature--fairy tales and picture books--and when the opportunity presents itself, to the dynamic interaction of visual and verbal texts that illustrated children's books often provide.

Students will be required to participate actively in classroom discussions and projects, write several short papers, and take a midterm and final examination.

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