COURSE DESCRIPTION

LIS 5183 Books and Materials for Children. Prerequisite: 5033. In-depth criticism of children’s materials; thematic/issues approach to reading guidance; contemporary trends; recent literature; children’s information literacy and critical thinking skills; and selection/evaluation).

PREREQUISITES/CO-PREQUISITES

LIS 5033.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:

Upon successful completion of this course, the students will be able to:
1. Demonstrate a knowledge of current materials for children
2. Share information about authors and illustrators that would provide insight into their works in order to discern elements of style
3. Evaluate books and materials for children, using standard criteria
4. Write reviews and annotations of children’s books and materials
5. Use an understanding of the interests, and needs of children in a reading guidance setting;
6. Examine a single work, weighing the skill of the author through concentration on such elements as character development, theme, and point of view
7. Analyze 21st Century trends in children’s literature in relation to society as a whole in order to understand current approaches and hypothesize about future directions
8. Analyze children’s fiction with a thematic framework

TEACHING/LEARNING METHODS

This course is designed to contribute to the preparation of graduate students for successful professional practice as librarians providing children’s library services in public libraries (ALSC Core Competencies http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/alsc/edcareeers/alscscorecomps/ALA_print_layout_1_506107_506107.cfm) and in school libraries (ALA/AASL NCATE Standards: http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/aasl/aasleducation/schoollibrary/AASL_PRAXIS_Chart.pdf).

The assignments in this course will include virtual literature circles/group discussions, individual reflection, electronic reserves, readings, notes and outlines, video and audio resources, lectures,
brief papers, collaboration, individual learning activities and, especially, projects related to the provision of children’s services in public and school libraries.

This course will be delivered online by Desire2Learn course software (http://learn.ou.edu), which is supported within the University by the OU IT Department.

All online courses offered in the College of Arts and Sciences (as this course is) require that students complete an online orientation during the first week of classes (http://casweb.ou.edu/olr/public/students/orientation.htm). Failure to complete the online orientation by 5:00 PM on the first Friday after this course begins will result in a student’s administrative withdrawal from this course by the CAS Online Program.

EVALUATION METHODS

Writing
Substantive content and the quality of the student’s writing will be considered in all written assignments, including discussion postings. Substantive content includes closely following instructions for the content of the assignment. Quality of writing covers clarity of expression and organization, appropriate use of references and academic writing style, and correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation. The manual of style required in the School of Library and Information Studies is *The Chicago Manual of Style, 16th ed.* Please contact the instructor if this is unclear or needs further explanation.

Grades and evaluation information:

- Weekly Discussion Boards = 80 points (8 x 10 points each)
- Virtual Literature Circles (Group): = 100 points (4 x 25 points each)
- In-class storytime/activity presentation = 50 points
- Individual Assignments = 130 points (13 x 10 points each)
- Class bibliography contribution = 45 points
- In-depth project = 100 points

The grading scale for the course is:

A=450-500
B=400-449
C=350-399
D=300-349  
F=below 300

To capture the essence of working with children’s literature through storytelling, creative expression, read alouds and other activities, students will be asked to provide video recording of themselves engaged using children’s material. This will require a video camera of some type. SmartPhones are acceptable provided the sound quality is sufficient.

EXPECTATIONS FOR VISUAL AND AUDIO PARTICIPATION AND PRESENTATIONS

To maximize learning opportunities in this online course there will be assignments submitted in video format, audio format, and a combination of both. Students will be required to record themselves presenting stories and activities. These recordings will be shared with the class through D2L. There is not a specific type of recording device required per say; the only requirement is that the device should produce a quality product suitable for sharing- a clear picture, good sound quality, universal format, etc.  

*Note: Recording yourself may seem awkward; however, it is imperative with children’s literature that the art of sharing be captured and shared for the purposes of learning. Best advice? Have fun with the course, materials, and projects! 😊*

Recordings and presentations will be uploaded to the course homepage on D2L and may also want to include them on the final LiveBinders project. The IT Department at the University of Oklahoma recommends the file size be kept to fewer than 80 MB. To accommodate this, *presentations must be under 3 minutes.* Students may submit two different files if necessary but no more than two for any given assignments.

Due to the limitations of file size and time constraints (3 minutes), students may select portions of a recording to submit. For example, if a recorded story time is 6 minutes long, a portion of the beginning, middle and end may be utilized; or, the recording may simply start with the opening and end at the 3 minute mark; or, in the middle of the story and play to the end. The goal is to allow you to see yourself presenting and for the class to learn from each other. Additionally, suggestions made by class members should support the development of skills for successfully sharing children’s literature.

ASSIGMENTS AND PROJECTS

1) **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

A collective bibliography will be developed by the class. Students will provide bibliographic citations for any material read so by the end of the semester a well-rounded bibliography will be available. This will be done in GoogleDocs. If you do not already have a Google account, please sign up.

2) **WEEKLY STORY AND/OR ACTIVITY**

Beginning with the second week of the course, students will be asked to provide a recording or access to a recording of themselves sharing a book, doing a book talk, poetry, etc. Students will sign up for a specific week. The purpose of this activity is for class members to provide feedback to each other about sharing children’s literature. Constructive comments are expected and should be presented in a manner which promotes improvement or change for improvement. Positive comments are also expected to reinforce positive qualities.
Students will provide feedback to each other using the “Guidelines for Feedback” document. This feedback form is on the discussion board forum and as a Google Doc.

3) **WEEKLY DISCUSSION BOARD ACTIVITIES** – Each week there will be discussion board activities outlined. Active participation is expected! Directions for each week will be included on the course site in D2L.

4) **WEEKLY ASSIGNMENTS** - there are assignments throughout the course outlined in the weekly schedule. *Read the directions carefully!* Each assignment will be submitted to the dropbox on D2L and is referred to as a ‘thorough rough draft’. A thorough rough draft is a complete paper recognizing that revisions are expected before the final project. The purpose of this draft is keep the workload of the course spread out and to allow the instructor to see student progress, provide feedback, and support understanding prior to the final in-depth project.

5) **VIRTUAL LITERATURE CIRCLES (group work)** - Class members will be randomly grouped by the instructor for the virtual literature circles. The group assignments will be done toward the end of the first week. There will be a group grade with individual accountability. In other words, each student will provide feedback about their contributions and the contributions of each group member. Each group will participate in 4 different literature circles; 1 time each for a discussion of the required reading in historical fiction, biography, fantasy, and contemporary realistic fiction genres. The virtual literature circles will be done online. Details and access information will be provided.

**Requirements of the virtual literature circle**
- Active participation by all group members
- Discussion and identification of elements – plot, character, theme, setting, tone
- Development of discussion questions by group members
- Evidence of understanding and meaning of the literature
- Each group member should be the ‘leader’ at least one time. If there are more members than opportunities for discussion, two members may share responsibility.
- **Virtual Discussions 2, 3, and 4** - Additional activities for the literature circle activities may include: book trailers, creating QR codes, Glogster, podcasts etc. Not required but experimenting with these tools may be fun!

**Online tools for virtual literature circle will be assigned by the instructor but may include: Edmodo, wikis, blogs, webpages, or other.**

**Proposed tools for this course (subject to change):**

- Virtual Literature Circle/Group Discussion #1-Edmodo (login and access information will be provided)
- Virtual Literature Circle/Group Discussion #2 – Wiki (login and access information will be provided)
Virtual Literature Circle/Group Discussion #3 – Wiki (login and access information will be provided)
Virtual Literature Circle/Group Discussion #4 – Webpage using Google Sites (login and access information will be provided)

6) IN-DEPTH PROJECT
Projects, assignments, and activities completed throughout the course will be compiled in a LiveBinders, an electronic three-ring binder. Examples of Children’s Literature LiveBinders are provided below—NOTE: The requirements for this course are different from these examples. The links are provided for the purposes of showing examples only.

http://www.livebinders.com/play/play_or_edit?id=106770
http://www.livebinders.com/play/play_or_edit?id=24659
http://www.livebinders.com/play/play_or_edit?id=179362
http://www.livebinders.com/play/play_or_edit?id=288618

The binder should include tabs or sections for the following at the very least:

- **Introduction**—provide information about you, your growth in the course, the contents of the binder, and how the binder might be used.
- Genre tab and sub tabs for each genre studied in the course (in other words, an example of genre)
- **Glossary of terms** related to Children’s Literature and the course
- **Activities, assignments, projects** (this tab may be divided by sub tabs or a separate tab for each)
- **Author / Illustrator study**—identify an author of children’s literature and organize an author study. The goal of an author study is to make a connection between a book and an author’s life. This shows children that authors are real people, develops motivation to seek out other work by the same author and hopefully inspires children to write. Components of the author study should include:
  - Biographical information about the author
    - Pictures, websites, interviews, bio, etc. etc. Who is the author and what is their story?
  - Bibliography and short summary of author/illustrator’s work
    - Investigate the body of the author/illustrator’s work.
  - Suggestions for curriculum connections *for each of the author/illustrator’s work*
    - Provide a curriculum link for each title. Note – you are not required to develop the lesson-just suggest the connection and activity
  - Suggestions for activities
    - How would the author study start or be kicked off? What about the culminating activities?
- **Reflection**—a personal reflection about children’s literature and the importance and value in teaching and student learning. Discuss your personal growth and your goals related to working with children’s literature in the library.
REQUIRED READING/LITERATURE

- Babbit, Nattie *Tuck Everlasting* (Fantasy)
- Collins, Suzanne *Gregor the Overlander* (Science Fiction)
- Fleming, Candace *The Great and Only Barnum* (Biography)
- Hesse, Karen *Out of the Dust* and Taylor, Mildred D. *Roll of Thunder, Hear my Cry* (Historical Fiction, Newbery)
- Draper, Sharon *Out of My Mind* (Contemporary Realistic Fiction)
- White, E.B. *Charlotte’s Web* (Classic/Newbery Honor)

Other literature required for assignments is self-selected by students. If there is reading required in a given genre area and a title is not provided by the required reading literature above, students are responsible for locating the additional material. So in other words, during the section covering fantasy, students will need to select an additional title to read for comparison. For each student-selected title, provide bibliographic citation, two reviews, and a justification for the selection.

TENTATIVE COURSE OUTLINE

**Week 1: June 12 - 17**
**Topics:**
- Introduction to the course
- Reviewing tools and professional sources
- Children’s book awards
- Introduction to picture book criteria
- What is children’s literature?
- Genres of children’s literature
- Literature, child development, and reading development
- Visual literacy through picture books

**Required Reading:** Lukens - Chapters 1, 2, 3

**Literature Circle Reading:** Charlotte’s Web
This title will be used by the class as an example for conducting an online literature circle during week 2.

**Week 2: June 18-June 24**
**Topics:**
- Appeals of picture books
- Psychological criticism
- Types of picture books
- Characterization in children’s literature
- Evaluating videos
- Introduction to Storytelling
- Evaluation of Setting
- Traditional Literature
- Types of Folktales

**Required Reading:** Lukens - Chapter 4 and 7

**Presentation of Story Time, Activity, Book Talk, etc posted to D2L – 4 students (sign-in GoogleDocs)**
Assignments due:

A. PICTURE BOOKS
Read at least ten picture books (not folktales), preferably utilizing a variety of art styles or techniques. If possible, include five of the books published within the past five years. Provide the following analysis in the assignment dropbox as a draft (thorough draft) and a finished product in the Final LiveBinders:
   1. A bibliography of all ten books
   2. Citations (for each book) of two positive recommendations (textbook, book review, editor’s choice award, or major award. At least one of the two recommendations should identify the work’s appropriate grade level(s).
   3. Analysis of two books for the style and quality of the art and its usefulness in delivering the message; documentation for your judgments with specific references to the books.
   4. Analysis of two books for character development (i.e., are main characters round or flat, static or dynamic) and the way that each author reveals a book’s main character.
   5. For the remaining six books, statement (brief) of content or plot, noting any contributions to language development or possible ways to share each.
   6. All judgments/evaluations should be stated in complete sentences and should be documented with specific references to each book.

B. FOLKTALES
Read at least two picture storybooks editions of the same folktale. Provide the following in the Final LiveBinders:
   1. Bibliographic citation for each book
   2. Citations (for each book) of two positive recommendations (textbook, book review, editor’s choice award, or major award. Include a recommendation for grade level in at least one of the review citations
   3. A comparison of the two books for variations in text, contributions of the books’ illustrations, the type of setting (backdrop or integral) in each and how the setting is indicated
All judgments/evaluations should be stated in complete sentences and should be documented with specific references to the books.

Virtual Literature Circle Reading: Charlotte’s Web

Week 3: June 25 -July 1
Topics:
   Mother Goose
   Fables, Myths, and Epics
   History of Children’s Literature
   Plot
   Tone
   Storytelling Introduction
   Types of Historical Fiction
   Criteria for Evaluating Historical Fiction
   Evaluation of Theme
   Sociological Criticism
   Storytelling
Required Reading: Lukens - Chapters 5, 6 and 10
Presentation of Story Time, Activity, Book Talk, etc posted to D2L – 4 students (sign-up in GoogleDocs)

Assignment due:
A. STORYTELLING, Prepare to tell a story and consider an audience to whom you could tell your story (perhaps at a library children’s program or a daycare center, to your own children, to members of this class who live close enough together to meet for a storytelling session, or perhaps to class members.)

Storytelling differs from reading aloud in that the storyteller maintains eye contact with a gathered group, drawing energy from and interacting visually and emotionally with the audience.

Week 4: July 2 - 8
Part 1
Topics:
- Elements of Style
- Types of Information Books
- Criteria for Evaluating Information Books

Required Reading: Lukens - Chapter 13
Virtual Literature Circle – Historical Fiction – Group decides which title to discuss
Presentation of Story Time, Activity, Book Talk, etc posted to D2L – 4 students (sign-up in GoogleDocs)
Assignment due:
A. Read Hesse’s Out of the Dust and Taylor’s Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry. Provide the following analysis in the assignment dropbox as a draft (thorough draft) and a finished product in the Final LiveBinders:
1. State the book’s theme as a sentence. Is it explicit or implicit? How is the theme developed throughout the story? Is the Theme relevant today?
2. Characterize the protagonist as round or flat and static or dynamic (i.e., choose two terms and document with references from the story.)
3. Describe the setting. Is it backdrop or integral? Explain.
4. Explain the main conflict (i.e., self against self, another person, society, or nature).
5. Was the plot marred by coincidence? If so, How? If not, why not?
7. Describe the book’s style
8. Make an overall evaluation of the merit of each resource.
All judgments/evaluations should be stated in complete sentences and should be documented with specific references to the book

B. Read and evaluate a non-fiction selection which also has a web site that adds information to the reading of the book. Provide the following analysis in the assignment dropbox as a draft (thorough draft) and a finished product in the Final LiveBinders:
A brief analysis (You may choose to use phrases and a chart if you are able to communicate the following information:
Does the book/site stimulate wonder?

What is the tone?

Is the book/site too packed with information?

Is it a starter resource that leads the child to explore, or is it a stopper that makes the child think there is not more to know on the subject?

Did you find evidence of stylistic artistry (i.e., imagery, figurative language, varied sentence structures, etc)?

Does the resource have special features (i.e., index, graphics, links or bibliography of additional readings, glossary, etc.)?

What are the author’s qualifications?

Make an overall evaluation of the merit of each resource.

All judgments/evaluations should be stated in complete sentences and should be documented with specific references to the book.

Week 5: July 9 - July 15

Part 1

Topics:

- Types of Biographies
- Criteria for Evaluating Biography
- Structural Criticism
- Writing Annotations

Required Reading: Lukens - Chapter 12

Virtual Literature Circles - Biography

Presentation of Story Time, Activity, Book Talk, etc posted to D2L – 4 students (sign-up in GoogleDocs)

Assignment due:

Read Fleming’s *The Great and only Barnum* and a self selected autobiography. Provide the following analysis in the assignment dropbox as a draft (thorough draft) and a finished product in the Final LiveBinders. Apply the criteria from Barbara Kiefer’s *Charlotte Huck’s Children’s Literature* (Boston: McGraw Hill, 2010, 544) to each work:

1. Choice of subject:
   
   A. Does the subject’s life offer interest and meaning for today’s child?
   B. Will knowing this historical or contemporary figure help children understand the past or the present?
   C. Can the subject’s experiences widen children’s views on the possibilities for their own lives?

2. Accuracy and authenticity:
   
   A. Do the text and illustrations reflect careful research and consistency in presentation?
   B. Does the author provide notes about the original source material, a bibliography, or other evidence of documentation?
   C. Are the discrepancies of fact in comparison with other books?
   D. Are there significant omissions that result in a distorted picture of the subject’s life?

3. Style:
   
   A. Are quotations or dialogue used in a way that brings the subject to life?
   B. For a fictionalized biography, does the choice of narrator’s point of view add to the story?
   C. Is the author’s style clear and readable, with background material included naturally?

4. Characterization:
A. Is the subject presented as a believable, multidimensional character, with both strengths and weaknesses?
B. Does the author avoid both eulogizing and debunking?

5. Theme:
A. Does the author’s interpretation of the subject represent a fair and balanced approach?
B. Does the author avoid oversimplifying or manipulating the facts to fit the chosen theme?

All judgments/evaluations should be stated in complete sentences and should be documented with specific references to the book.

Week 6: July 16-July 22

Topics:
- Types of Poetry
- Characteristics of Poetry
- Modes of Sharing Poetry
- Poetry/Puppet Sharing
- Storytelling

Required Reading: Lukens - Chapter 11

Presentation of Story Time, Activity, Book Talk, etc posted to D2L – 4 students (sign-up in GoogleDocs)

Assignment due:
A. Poetry: Select and read a poetry collection published since 1990 and written by one poet. Provide the following analysis in the assignment dropbox as a draft (thorough draft) and a finished product in the Final LiveBinders:
   - How does the rhythm of the poem reinforce and create the meaning of the poem? How does the rhythm of the poem reinforce and create the meaning of the poem?
   - If the poem rhymes, does it sound natural or contrived? How does the sound of the poem add to its meaning? Does the poem use alliteration? Onomatopoeia? Repetition?
   - Does the poem create sensory images of sight, touch, smell, or taste?
   - Are these images related to children’s delight in their particular senses?
   - What is the quality of imagination in the poem? Does the poem make the child see something in a fresh, new way, or does it rely on tired clichés?
   - Is the figurative language appropriate to children’s lives? Are the similes and metaphors ones that a child would appreciate and understand?
   - What is the tone of the poem? Does it patronize childhood by looking down on it? Is it didactic and preachy? Does it see childhood in a sentimental or nostalgic way?
   - Is the poem appropriate for children? Will it appeal to them, and will they like it?
   - How has the poet created the emotional intensity of the poem? Does every word work to heighten the feelings conveyed?
   - Does the shape of the poem—the placement of words—contribute to the poem’s meaning?
   - What is the purpose of the poem? To amuse? To describe in a fresh way? To comment on humanity? To draw parallels in our lives? How well has the poet achieved this purpose?

B. Mother Goose: Select and read two editions of Mother Goose. Provide the following analysis in the assignment dropbox as a draft (thorough draft) and a finished product in the Final LiveBinders. (You may use phrases and a chart if you are able to convey your analyses.) evaluate the two works by the following points from Barbara Kiefer’s Charlotte Huck’s Children’s Literature (Boston, McGraw Hill, 2010, 116):
• **Coverage:** How many verses are included? Are they well-known rhymes, or are there some fresh and unusual ones?

• **Illustrations:** What medium has been used? What colors? Are the illustrations realistic, stylized, or varied? Are the illustrations consistent with the text? Do they elaborate the text? What is the mood of the illustrations (humorous, sedate, high-spirited)? Has the illustrator created a fresh approach, avoiding cliché-ridden images?

• **Text:** Does the text read smoothly, or have verses been altered? Is the text all on the same page, or fragmented by the need to turn the page?

• **Setting:** What background is presented—rural or urban? Does the book take place in any particular country? Is the setting modern or in the past? What does the setting add to the collection?

• **Characters:** Do the characters come from a variety of ethnic backgrounds? Do the characters have distinct personalities? Are adults and children featured? Only children? How are the animals presented—as humans or realistically?

• **Arrangement:** Is there a thematic arrangement to the verses? Is there a feeling of unity to the whole book, rather than just separate verses? Are pictures and verses well spaced or crowded? Is it clear which picture illustrates which verse?

• **Format:** What is the quality of the paper and the binding? Is the title page well designed? Is there an index or table of contents? Is there harmony among endpapers, cover, and jacket?

Using finger puppets, share a poem from your poetry selection or a Mother Goose rhyme.

All judgments/evaluations should be stated in complete sentences and should be documented with specific references to the book.

**Week 7: July 23 -July 29**

**Topics:**
- Evaluating Fantasy
- Types of Fantasy
- Point of View
- Discussion of Professional Journals
- Archetypal Criticism
- Appeal of Science Fiction
- Children’s Magazines

**Required Reading:** Lukens - Chapter 8, review pp. 20-22, Review pp. 22-24

**Virtual Literature Circles-Fantasy**

Presentation of Story Time, Activity, Book Talk, etc posted to D2L – 4 students (sign-up in GoogleDocs)

**Assignment due:**

A. Read Natalie Babbitt’s *Tuck Everlasting* and a self-selected book for this genre. Provide the following analysis in the assignment dropbox as a draft (thorough draft) and a finished product in the Final LiveBinders:

• State the book’s theme as a sentence. Is it explicit or implicit? How is the theme developed throughout the story?

• What is the point of view? Would tone and characterization have been less effective with another point of view?
All judgments/evaluations should be stated in complete sentences and should be documented with specific references to the book.

- Briefly examine the five following journals (http://libraries.ou.edu), examining two issues of each journal. From each, read one article (for a total of 10 articles). Provide the following for each journal in the Final LiveBinders (A) Write a two sentence summary and a two sentence evaluation for each of the 10 articles. Book Links (American Library Association)
  - *Children and Libraries* (ALA, Association for Library Service to Children)
  - *Horn Book Magazine* (Boston Globe / Horn Book)
  - *Language Arts* (National Council of Teachers of English)
  - *Reading Teacher* (International Reading Association)

B. Read Gregor the Overlander by Collins and a self selected science fiction novel (include a citation for two positive professional reviews with a recommendation for reading level in at least one of them). Provide the following analysis in the assignment dropbox as a draft (thorough draft) and a finished product in the Final LiveBinders:
  Evaluate the literary excellence by considering plot, character, point of view, theme, style, tone, and setting. In a final statement, give your overall reaction to the novel. All judgments/evaluations should be stated in complete sentences and should be documented with specific references to the book.

**Week 8: July 30 - August 3**

**Topics:**
- Values of Contemporary Realistic Fiction
- Issues Relating to Contemporary Fiction
- Intellectual Freedom
- Diversity
- Cultural Criticism
- Gender Criticism
- 21st Century Changes

**Required Reading: Lukens - Review pp. 14-18**

**Virtual Literature Circle – Contemporary Realistic Fiction**

**Assignment Due:**

A. Read Sharon Draper's Out of My Mind and a self selected contemporary realistic fiction title. Provide the following analysis in the assignment dropbox as a draft (thorough draft) and a finished product in the Final LiveBinders:
  - Does the author present authentic perspectives?
  - Is the culture portrayed multi-dimensionally? (i.e., is there diversity of roles within the culture?)
  - Is language authentic?
  - Are details accurate? Are cultural details integrated smoothly?

B. Select and read one novel that has won the Mildred L. Batchelder Award (see text, Appendix A, 336-337). Provide the following analysis of each work in the Final LiveBinders:
• Provide a brief description of the plot and characters
• Identify any elements of the work that would be difficult for children to understand.
• Suggest ways that an adult could make the work most accessible to young people?

All judgments/evaluations should be stated in complete sentences and should be documented with specific references to the work.