

Welcome to Children's Literature Online! This course provides a survey of children's literature and an exploration of the texts from a number of different perspectives. The readings are from significant books written for children, selected primarily for literary quality. Some attention will be given to the historic evolution of children's literature as a separate class, but the principal aim of the course will be to consider the nature and development of the major genres: fairy tales, nonsense, adventure fiction, the domestic novel, fantasy, and animal stories. You should come away from this course with an enriched understanding of the variety of texts written for children and the variety of critical responses to them.

This course demands as much time and effort from you as a conventional lecture-based university course in literature. You are expected to read the assigned work and to engage with the material, the instructor, and the other students in the course. You are required to participate in the course regularly, as you would in a regular classroom. This participation will take the form of active reading of course materials, asking questions of the instructor, and contributing to online discussions. All of this means that you must devote a minimum of fifteen hours per week to the course in order to keep up with the reading and complete the assignments. Assignments will be submitted online, so be sure to work out any technical problems quickly by contacting ITS at 519-661-3800.

This course is designed for OWL, which operates as an online classroom. Ten percent of your grade depends on regular participation (more on participation below). You must have regular online access to do this; this access can be from home, from a computer lab on campus, or from a public library, but you must ensure that you have access to the internet on a regular and consistent basis. (This means that, in the event of a service interruption to your internet connection at home, you are expected to find another way to access the course materials.)

By the end of the course, the successful student will be able to

- place individual texts in their context within the historical development of children's literature
- recognize and understand the features of genres such as the fairy tale, the cautionary tale,

Unit 4: *This Little Puffin*
Dennis Lee, *Alligator Pie*

Unit 19: J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Hobbit*

Unit 20: C.S. Lewis, *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*

Unit 21: J.K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*

Read Alexandra Mullen, "Harry Potter's School days" (coursepack)

Unit 22: Lois Lowry, *The Giver*

Unit 23: Neil Gaiman, *Coraline*

Unit 24: Roald Dahl, *Matilda*

Email

I am happy to communicate with students by e-mail, but there are two provisos. (1) I can't always answer emails instantly; please allow 24 hours for a response on weekdays and 48 hours on weekends. (2) I will respond to short emails only.

, so please use your UWO email account for messages to your instructor. In addition, please ensure that your emails conform to the rudimentary standards of university discourse: emails should be written using correct grammar, complete sentences, and a professional tone. Rude or harassing emails, or emails from students requesting information readily available on the course outline, will not be answered.

Telephone

Students wanting to engage in an extended conversation about the course work— discussions or questions about lecture material, essay or exam expectations or results, course readings, etc.— may e-mail me to set up a time that is convenient for both of us to have a telephone conversation. Either I will call you (if the call is not long-distance) or you can call me at a phone number I will give you, depending on where I am the day of the appointment. Please note that I cannot return long-distance calls.

In person

Students who are in the London area and who would prefer to talk with me in person rather than by telephone or e-mail may e-mail me to set up a time that is convenient for both of us to meet at my office on campus.

Please do not hesitate to contact me to talk or ask questions about any topic or issue, including assignments, difficulties you are having with the course, suggestions for further reading, or clarification and expansion of issues raised in the readings or lecture notes. Unfortunately, most students wait until the last minute or until all hell is breaking loose before consulting their instructors. Please see me well ahead of deadlines and the onset of nervous breakdowns.

Your participation in the discussion forums on OWL is worth 10% of your grade. Discussion questions are posted at the end of the lecture notes for each unit as well as in the Forums. You may use these questions to get a discussion of a text started, although you may certainly raise other questions or issues not included in the questions. Once a discussion is posted, you may respond to it or raise another issue. Avoid using the Forums just to state whether you liked or disliked a text or to simply agree or disagree with a previous post. I will be checking the Forums at least three times a week, and I expect you to do likewise. Posting responses to questions without fir

: All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between Western University and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>).

Steps to follow to avoid plagiarism:

- 1) Do as much work as possible *before* beginning your secondary research – read the novel(s), think of a thesis statement, sketch out your argument. Write down your own ideas before reading any criticism.
- 2) Develop a note-taking style that clearly indicates what ideas are your own and what ideas are taken from another source. You can use different coloured pens, cue cards, or any other method that helps you distinguish your own ideas from those of other critics.
- 3) Feel free to disagree with any critic you are reading – don't simply regurgitate somebody else's argument.
- 4) When you are incorporating someone else's ideas into your essay, acknowledge them within the essay itself using
 - (a) quotation marks (whenever you use exact language, even a short phrase, from the original text)
 - (b) signal phrases – i.e. According to John Smith...
As Smith points out...
Smith observes that...
 - (c) a reference in parentheses that indicates the source of the idea (just the page number, if you've already used the author's name)
- 5) Cite the source in full in your Works Cited list (see guidelines below).

Your essays should follow MLA format:

- 1) In the top left-hand corner of the first page, put your name, the name of your professor, the name of the course, and the date.
- 2) Number your pages in the top right-hand corner.
- 3) Double space.
- 4) If you use a snappy, attention-grabbing title, follow it up with an informative sub-title that indicates your topic and the works you will be discussing (i.e. Touching Pitch: Moral Ambiguity in R. L. Stevenson's Treasure Island).
- 5) Titles of books should be underlined or *italicized*. Titles of short poems, articles, and short stories should be in quotation marks.
- 6) Introduce quotations in your own words, identifying the speaker and context: i.e. Bettelheim argues that "The fairy tale ... confronts the child squarely with the basic h

