

INLS 732 - Children's Literature and Related Materials

Thursdays, 11:00-1:45
Remote/Synchronous

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Virtual Office Hours: Thursdays 9:30-10:30 and by appointment [link to be posted in Sakai]

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*****Note: Please understand that the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic may require changes to this plan. I will be monitoring the situation closely and following guidance from the Dean and other University leadership. If I need to change the course temporarily due to outbreaks of illness, I will announce this via email and the course Sakai site.***

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Survey of literature and other materials for children, age's birth-12, with emphasis on twenty-first century authors and illustrators.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

We will explore the topics in this course primarily through whole class and small group discussion. During our time together, we are learning from each other. In other words, the class will be a cooperative learning experience, a true intellectual community. Consider that not only will you get out of the course what you put into it, but also other students are counting on your input to make this a rich experience for us all. We'll also need to find ways to be "present" in the virtual classroom where our course will live.

This is a reading intensive course, so please look over the course schedule and plan accordingly. There are professional articles and selections from professional books (all of which can be found in Sakai or are linked online) that are meant to be read before each class meeting so we can all make informed contributions to the discussions. You will also read children's books. By the end of the semester, you will have personal experience with many new (to you) children's books and will learn about even more books from your classmates.

This course will prepare you to:

- Gain a background in the various resources intended for and adopted by children ages birth-12.
- Become familiar with the theory of radical change and how its three principles are reflected in today's resources for children.
- Understand and apply principles related to critical literacy and counter narratives to the evaluation and selection of resources for children.
- Develop an awareness of the interrelationships among resources and how they address the needs of children.

- Become familiar with the professional selection resources available to teachers, librarians, and other adults concerned with children.
- Have an opportunity to identify, address, and reflect upon the information needs and practices of individuals and communities that are marginalized and underserved in the United States.

Our Literacy Stance for This Course

In this class we will take a **critical literacy stance**. Taking a critical stance is the role the reader takes in opposition to the text that is being read and discussed. It involves the application of critical literacy skills. Questions to consider when thinking about literature and other resources for children through a critical lens include:

- How is this text trying to make me feel?
- Who is represented and how?
- Who holds power and who does not?
- Whose voices are included? Whose voices are left out?
- Why do you think the author or illustrator makes those choices?
- What biases do I bring to the text?

Critical literacy allows readers to interact with texts in powerful ways. Lewison et al. (2008) defined four dimensions of critical literacy, including: 1. Disrupting the commonplace— Asking what is naturalized or taken for granted in a text, uncovering perhaps the way a text constructs a possibility for a reader (i.e., what activities or emotions are appropriate for girls or boys). 2. Interrogating multiple viewpoints—Recognizing diverse personal and cultural perspectives on an issue and having dialogue about that diversity. 3. Focusing on the sociopolitical— Addressing social issues related to justice. 4. Taking action and promoting social justice—Moving to action (through talk, letter writing, etc.) based on an inquiry

Lewison, M., Leland, C., & Harste, J.C. (2008). Creating critical classrooms: K–8 reading and writing with an edge. New York: Routledge.

ASSESSMENT

Assessment for this course will be qualitative in nature as opposed to quantitative. While you will get a grade at the end of the term, as required by the University, instead of assigning points or grades to individual assignments, I will be providing feedback in the form of questions and comments that engage your work rather than simply evaluate it. My intention is to help you focus on *learning* and *understanding* rather than compliance to a prescribed notion of excellence. My goal is to encourage you to engage in deeper thinking, be creative, and take risks.

You will also be reflecting critically on your own work during the semester – completing a mid-term and final reflection in which you will discuss your learning/understandings, the elements of the course that excite you as well as challenge you, and *your* assessment of your work (what are you proud of, what would you change, what questions do you have, and so forth).

I realize this process may cause anxiety for some of you, so please see me at any point to talk about your progress to date. If you are worried about your grade, the best strategy is to join the class discussions, do the reading, and complete the assignments.

*Note: Final Grades for this course will be Pass / Fail for graduate students. Undergraduates will be graded on the normal A-F scale.

THE WORK OF THE COURSE

#1 – Weekly Contributions to Class Annotated Bibliography

Weekly beginning January 20

Most weeks you will be asked to locate and read a number of children’s books that: 1) align with the discussion topic for that week, 2) reflect one or more of Eliza Dresang’s three principles of radical change - changing forms and formats; changing perspectives; and changing boundaries, and 3) are of interest to you. As a class, we will create an annotated bibliography of these books so that by the end of the course you will have a list of titles to share with youth, educators, and parents/caregivers.

Please use the following format for your entries:

Author. Title. Illustrated by “name”. Publisher, Year published.

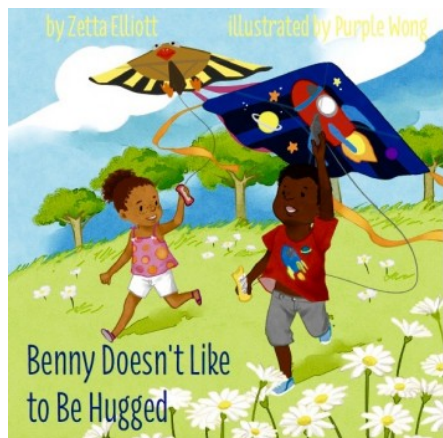
Type of Book (picture book, board book, novel, graphic novel, information book, etc.)

Principle (s) of radical change represented

About the Book Statement (can be original or from publisher)

Optional: Include the book’s cover.

Example:



Elliot, Zetta. *Benny Doesn't Like to Be Hugged*. Illustrated by Purple Wong. Rosetta Books, 2017.

Picture Book
Changing Perspectives

“A little girl uses rhyming verse to describe the unique traits of her autistic friend. Benny likes trains and cupcakes without sprinkles, but he can also be fussy sometimes. The narrator doesn't mind, however, because "true friends accept each other just the way they are." A gentle story encouraging children to appreciate and accept our differences.” (from author’s website;
<https://www.zettaelliott.com/book/benny-doesnt-like-to-be-hugged/>)

Submit your contributions to the Class Google Doc before class each week.

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1V-IX4ZFMBlzmBOuHLDvdCENGg7doqtn9rsR9ddgsTps/edit>

#2 – Counter Narrative Project

Due March 10

Note 1: The article, “Critical Literacy in Elementary Social Studies: Juxtaposing Historical Master

and Counter Narratives in Picture Books” serves as the foundation for this assignment. You will read this article for week 3 of the course.

Note 2: To understand how harmful & insidious master narratives are, listen to this podcast (or read the transcript) from Teaching Tolerance: “Teaching Slavery through Children’s Literature: Part 1.” <https://www.tolerance.org/podcasts/teaching-hard-history/american-slavery/teaching-slavery-through-childrens-literature-part-1>

Master narratives are stories told from a dominant perspective. Our K-12 curriculum is replete with master narratives - texts that simplify and sanitize historical events. As Demoinya and Ferraras-Stone (2018) note: “One problem with this curricular and instructional pattern is that students do not hear multiple perspectives of an event, and they are only provided with mere ‘highlights’ of events throughout history” (1).

Counter narratives share the experiential knowledge of those who are marginalized in U.S. history. Counter narratives challenge the master narrative and the stereotypical ways in which traditionally marginalized communities are portrayed. Additionally, they provide an opportunity for marginalized identity youth to learn about historical events through the perspectives of their ancestors. They also enable white youth, who are accustomed to the dominant narrative, to learn from those who have experienced trauma and been marginalized throughout U.S. history.

For this assignment, you are to:

1. Select an historical event or person that is often “taught” in US public schools.
2. Locate at least two children’s books that present the master narrative about this event.
3. Locate 5-10 resources (informational/nonfiction books, historical fiction picture books & novels, articles, videos, images, etc.) that provide counter narratives. That is, represent the perspectives and voices of those who are misrepresented by the master narrative, thus allowing children “to grapple with what history truly means and to question how history is told” (Demoinya and Ferraras-Stone 2018, 2), The resources should:
 - a. “Explore differences rather than making them invisible,
 - b. Enrich understandings of history and life by giving voice to those traditionally silenced or marginalized,
 - c. Show how people can begin to take action on important social issues,
 - d. Explore dominant systems of meaning that operate in our society to position people and groups of people as ‘others,’
 - e. Don’t provide ‘happily ever after’ endings for complex social problems.” (Richardson and Hatch 2009, cited in Demoinya and Ferraras-Stone 2018, 5)
4. Use the template below to present your Counter Narrative Project

Event or Person

Master Narrative (Briefly summarize in your own words the master narrative associated with this event or person. List at least two resources that present this narrative. Include: Title, author, bibliographic information, and an annotation for each resource.)

Counter Narrative (Create a “text set” that shows aspects of the event/person’s life that are missing and/or misrepresented in the master narrative. For each resource included in the “text set” include 1) the title, author, bibliographic information, 2) a link to the document (if appropriate – e.g. primary document or online video), 3) a 2 - 3 paragraph summary of the resource that explains how it counters the master narrative, and 4) suggestions for how a librarian, parent/caregiver, and/or educator might use it with youth. Include 5-10 resources in your “text set”.)

#3 – Research Poster

You will present your poster to your classmates on April 21st

For your research poster, you will use the methodology of content analysis to examine a set of children’s books of your choice. You are to devise a question about a social justice issue as represented in literature for children for in-depth exploration, and then try to answer this question from the books in your chosen data set. The term *social justice* has many definitions, but most agree it connects to the following common themes:

- Human rights and dignity
- Issues of equality
- Access to resources
- Personal responsibility and choices that affect the community
- Change through action

For example, you might look at the representation of a specific marginalized community in children’s books. Alternatively, you might decide to explore how children’s books present a social justice topic like climate change or homelessness. You will read several articles this semester that will serve as mentor texts for this assignment [See for example, Crisp, Thomas, Roberta Price Gardner, and Matheus Almeida. 2017. “The All-Heterosexual World of Children’s Nonfiction: A Critical Content Analysis of LGBTQ Identities in Orbis Pictus Award Books, 1990–2017.” *Children’s Literature in Education*; Chaudhri, Amina, and William H. Teale. 2013. “Stories of Multiracial Experiences in Literature for Children.” *Children’s Literature in Education*.]

Your topic and research question are due March 31st.

Posters should be of professional quality and able to be shared digitally.

#4 – Self Reflections

Twice during the term (at the mid-point and at the end) you will be asked to complete a self-reflection. The reflection will include questions such as “What have you learned that you are most excited about? What challenges have you encountered? Talk about the work you’ve done for the class so far.” You will also be asked to give yourself a grade. (Note: While I prefer to give everyone the grades they give themselves, I reserve the right to change grades as appropriate.)

Work Due Dates – May Be Negotiated as Necessary

ASSIGNMENT	DUE DATE
Annotated Bibliography	Weekly beginning January 20
Counter Narrative Project	March 10
Mid-term Self Reflection	March 24
Research topic and question	March 31
Research Poster	April 21
Final Self Reflection	April 28

IMPORTANT INFORMATION**Students with Disabilities**

“The Department of Disability Services (DDS), a part of the Division of Student Affairs, works with departments throughout the University to assure that the programs and facilities of the University are accessible to every student in the University community. Additionally, DDS provides reasonable accommodations so students with disabilities who are otherwise qualified may, as independently as possible; meet the demands of University life.” Visit their website at <http://disabilityservices.unc.edu/> for more information.

Counseling and Psychological Services at UNC

Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) staff at UNC are available to provide mental health services to students. Visit their website at: <https://caps.unc.edu/> to learn about their services or to schedule an appointment. For severe or potentially life-threatening medical or mental health emergencies, *call 911, go to a local hospital emergency room, or call campus police at 919-962-8100.*

Title IX and the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA)

“Title IX and the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) are two of the federal laws that are focused on providing safe, inclusive, and welcoming learning and work environments on campus. Title IX prohibits sex discrimination and sexual harassment. Sexual assault and sexual violence are forms of sexual or gender-based harassment that are prohibited by Title IX. VAWA also requires Universities to address sexual violence, interpersonal violence, and stalking.”

For more information:

- View a [Quick Reference Guide](#) for a step by step approach about how to get help in emergency situations for incidents of sexual and gender-based discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual assault or sexual violence, interpersonal (relationship) violence, and stalking.
- View a [Comprehensive Resource Guide](#) that provides more detailed information about how to get help following an incident of sexual and gender-based discrimination, sexual

harassment, sexual assault or sexual violence, interpersonal (relationship) violence, and stalking.

Basic Needs Security

Any student who faces challenges securing their food or housing and believes this may affect their performance in the course is urged to contact the Office of the Dean of Students for support (<https://odos.unc.edu/>). Also, please notify me if you are comfortable in doing so. This will enable me to provide any resources I might possess.

SILS Diversity Statement

In support of the University's diversity goals and the mission of the School of Information and Library Science, SILS embraces diversity as an ethical and societal value. We broadly define diversity to include race, gender, national origin, ethnicity, religion, social class, age, sexual orientation and physical and learning ability. As an academic community committed to preparing our graduates to be leaders in an increasingly multicultural and global society we strive to:

- Ensure inclusive leadership, policies and practices.
- Integrate diversity into the curriculum and research.
- Foster a mutually respectful intellectual environment in which diverse opinions are valued.
- Recruit traditionally underrepresented groups of students, faculty and staff.
- Participate in outreach to underserved groups in the State.

The statement represents a commitment of resources to the development and maintenance of an academic environment that is open, representative, reflective and committed to the concepts of equity and fairness.

Observance of Religious or Spiritual Holidays/Events

If you need to miss class to observe a religious or spiritual holiday/event, please submit the dates of your absence to me in writing by the end of the second full week of classes. You will be permitted to make up work within a mutually agreed-upon time.

University Honor System

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill has had a student-administered honor system and judicial system for over 100 years. Because academic honesty and the development and nurturing of trust and trustworthiness are important to all of us as individuals, and are encouraged and promoted by the honor system, this is a most significant University tradition. More information is available at <http://www.unc.edu/depts/honor/honor.html>. The system is the responsibility of students and is regulated and governed by them, but faculty share the responsibility and readily commit to its ideals. If students in this class have questions about their responsibility under the honor code, please bring them to me or consult with the Office of the Dean of Students. The web site identified above contains all policies and procedures pertaining to the student honor system. We encourage your full participation and observance of this important aspect of the University.

Campus Resources, Centers, and Caucuses

The University provides a few resources for students. To learn more visit this libguide: <https://guides.lib.unc.edu/campusresources>