

# AP/EN 2173: Children's Literature: 1590-1900

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**Course Director:** Kathryn Walton

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**Office:**

**Office Hours:** Thursdays 9:30-10:30

## Course Description:

This course explores the emergence and development of literature for children from its earliest stages in the medieval and early modern periods to its flourishing in the 19th century. We analyze children's literature of this time both within its historical and cultural context and also from our own contemporary perspective. Through the lenses of various critical schools, we consider the ideologies and social implications of the literature – its depiction of gender, class, race, religion – and ask ourselves why and to what purpose these texts were developed. We reflect upon the diverse styles and intended audiences, taking note of the dramatic changes in notions of childhood that occur during our four-hundred-year historical span. We begin our journey with the origins of children's stories – with fairy tales, folk tales, and fables – before moving into the didactic literature of the 17th and 18th centuries. We conclude with two novels and a collection of stories from the Golden Age of children's literature: Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, E. Nesbit's *The Story of the Treasure Seekers* and Rudyard Kipling's *The Jungle Books*. Throughout, we consider the ways in which the deep historical roots of children's literature have enabled it to blossom into the popular form we know it as today.

## Learning Objectives:

By the end of this course students will be able to...

- Identify and define the historical trajectory and evolution of children's literature from 1590-1900, including major genres, authors, styles, and audiences.
- Define key literary techniques, narrative styles, genres and theoretical concepts associated with the study of children's literature.
- Locate and discuss texts within their social and historical contexts.
- Recognize and analyze the complexities, prejudices, and preoccupations evident within this seemingly simple literature.
- Find and assess critical material (scholarly research) on children's literature and apply this material in their own academic work.
- Prepare an academic research paper on a specific aspect of children's literature that demonstrates strong research, writing, and analytical abilities.
- Speak and write academically and argumentatively about the history of children's literature and key individual works.

## Course Delivery:

Each week, students will be provided with a list of readings and will come to class having read that week's texts and ready to discuss the material. Classes will blend lecture and discussion so as to ensure both engagement with the material and mastery of course concepts. In class, I will introduce students to the historical and literary context of the authors and texts and provide key thematic and literary concepts. Videos and visual aids will help illustrate some key ideas and provide grounds for discussion. I will also pose questions to the class, facilitate small group discussions, and provide writing and critical thinking exercises. Students are expected to participate actively and enthusiastically in the seminar.

Three in-class quizzes and a final exam will ensure student's understanding of literary texts and concepts. Three written assignments will enable students to delve deeply into texts of interest to them. These assignments will not only allow for a close analysis of the literary works but also provide opportunities for students to further develop their research and writing abilities.

## Course Assignments:

Close Analysis Essay: 15%  
 Annotated Bibliography: 10%  
 Research Essay: 25%  
 Quizzes: 10%  
 Participation: 15%  
 Final Examination: 25%

## Required Course Texts:

Demers, Patricia (ed.). *From Instruction to Delight: An Anthology of Children's Literature to 1850*. 4<sup>th</sup> ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press Canada, 2015.

Kipling, Rudyard. *The Jungle Books*. Ed. W.W. Robson. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.

Carroll, Lewis. *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland and Through the Looking-Glass*. Ed. Peter Hunt. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2009.

E. Nesbit. *The Story of the Treasure Seekers*. Puffin Books: 1996.

Selected online readings will also be required.

**Course Schedule:****Unit 1: Some Origins of Children's Literature****Week 1: Introduction** **September 5**

No readings

**Week 2: Medieval Children's Literature** **September 12**

Readings

- Aesop's Fables (available online)
  - "The Crow and the Pitcher"
  - "The Lion the Fox and the Beasts"
  - "Androcles"
  - "The Ass in Lion's Skin"
- *Robin Hood and the Monk* (available online)
- Hugh Rhodes: Excerpt from *The Book of Nurture, or Schoole of Good Manners*. (Demers 17-18).
- Hornbooks and Battledores. (Demers 20-22).

**Week 3: Fairy Tales and Folk Tales** **September 19**

Readings

- Charles Perrault: *Cinderella* and *The Sleeping Beauty in the Wood* (Demers 100-111)
- Jakob and Wilhem Grimm: *Hansel and Grethel* (Demers 389-393) and *Rumpelstiltskin* (Available online).

**Week 4: Fairy Tales and Folk Tales Continued** **September 26****QUIZ 1**

Readings

- *Tales from 1001 Nights*
  - "Aladdin and his Wonderful Lamp" (available online)
  - "Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves" (available online)

**Unit 2: Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century Didacticism****Week 5: The Puritans and the Rise of Literature for Children** **October 3**

**CLOSE ANALYSIS ESSAY DUE**

## Readings

- *Puritan 'Hell-Fire:’ Warnings and Warmth* (Demers 40- 43)
- *Mary Downing: A Letter to her Father* (Demers 26-27)
- John Cotton: *Milk for Babes* (Demers 44-48)
- James Janeway: *A Token for Children* (Demers 52-56)
- Benjamin Keach: *War with the Devil* (Demers 56-59)
- *The New England Primer* (Demers 60-65)
- John Bunyan: *A Book for Boys and Girls* (65-71)

**Week 6: Locke and Lyrical Instruction**

October 10

## Readings

- John Locke: Excerpts from *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* (available online)
- Isaac Watts: *Divine Songs Attempted in Easy Language for the Use of Children* and *The Moral Songs* (Demers 76-85)
- John Gay: from *Fables* “The Man and the Flea” (Demers 91-92)
- *An Elegy on the Death and Burial of Cock Robin* (Demers 112-118)
- *The Interesting Story of the Children in the Woods* (Demers 119-123)
- John Newberry: *A Pretty Little Pocket-Book* (Demers 148-156) and *The History of Little Goody Two-Shoes* (Demers 160-163)

**READING WEEK: NO CLASS**

October 17

**Week 7: Rousseau and Rational Moralism**

October 24

**QUIZ 2**

## Readings

- Jean Jacques Rousseau: Excerpts from *Émile* (available online).
- *Rational Moralists* (Demers 164-168)
- Sarah Fielding: *The Governess; or, Little Female Academy* (Demers 168-174)
- Thomas Day: *The History of Sanford and Merton* (Demers 182-186)
- Mary Wollstonecraft: *Original Stories from Real Life* (Demers 190-193)
- Priscilla Wakefield: *Mental Improvement* (Demers 193-197)
- Henry Sharpe Horsley: *The Affectionate Parent’s Gift* (Demers 215-221)

**Unit 3: The Golden Age****Week 8: Into the Golden Age**

October 31

**ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY DUE**

## Readings

- William Blake: *Songs of Innocence and of Experience* (Demers 289-298)
- Elizabeth Turner: *The Daisy; or Cautionary Stories in Verse* (Demers 320-325)
- William Roscoe: *The Butterfly's Ball and the Grasshopper's Feast* (Demers 326-329)
- Charles Lamb: *Beauty and the Beast* (Demers 341-356)
- Edward Lear: *The Book of Nonsense* (Demers 376-379)
- Heinrich Hoffman: *The English Struwwelpeter* (Demers 379-383)

**Week 9: Alice in Wonderland**

November 7

## Readings

- Lewis Carroll: *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*

**Week 10: The Jungle Books**

November 14

## Readings

- Rudyard Kipling: The Mowgli stories from *The Jungle Books*

**Week 11: The Treasure Seekers**

November 21

**QUIZ 3**

## Readings

- E. Nesbit: *The Story of the Treasure Seekers*

**Week 12: Picture Book Origins**

November 28

**RESEARCH ESSAY DUE**

## Readings

- Randolph Caldecott: *Hey Diddle Diddle; and Baby Bunting and The Milkmaid* (available online)

## Course Policies:

### Due Dates:

**Written assignments** are due at the start of class on the following dates:

Close Analysis Essay: October 3, 2016  
Annotated Bibliography: October 31, 2019  
Research Essay: November 28, 2019

**Quizzes** will be held in lecture at the start of class on the following dates: September 26<sup>th</sup>, October 24<sup>th</sup>, November 21<sup>st</sup>. Please ensure that you are on time. Students will be able to drop their lowest mark, but there will be no make-ups.

The **final exam** will be held during the designated examination period: December 5-20. The exam can be scheduled at any time during this period at the discretion of the university. Please do not make travel plans until after the schedule has been released. The date of the final exam is fixed and beyond my control.

In-class **participation** will be graded throughout the term. Success in the course depends upon regular engaged attendance and active participation.

### Seminar Policies:

Active and enthusiastic discussion and debate is highly encouraged in the classroom. However, students will treat each other with politeness and respect. Smart phones are to be kept out of sight during class time and not to be used except in emergencies.

### Submission of Assignments:

Hard copies of the assignments should be submitted at the start of class. Late assignments can be submitted to me via email. If you submit electronically, you must also provide me with a hard copy. Hard copies can be submitted to the course drop box located in Atkinson College or brought to the next class. Do not submit an assignment late to the drop box without letting me know you have done so.

### Late Policy:

Assignments submitted after the due date will be penalized 2% a day to a maximum of 20%.

### Extensions:

Students are welcome to request an extension on an assignment. Extensions must be requested at least one week before the assignment is due. Extensions will not be granted in the week prior to the due date except in the case of documented illness. The

amount of time granted will be decided between the student and me. The final date for submission of course work is **December 4<sup>th</sup>**.

**Academic Honesty:**

All components of the course must comply with the University's policy on Academic honesty. Please inform yourself of these policies by reading the Senate Policy on Academic Honesty at <http://secretariat-policies.info.yorku.ca/policies/academic-honesty-senate-policy-on/>.

Further resources on preparing assignments with academic integrity can be found on York University's Library website at <http://www.library.yorku.ca/web/research-learn/academic-integrity/>. Please consult these resources and ensure all assignments are prepared within the university's policy on Academic Honesty.

**Withdrawing from the Course:**

If you are unable to complete the course requirements, you should withdraw from the course by **November 8, 2019**. This is the last day to withdraw from a fall semester course without receiving a grade.