

## English 470: Studies in Children's Literature: Author & Illustrator as Critic

Fall 2016 Professor Jan Susina

Class Meeting: Wednesdays 5:30--8:20 p.m.

Class Room: Stevenson 410

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Office Hours: Tuesday & Thursday: 11 a.m. - noon

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### Tentative Syllabus:

**Aug. 24** Introduction and Overview to the Course: The Place of the Author in Children's Literature & Children's Literature Criticism

Zoe Heller & Adam Kirsch's "Bookends: Should an Author's Intentions Matter?" (handout)

Zadie Smith's "Rereading Barthes and Nabokov" (handout)

Roland Barthes "The Death of the Author" (handout)

W.K. Wimsatt & Monroe Beardsley "The Intentional Fallacy" (website)

**Aug. 31** Lewis Carroll's "'Alice' on the Stage" (website)

Robert Louis Stevenson's "My First Book" (website)

L. Frank Baum's "Modern Fairy Tales" (website)

Beatrix Potter's "'Roots' of the Peter Rabbit Tales" (website)

J.M. Barrie's "To the Five: A Dedication" (website)

**Sept. 7** George MacDonald's "Fantastic Imagination" (website)

C.S. Lewis's "On Three Ways of Writing for Children"

J.R.R. Tolkien's "On Fairy Stories" (website)

Edwina Burness & Jerry Griswold's "P.L. Travers: Paris Review Interview" (website)

Banned Books Weeks: List of Frequently Challenged Books for 2015 (handout)

**Deadline for Sign-up for Author/Illustrator for Collection of Essays**

**Sept. 14** Leonard Marcus's *The Wand in the Word*

J.K. Rowling's "By the Book" (website)

Paper Call: Imagined Worlds, 2017 ChLA Conference, Deadline for proposals

Oct 15 for Conference Tampa, FL, June 22-24 (handout)

Madeleine L'Engle "The Expanding Universe: Newbery Award Acceptance" (website)

Oral Report: Madeleine L'Engle's *A Wrinkle in Time*

**Deadline to select Book for Presentation at Banned Book Reading.**

Consult Robert P. Doyle's *Banned Books Resource Guide* or the ALA (American Library Association) Website for appropriate book.

- Sept. 21** E.B. White's *Charlotte's Web*  
 E.B. White's "Children's Books" (website)  
**Short essay explaining reasons the book was challenged or banned and justification/rational for book (2 pages)**
- Sept. 28** JonArno Lawson's *Inside Out: Children's Poets Discuss Their Work*  
 X.J. Kennedy's "Strict and Loose Nonsense: Two Worlds of Children's Verse" (website)  
 Nancy Willard's "Newbery Medal Acceptance" (website)  
 Oral Report: Nancy's Willard's *A Visit to William Blake's Inn: Poems for Experienced and Innocence Travelers*  
**Banned Book Reading:** Stevenson 101, 7-8:20 p.m.
- Oct. 5** Leonard Marcus's *Show Me A Story: Why Picture Books Matter*  
 Crockett Johnson's *Harold and the Purple Crayon*  
 Maurice Sendak's "Ruth Krauss and Me: A Very Special Partnership" (website)  
 Robert McCloskey's Caldecott Award Acceptance" (website)  
 Oral Report: Robert McCloskey's *Time of Wonder*  
**Proposal for ChLA Conference: Imagined Worlds (300-350 words) Due**
- Oct. 12** Maurice Sendak's *Caldecott & Company*  
 Maurice Sendak's *Where the Wild Things Are*  
 Oral Report: Gregory Maguire's *Making Mischievous: A Maurice Sendak Appreciation*
- Oct. 19** Betsy Hearne's *The Sutherland Lectures, 1983-1992*  
 Arnold Lobel's "A Good Picture Book Should ..." (website)  
 Margaret Wise Brown's "Creative Writing for Very Young Children" (website)  
 Oral Report: Jean Fritz's *Homesick: My Story*  
**Draft of Collection of Essays Working Title, Draft Biographical sketch of author/illustrator. List of Key Works & Awards (6-8 pages) Draft of table of contents including 5 possible essays for the collection. Annotate essays.**
- Oct. 26** Katherine Paterson's *A Sense of Wonder: On Reading and Writing Books for Children*  
 Oral Report: Katherine Paterson's *Bridge to Terabithia*  
 Oral Report: Katherine Paterson's *Jacob Have I Loved*
- Nov. 2** Arnold Adoff's *Virginia Hamilton: Speeches, Essays & Conversations*  
 Oral Report: Virginia Hamilton's *MC Higgins the Great*  
 Selection of *Everything I Need to Know essays* (website)

- Nov. 9** Beverly Cleary's *Dear Mr. Henshaw*  
 Beverly Cleary's *On My Own Two Feet*  
 Beverly Cleary's "Newberry Medal Acceptance." (website)  
 Beverly Cleary's "The Laughter of Children" (website)  
 Jon Scieszka's "What's So Funny, Mr. Scieszka?" (website)  
**Influential Children's Book Essay Due (2 pages)**
- Nov. 16** Louis Fitzhugh's *Harriet the Spy*  
**Essay Collection, Introduction, Biographical Sketch of Author, List of Key Works, Table of Contents with at least 10 interviews, articles, speeches (15-18 pages) Due.**
- Nov. 23** Thanksgiving Break: no class
- Nov. 30** Rainbow Rowell's *Fangirl: A Novel*  
 Jane Davitt "Fan Fiction, Plagiarism, and Copyright" (website)  
 Kirby Ferguson's "Everything is a Remix" The Song Remains the Same, Remix Inc., Elements of Creativity, System Failure (website)
- Dec. 7** Author/Illustrator's Websites/You tube videos/ documentaries  
 John Green, Judy Blume, Gene Luen Yang, & Jacqueline Woodson websites  
 Spike Jonz's "Tell Them Anything You Want: A Portrait of Maurice Sendak"
- Dec. 14 Final Exam** TBA. Five-minute presentations on collections.  
 Bring to class a one-page abstract of collection and the table of contents.  
 Bring copies for each member of the class.

### **Studies in Children's Literature: Author & Illustrator as Critic.**

Children's book authors and illustrators, in addition to crafting memorable texts for young readers, are often insightful critics of children's and young adult literature. This seminar will examine the critical writing of a wide range of children's authors and illustrators from the nineteenth to the twenty-first centuries. Readings will include critical essays by Lewis Carroll, J.M. Barrie, C.S. Lewis, J.R.R. Tolkien, E.B. White, Beverly Cleary, Jean Fritz, Ursula Le Guin, Virginia Hamilton, X.J. Kenndy, Katherine Patterson, Maurice Sendak, David Macaulay, Jon Scieszksa, Katherine Patterson, Virginia Hamilton, and J.K. Rowling. The seminar will also read of a selection of Newbery & Caldecott Medal speeches, and Zena Sutherland lectures. The seminar will examine several children's Künstlerroman, in which the protagonist addresses the challenges of becoming a writer or an artist including E.B. White's *Charlotte's Web*, Louise Fitzhugh's *Harriet the Spy*, Beverly Cleary's *Dear Mr. Henshaw*, Rainbow Rowell's *Fangirl: A Novel*, Crockett Johnson's *Harold and the Purple Crayon*, and Maurice Sendak's *Where the Wild Things Are*. Students will select an influential children's author or illustrator and edit a collection of that individual's essays, speeches, and interviews.

**Required Texts:**

William Zinsser, Ed. *Worlds of Childhood: The Art and Craft of Writing for Children*. Mariner.

Maurice Sendak. *Caldecott & Co.: Notes on Books & Pictures*. Noonday Press.

Arnold Adoff, Ed. *Virginia Hamilton: Speeches, Essays, & Conversations*. Blue Sky Press.

Katherine Paterson. *A Sense of Wonder: On Reading and Writing Books for Children*. Plume.

Beverly Cleary. *On My Own Two Feet: A Memoir*. Harper Collins.

Leonard Marcus, Ed. *The Wand in the Word: Conversations with Writers of Fantasy*. Candlewick.

JonArno Lawson, Ed. *Inside Out: Children's Poets Discuss Their Works*. Walker Books.

Betsy Hearne, Ed. *The Zena Sutherland Lectures 1983-1992*. Clarion.

Leonard Marcus, Ed. *Show Me A Story: Why Picture Books Matter*. Candlewick.

E.B. White. *Charlotte's Web*. HarperCollins.

Louis Fitzhugh. *Harriet the Spy*. Yearling.

Beverly Cleary. *Dear Mr. Henshaw*. HarperCollins.

Rainbow Rowell. *Fangirl: A Novel*. Macmillan.

Crockett Johnson. *Harold and the Purple Crayon*. HarperCollins.

Maurice Sendak. *Where the Wild Things Are*. HarperCollins.

Joseph Gibaldi. *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*, 7<sup>th</sup> ed. MLA  
(This text is not required, but strongly recommended)

**On Reserve at Milner Library (2<sup>ND</sup> Floor):**

Zinsser's *Worlds of Childhood*

Sendak's *Caldecott & Company*

Cleary's *On My Own Two Feet*

Patterson's *A Sense of Wonder*

Marcus's *The Wand in the Word*

Lawson's *Inside Out*

Hearne's *Zena Sutherland Lectures*

Marcus's *Show Me a Story*

Adoff's *Virginia Hamilton* 6th Floor Special Collections: Building Use Only

**Course Format:**

The class will be conducted as a seminar, which means that the students are expected to come to class and be prepared for active discussion of the reading assignments. All students will give an oral presentation on a prearranged topic and will create and distribute a handout (2 pages) on the topic for every member of the class. Students should include a Powerpoint presentation as part of their class presentation and turn in a printout of their Powerpoint presentation to the instructor the evening of the presentation. Students will also write an rationale for of a banned or challenged children's book (2-page). The class will organize, promote, and present a Banned Book Reading on Sept. 28. Students will select, prepare, and read a five-minute presentation from a challenged or censored tween book. Each student develop a collection of writings by a children's

author or illustrator (15-18 pages). Students will also write a proposal for a conference paper (2-page) and a short personal essay on a personally influential children's books (2-page). For the final exam, students will prepare and present a five-minute oral presentation on their collections of essays and distribute a one-page abstract & table of contents of their author/illustration collection to all the members of the class. During the semester, there will be short written assignments related to the primary texts and critical readings. Students are expected to attend class and contribute to class discussion.

### **Class Attendance:**

Class attendance is important and is intended to be a valuable experience. You should diligently try to be on time for class. Since the class meets once a week, missing one class is missing a week's worth of class. Since you can't be two places at the same time, avoid scheduling other activities during class time. If you must miss class, you should have a compelling reason for your absence. Whenever possible, notify me by email before your absence. Since class participation will be evaluated as part of your responsibilities in this course, missing more than one class will lower your final grade one half a letter for each additional class session missed. Papers and assignments should be turned in at the stated deadlines. If an extension needs to be made, it should be worked out with the instructor prior to the deadline: otherwise, late work will be penalized with a lower grade.

If you need to withdraw from the course, please remember this is your responsibility and you should be aware of the deadlines for dropping a course.

### **Collection of Writing by Children's Author or Illustrations:**

Each student will develop a collection of articles, interviews, and conversations with a significant children's author or illustrator (15-18 pages). For the final class, each student will prepare a five-minute presentation on their research and provide a one-page abstract of their essay collection & table of contents for all members of the class. Material for the collection needs to conform to the format that is explained in the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*. *The MLA Handbook* shows how to cite material and how to create a Works Cited page. Students are strongly encouraged to purchase a copy of this handbook, if they do not already own it. Please keep an extra copy of your papers for your records.

### **Class Presentation and Presentation Handout**

Each student will give a short 10-12 minute class presentation selected from a list of prearranged topics. Students will introduce the topic to the class and then lead a class discussion on the subject. In addition to the presentation, each student will construct a handout (2-page) to accompany their presentation to be distributed to each member of the class on the evening of the presentation. Students should provide the instructor with a printout of their Power Point presentation.

### **Plagiarism/Cheating:**

Please review the Illinois State University policy in the *Graduate Catalog* under "Academic Integrity" (29-30) and chapter 2: "Plagiarism" (66-75) in the *MLA Handbook*. Plagiarism and cheating are serious academic offenses and may result in failure on an

exam, paper, or project and in some cases failure in the course. All written work submitted for this course must be your own and produced for this specific course.

**Students Access and Accommodation:**

Students with a documented disability should contact Student Access and Accommodation at 350 Fell Hall, 438-5857, or visit their website: [StudentAccess.IllinoisState.edu](http://StudentAccess.IllinoisState.edu)

**Grades:**

Grades will be based on the following point scale: Grades for papers: A+=100, A=95, A-92, B+= 87, B=85, B-=82, C+=77, C=75, C-=72, D+=67, D=65, D-=62, F=50. For the course grade, the following scale will be used A=90 and above, B=80 and above, C= 70 and above, D=60 and above, F=50 and below. Students earn their grades by performance, not by negotiation. If you have a question concerning a grade on an assignment, please come by my office during my office hours to discuss it. The course grade will be based on the following assignments, which will be weighted as follows:

Class presentation & Handout: 10%

Rational for the Banned Books 10%

Banned Book Reading 10%

Conference Proposal: 10%

Essay on Influential Book 10%

Collection of Essays: 40%

Class Participation: 10%