

King's College  
Education Department  
EDUC 339 - 3 Credits  
CHILDREN'S LITERATURE N-6  
Fall 2003

**Professor:** Dr. Joyce Armstrong  
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**Office Hours:** Monday, Wednesday, and Friday – 8:30 to 11:00 am  
Other times by appointment

**Class Meetings, Location:**

Monday, Wednesday, and Friday: 10:00 – 10:50  
Administration Building 310

**Course Texts:** Galda, L. & Cullinan, B.E. (2002) Literature and the Child, 5<sup>th</sup> Edition.  
Belmont, CA:Wadsworth/Thomson Learning.

**Course Description:** This course will review relevant literature for preschool and elementary children. The wide breadth of literature from fantasy and poetry to informational books is studied. This course is designed to inculcate in students an appreciation of the literature created especially for children. **Literature will focus on the diversity within the world.** **Prerequisite:** EDUC 336.

**Course Outcomes:** The student will:

1. Become familiar with the theoretical issues surrounding teaching with literature.
2. Participate in-group discussions of class text and children's literature.
3. Critically evaluate varied children's literature for classroom use.
4. Practice presenting children's literature in a classroom.
5. **Evaluate children's literature in view of diversity issues.**
6. **Develop an understanding of the complexity, multiplicity, and fluidity of identities expressed in children's literature.**
7. **To develop the ability to evaluate how categories of race, gender, etc. are socially constructed and how to identify hidden assumptions in children's literature.**
8. Expand the liberal arts competencies emphasized in King's Core Curriculum, particularly the abilities of critical and creative thinking.

**Special Needs:** If you have a special need as addressed by the *Americans with Disabilities Act* and need course material in alternative formats, notify the instructor immediately. Reasonable efforts will be made to accommodate your special needs.

**Grading Criteria:**

- A = 285 – 300 points
- B+ = 274 – 284 points
- B = 263 – 273 points
- C+ = 252 – 262 points
- C = 240 – 251 points
- D = 228 – 239 points
- F = 227 points or less

**Attendance:** “King’s College regards student participation in class as essential to the learning process. Therefore, regular class attendance is required of all students.” (Student Handbook) Students should contact the instructor prior to any absence. Four (4) missed classes will result in the grade lowered by one grade level.

**Overall Minimum GPA:**

The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania requires teacher education programs to set the standard of overall minimum GPA of 3.00 for student teaching and certification. Students must meet the above minimum GPA requirements to formally enter the teacher education program, register for student teaching, and apply for Pennsylvania teacher certification regardless of when they entered King’s College.

**Academic Integrity:** It is assumed that all materials presented by students are original and/or referenced accordingly.

**Class Format:** Classes will include lecture, discussions, group work, and student presentations.

## Course Requirements: (300 Total Points)

### A) Reading Assignments and Reaction Papers: (50 points)

Reading assignments have been made from the text **and outside readings** for each week. A reaction paper for each chapter needs to be completed for chapters 1 through 10. The reaction paper is due the Monday after the class discussion of the chapter. The reaction paper should be five (5) paragraphs in length, double-spaced, and word-processed. Please include a title page with your name, date, and chapter number. The paper should reflect your reactions to what was presented within the chapter and the class discussion, not a review of the chapter.

### B. Examination: (50 points)

One multiple choice and/or essay tests will be administered at mid-term.

### C. Children's Literature Notebook: (100 points)

A notebook of 100 children's books needs to be compiled. At least one Newbery Award winning book and three books from each genre is required. The student will decide upon the organization of the notebook. After reading a book an entry page needs to be developed. (see example)

Each entry includes:

1. Centered Title
2. Genre of the book
3. Bibliographic Information: author, illustrator, publisher, and copyright date
4. Summary: brief summary of the plot or content (1-2 paragraphs)
5. Your response: What do you think about the book?
6. Instructional Ideas: How would you use this book in class?

### D) Presentations: (60 points)

Reading aloud and storytelling are powerful incentives for fostering reading with students. To increase your confidence in reading aloud and in storytelling each student is expected to make 3 presentations (20 points each) to the class during class time.

One presentation will be a picture book, a second presentation will be a non-fiction book, and the third presentation will be a story-telling experience. Each presentation should be 5-10 minutes in length. A notebook entry page should be available for distribution to class at the time of the presentation for the picture book and the non-fiction book.

E) Reading to a Child: (10 points)

To promote reading aloud to children you will need to select a child or children to read to on a weekly basis. A log should be developed to reflect your readings to the child. A session should be a minimum of 15 minutes and conducted weekly. Logs are due at the end of the semester.

F) Diversity Paper: (20 points)

You will need to decide upon one aspect of multiculturalism that is discussed in Chapter 11 of our textbook. Utilizing the technology of the internet explore your topic. Locate 3 different websites that provide information about your topic. Write one paragraph about each web site. Lastly identify three quality children's books that promote your topic.

G) Evaluation of Children Books: (10 points)

Select three books for children ages 8-12. Utilizing the criteria listed in "Ten Quick Ways To Analyze Children's Books For Sexism and Racism" evaluate the three books. Papers should be should be double-spaced and word-processed. Please include a title page with your name and date.

## READING ASSIGNMENTS

### Week of:

August 25:	Chapter 1	Children's Literature Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow
September 1:	Chapter 2	Poetry and Verse Due: Reaction to Chapter 1
September 8:	Chapter 3	The Art of Picture Books Due: Reaction to Chapter 2
September 15:	Chapter 4	The Content of Picture Books Due: Reaction to Chapter 3
September 22:	Chapter 5	Folklore Due: Reaction to Chapter 4
September 29:	Chapter 6	Fantasy and Science Fiction Due: Reaction to Chapter 5
October 6	Chapter 7	Contemporary Realistic Fiction Due: Reaction to Chapter 6

**October 8: Mid-Term Examination**

October 13:	Chapter 8	Historical Fiction Due: Reaction to Chapter 7
October 20:	Chapter 9	Biography Due: Reaction to Chapter 8
October 27:	Chapter 10	Non-Fiction Due: Reaction to Chapter 9
November 1:	Chapter 11	Building a Culturally Diverse Literature Collection Due: Reaction to Chapter 10 <b>Literature Evaluation Papers</b>
November 8:	Handouts	Evaluating Children's Literature in the context of Diversity Issues
November 15	Chapter 12	Developing Responsive Readers <b>Due: Diversity Paper</b>
November 22:	Chapter 13	Literature-Based Instruction in Preschool And Primary Grades
:	<b>November 30: Notebook Due</b>	
November 29:	Chapter 14	Literature-Based Instruction in Intermediate Grades and Middle School

**December 3: Reading to a Child Log Due**

# Sample Notebook Entry

## Lucy's Picture

**Author:** Nicola Moon

**Illustrator:** Alex Ayliffe

**Genre:** Picture Book

**Publisher:** Dial Books for Young Readers

**Copyright Date:** 1994

### **Summary:**

Lucy is a young child in kindergarten. She is preparing a picture for her visiting grandfather. We read how Lucy develops a collage instead of a simple painting. At the end of book we discover that Lucy's grandfather is blind.

### **Reaction:**

This book reflects accurately the emotions of a grandchild of a person who is blind. Lucy reflects compassion and love for her grandfather.

### **Instructional Ideas:**

The book can be read to all age groups. The accuracy involved in the book assists children in understanding how we need to change our view of what we accept from students with family members who have disabilities.

# Ten Quick Ways To Analyze Children's Books For Sexism And Racism

Both in school and out, young children are exposed to racist and sexist attitudes. These attitudes-expressed over and over in books and in other media-gradually distort their perceptions until stereotypes and myths about minorities and women are accepted as reality. It is difficult for a librarian or teacher to convince children to question society's attitudes. But if a child can be shown how to detect racism and sexism in a book, the child can proceed to transfer the perception to wider areas. The following ten guidelines are offered as a starting point in evaluation of children's books from this perspective.

## 1. Check the Illustrations

**Look for Stereotypes.** A stereotype is an oversimplified generalization about a particular group, race, or sex, which usually carries derogatory implications. Some infamous (overt) stereotypes of Blacks are the happy-go-lucky, watermelon-eating Sambo and the fat, eye-rolling "mammy"; of Chicanos, the sombrero-wearing peon, or the fiesta-loving, macho bandito; of Asian Americans, the inscrutable, slant-eyed "Oriental"; of Native Americans, the naked savage or "primitive" craftsperson and his squaw; of Puerto Ricans, switchblade-toting, teenage gang member; of women, the completely domesticated mother, the demure, doll-loving little girl or the wicked stepmother. While you may not always find stereotypes in the blatant forms described, look for variations, which in any way demean or ridicule characters because of their race or sex.

**Look for Tokenism.** If there are minority characters in the illustration, do they look just like whites except for being tinted or colored? Do all minority faces look stereotypically alike, or they depicted as genuine individuals with distinctive features?

**Who's Doing What?** Do the illustrations depict minorities in subservient and passive roles or in leadership and action roles? Are males the active "doers" and females the inactive observers?

## 2. Check the Story Line

The liberation movements have lead publishers to weed out many insulting passages, particularly from stories with black themes and from books depicting female characters; however, racist and sexist attitudes still find expression in less obvious ways. The following checklist suggests some of the subtle forms of bias to watch for.

**Standard for Success.** Does it take “white” behavior standards for a minority person “get ahead”? Is “making it” in the dominant white society projected as the only ideal? To gain acceptance and approval, do third world persons have to exhibit extraordinary qualities-excel in sports, get A’s etc.? Is friendships between white and third world children, is it the third world child does most of the understanding and forgiving?

**Resolution of Problems.** How are problems presented, conceived and resolved in a story. Are minority people considered to be “the problem”? Are the oppressions faced by minorities and women represented as casualty related to an unjust society? Are the reasons for poverty and oppression explained, or are they accepted as inevitable? Does the story line encourage passive acceptance or active resistance? Is a particular problem that is faced by a minority person resolved through benevolent intervention of a white person?

**Role of Women.** Are the achievements of girls and women based on their own? initiative and intelligence, or are they due to their good looks or to their relationship with boys? Are sex roles incidental or critical to characterization and plot? Could the same story be told if the sex roles were reversed?

## 3. Look at the Lifestyles

Are third world persons and their setting depicted in such a way that they contrast unfavorably with the unstated norm of white, middle-class suburbia? If the minority in question is depicted as “different”, are negative value judgments implied? Are minorities depicted exclusively in ghettos, barrios, or migrant camps? If the illustrations and text attempt to depict another culture, do they go beyond over-simplifications and offer genuine insights into another lifestyle? Look for inaccuracy and inappropriateness in the depiction of other cultures. Watch for instances of the “quaint-natives-in-costume” syndrome (most notable in areas like clothing and custom, but extending to behavior and personality traits as well).

## 4. Weigh the Relationship Between People

Do the whites in the story possess the power, take the leadership, and make the important decisions? Do minorities and females function in essentially supporting and subservient roles?

How are family relationships depicted? In Black families, is the mother always dominant? In Latino families, are there always lots of children? If the family is separated, are societal conditions-unemployment, poverty-cited among the reasons for separation?

## **5. Note the Heroes**

For many years, books showed only “safe” minority heroes- those who avoided serious conflict with the white establishment of their time. Minority groups today are insisting on the right to define their own heroes (of both sexes) based on their own concepts and struggles for justice.

When minority heroes do appear, are they admired for the same qualities that made white heroes famous or because they have done what has benefited white people? Ask this question: “Whose interests is a particular hero really serving?” The interests of the hero’s own people? Or the interests of white people?

## **6. Consider the Effects on a Child’s Self-Image**

Are norms established which limit any child’s aspirations and self-concepts? What effect can it have on third world children to be continuously bombarded with images of the color white as the ultimate in beauty, cleanliness, virtue, etc.? Does the book reinforce or counteract positive associations with the color black?

What happens to a girl’s self-image when she reads that boys perform all the brave and important deeds? What about a girl’s self-esteem if she is not “fair” of skin or slim of body?

In a particular story, are there one or more persons with whom a minority child can readily identify to a positive and constructive end?

## **7. Consider the Author’s or Illustrator’s Background**

Analyze the biographical material on the jacket flap or on the back of the book. If a story deals with a minority theme, what qualifies the author or illustrator to deal with the subject? If the author and illustrator are not members of the minority being written about, is there anything in their background that would specifically recommend them as the creators of this book?

## **8. Check Out the Author’s Perspective**

No author can be entirely objective. All authors write from a cultural as well as from personal context. Children’s books in the past have traditionally come from authors who were white and who were members of the middle class, with one result being that a single ethnocentric perspective has dominated children’s literature in the United States. With any book in question, read carefully to determine whether the direction of the author’s perspective substantially weakens or strengthens the value of his/her written work. Is the perspective patriarchal or feminist? Is it solely Eurocentric or do third world perspectives also surface?

## Culturally Diverse Literature

Culturally Diverse Literature is much more than race, ethnicity, gender, customs, beliefs, and ethics differences. It is a reflection of all children's literature because all children's literature is beginning to reflect the cultural diversity that marks North America and the world.

You will need to decide upon one aspect of multiculturalism that is discussed in Chapter 11 of our textbook. Utilizing the technology of the internet explore to your topic, locate three (3) different websites that provide information about your topic. Write one paragraph about each web site. Lastly identify three quality children's books that promote your topic.

The format of the paper will reflect the following outline:

- I. Identify your topic and write at least one (1) paragraph to define your topic.
- II. Write three separate paragraphs about each web site.
- III. Identify the three books by title, author, and include a few sentences on why these books promote the topic.
- IV. Conclusion

Paper should have a title page, doubled spaced, and be word-processed.

Paper due: Monday, November 25, 2003.

Total possible points: 15 points

**Education 339**  
**Children's Literature**  
**Presentations**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

1) Picture Book \_\_\_\_\_

A) Appearance      1.....2.....3.....4      \_\_\_\_\_

B) Quality of voice      1.....2.....3.....4      \_\_\_\_\_

C) Questioning before      1.....2.....3.....4      \_\_\_\_\_

D) Questioning during      1.....2.....3.....4      \_\_\_\_\_

E) Questioning after      1.....2.....3.....4      \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_points

2. Non Fiction Book \_\_\_\_\_

A) Appearance      1.....2.....3.....4      \_\_\_\_\_

B) Quality of voice      1.....2.....3.....4      \_\_\_\_\_

C) Questioning before      1.....2.....3.....4      \_\_\_\_\_

D) Questioning during      1.....2.....3.....4      \_\_\_\_\_

E) Questioning after      1.....2.....3.....4      \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_points

3. Storytelling \_\_\_\_\_

Comments on Presentation:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_points