

English 272:01 Literature for the Middle Grades

Fall 2019 Professor Jan Susina

Class Meeting: Tuesday & Thursday 9:30 --10:50 p.m.

Class Room: Stevenson 221-B

Office: Stevenson 402

Office Phone: 438-3739; Email: jcsusina@ilstu.edu.

(Email is the most efficient method to contact me.)

Office Hours: Tuesday & Thursday: 12:30-1:30 p.m.

Web site: <http://ghostofthetalkingcricket.squarespace.com>

Tentative Syllabus:

Aug. 20: Introduction and Overview to the Course: The World of Middle School
& Tweens

NCTE Position Statements: "Preparing Teachers with Knowledge of Children's
and Young Adult Literature (handout)

Aug. 22: Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* (chapters 1-15)

Aug. 27: Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* (chapters 16-36, Conclusion)

****Deadline for Sign-up for Tween Film for Paper****

Aug. 29: Francis Hodgson Burnett's *A Little Princess* (chapters 1-9)

Sept. 3: Francis Hodgson Burnett's *A Little Princess* (chapters 10-19)

Sept. 5: Gail Carson Levine's *Ella Enchanted* (chapters 1-10)

****Tween Film Paper Due****

Sept. 10: Gail Carson Levine's *Ella Enchanted* (chapters 11-19)

Sept. 12: Gail Carson Levine's *Ella Enchanted* (chapters 20-29, Epilogue)

Sept. 17: Rick Riordan's *The Lightning Thief* (chapters 1-8)

Sept. 19: Rick Riordan's *The Lightning Thief* (chapters 8-16)

Sept. 24: Rick Riordan's *The Lightning Thief* (chapters 17-22)

****Deadline for Sign-up for Book for Critical Paper****

Sept. 26: Research Day

Oct. 1: Russell Freedman's *Lincoln: A Photobiography* (chapters 1-7, A Lincoln
Sampler)

Oct. 3: **Midterm Exam**

Oct. 8: Christopher Paul Curtis's *Bud, Not Buddy* (chapters 1-10)

Oct. 10: Christopher Paul Curtis's *Bud, Not Buddy* (chapters 11-19, Afterward)

Oct. 15: Karen Hesse's *Out of the Dust* (pages 1-95)

Oct. 17: Karen Hesse's *Out of the Dust* (pages 99-227)

Oct. 22: Louise Fitzhugh's *Harriet the Spy* (chapters 1-5)

****Proposal for Critical Paper: Working Title, &
Works Cited with four annotated secondary sources Due****

Oct. 24: Louise Fitzhugh's *Harriet the Spy* (chapters 6-12)

Oct. 29: Louise Fitzhugh's *Harriet the Spy* (chapters 13-16)

Oct. 31: Blue Balliett's *Chasing Vermeer* (chapters 1- 10)

Nov 5: Blue Balliett's *Chasing Vermeer* (chapters 11-16)

Nov. 7: Blue Balliett's *Chasing Vermeer* (chapters 17-24)

Nov. 12: Jeff Kinney's *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* (pages 114-217)

Nov. 14: Jeff Kinney's *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* (pages 1-113)

****Critical Paper Due ****

Nov. 19: Brian Selznick's *The Invention of Hugo Cabret* (Part 1)

Nov. 21: Brian Selznick's *The Invention of Hugo Cabret* (part 2)

Nov. 26: No Class: Thanksgiving Break

Nov. 29: No Class: Thanksgiving Break

Dec. 3: E.B. White's *Charlotte's Web* (chapters 1-11)

Dec. 5: E.B. White's *Charlotte's Web* (chapters 12- 22)

Dec. 9-13: **Final Exam** according to the final exam schedule.

Goals of the course:

While this is a course in children's literature, it is also a university-level literature course. Students will be reading and analyzing a variety of texts that are intended for students in middle school. Since many of the students enrolled in this course are preparing to become middle school teachers, or librarians, students will want to know much more about these books than your future students. The class will attempt to understand how

young readers make meaning from these texts and how these texts help to form ideologies and cultural beliefs concerning middle school children.

Required Texts:

Mark Twain. *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, ed. John Seelye. Penguin Classics.
 Frances Hodgson Burnett. *A Little Princess*, ed. U.C. Knoepfelmacher. Penguin Classics.
 Gail Carson Levine. *Ella Enchanted*. HarperCollins.
 Rick Riordan. *The Lightning Thief*. HyperionMiramax.
 Russell Freedman. *Lincoln: A Photobiography*. Houghton Mifflin.
 Christopher Paul Curtis. *Bud, No Buddy*. Yearling.
 Louise Fitzhugh. *Harriet the Spy*. Yearling.
 Blue Balliett. *Chasing Vermeer*. Scholastic.
 Jeff Kinney. *Diary of a Wimpy Kid*. Amulet Books.
 Brian Selznick. *The Invention of Hugo Cabret*. Scholastic.
 E.B. White. *Charlotte's Web*. HarperCollins.

Joseph Gibaldi. *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*, 8th ed. MLA
 (This text is not required, but strongly recommended)

Course Format:

The class will be reading and discussing a variety of children's texts that are intended for children aged nine-to-thirteen, including multicultural novels, information books, poetry, graphic novels, children's media and culture. Students need to read the assignments prior to class and be prepared to discuss them in class. The class will involve lecture, discussion, and small group work. Throughout the semester, students will be assigned a series of short writing projects and reading quizzes that are intended to help you to think critically about middle school literature.

Class Attendance:

Class attendance is important and is intended to be a valuable experience. You should diligently try to be on time for class. If you must miss class, you should have a good reason for your absence. Whenever possible, notify me by email before your absence. Since you can't be two places at the same time, avoid scheduling other activities during class time. Students are expected to participate in class discussion and a portion of the final grade will be based on class discussion. If a student misses more than three classes, the final grade will be lowered a third of a letter grade for each additional class missed. Turn off cell phones and other electronic devices before class starts. Students who miss a class or come in late will not be allowed to make up an in-class writing assignment and/or a pop quiz. Regular attendance and active participation in class discussion is required. 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. Papers and assignments should be turned 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. Students will provide the instructor with print copies of the assignments.

Exams:

There will be two exams given during the semester, one of which will be a cumulative final exam. The final exam is scheduled, according to the Fall 2019 Final Exam Schedule. The exams will include objective and short identification items as well as essay questions. Students will need to purchase a Blue Book for each exam.

Proposal for Critical Paper:

In preparation for your critical paper on one of the middle school books read in class or those listed on the syllabus as additional texts, students will write a short proposal for their research paper which explains the focus of their paper. The proposal should be 1-2 pages, typed, double-spaced, single-sided, and include a working title and a Works Cited section with at least 4 possible secondary sources. The proposal needs to conform to the format provided in the *MLA Handbook*. The *MLA Handbook* shows how to cite material within your paper and how to create a Works Cited page. Number the pages of your paper. Students will provide a print copy of their proposal to the instructor.

Critical Paper:

Each student will write a short (7-10 page, typed, doubled spaced, single-sided) analysis on a book appropriate for middle school readers selected from a list of titles provided by the instructor. Students will write a proposal for their research paper, which will include a minimum of 4 secondary sources in their Works Cited section. Only half of the secondary sources can be electronic sources. Critical papers need to conform to the format that is explained in the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers, Eighth Edition*. The *MLA Handbook* shows how to cite material within your paper 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. The Work Cited section of the final paper must have a minimum of 7 secondary sources. Once again, only half of those sources can be electronic. Students will submit a print copy of the paper to the instructor. Number the pages of your paper. Please keep an extra copy of your papers for your records.

Film Analysis Paper:

Students will write a short analysis (3-page, typed, doubled spaced, single-sided) on a film appropriate for middle school viewers selected from a list provided by the instructor. Students need to look up and read the entry on the film in *Wikipedia* and films reviews from the *New York Times*, *Los Angeles Times* and Roger Ebert's website (rogerbert.com). The film analysis should focus on how the film represents tweens and their concerns and preoccupations. Identify reasons that the film would appeal to a tween audience and the messages the film conveys to young viewers. Identify the genre of the film and provide a cultural context for the film. Consider whether you feel the film is a successful or appropriate for tween viewers and justify your opinion. The film analysis paper should cite the film and at least one of secondary source about the film. These film papers need to conform to the format found in the *MLA Handbook*. Number the pages of your paper. Students will submit a print copy of the paper to the instructor.

Plagiarism/Cheating:

Please consult the Illinois State University policy in the *ISU Undergraduate Catalog* under "Academic Integrity" and chapter 2: "Plagiarism" 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 Needing Support Services

Any student needing to arrange a reasonable accommodation for a documented disability and/or medical/mental health condition should contact Student Access and Accommodation Services at 350 Fell Hall, 438-5853 (voice), or 438-8620, visit the website at 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 for exam, 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:

Midterm Exam: 20%

Critical Paper: 20%

Film Analysis Paper: 10%

Assignments & Reading Quizzes: 20%

Final Exam: 20%

Class Participation: 10%

Additional Books for Critical Paper:

Roald Dahl's *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*

E.L. Konigsburg's *From The Mixed-up Files of Mr. Basil E. Frankweiler*

Katherine Paterson's *Bridge to Terabithia*

Judy Blume's *Are You There God? It's Me, Margaret*

Meg Cabot's *The Princess Diaries*

Scott O'Dell's *The Island of the Blue Dolphins*

Lemony Snicket's *A Series of Unfortunate Events: Book 1*

Jacqueline Woodson's *Brown Girl Dreaming*

Raina Telgemeier's *Sisters*

Gene Luen Yang's *American Born Chinese*

J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter and Sorcerer's Stone*

Madeleine L'Engle's *A Wrinkle in Time*

Tween Films for Papers:

(Check IMDb) Internet Movie Database for film information

Jim Henson's *Labyrinth* (1986)
 Steven Spielberg's *E.T.: Extra-Terrestrial* (1982)
 Alfonso Cuarón's *A Little Princess* (1995)
 Bronwen Hughes's *Harriet the Spy* (1996)
 Brad Bird's *The Iron Giant* (1999)
 Jay Russell's *My Dog Skip* (2000)
 Hayao Miyazaki's *Spirited Away* (2001)
 Jeffery Blitz's *Spellbound* (2002)
 Richard Linklater's *School of Rock* (2003)
 Tommy O'Haver's *Ella Enchanted* (2004)
 Brad Silberling's *Lemony Snicket's A Series of Unfortunate Events* (2004)
 Tim Burton's *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* (2005)
 Doug Atchison's *Akeelah and the Bee* (2006)
 Elizabeth Allen Rosenbaum's *Aquamarine* (2006)
 Gabor Csupo's *Bridge to Terabithia* (2007)
 Henry Selick's *Caroline* (2009)
 Thor Freudenthal's *The Diary of a Wimpy Kid* (2010)
 Chris Columbus's *Percy Jackson & the Olympians* (2010)
 Martin Scorsese's *Hugo* (2011)
 Peter Docter's *Inside Out* (2015)
 Ron Clements's *Moana* (2016)
 Lee Unkrich & Adrian Molina's *Coco* (2017)
 Ava DuVernay's *A Wrinkle in Time* (2018)
 Bo Burnham's *Eight Grade* (2018)