

## English 470.01: Disney's Influence on Children's Literature and Children's Culture

Fall 2022: Professor: Jan Susina

Class Meets: 2:00 - 3:15 p.m. Tuesdays & Thursdays.

Meeting Place: Stevenson 229

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Office Hours: Tuesday & Thursday: 12:30 -1:30 pm. Office Hours will be held on Zoom. Students should contact me by email to arrange an appointment.

### Tentative Syllabus

Aug. 23: Introduction and Overview to the Course.

Aug. 25: Disney and the Critics: Frances Clarke Sayers's "Walt Disney Accused, Lucy Rollin's "Fear of Faerie: Disney and the Elitist Critics," Jill May's "Walt Disney's Interpretation of Children's Literature," & Jack Zipes's "Breaking the Disney Spell" on website.

Aug. 30: Early Animation.

Neal Gabler's *Walt Disney* (Introduction & chapters 1 & 2).

*The Walt Disney Story* (1973).

Winsor McKay's *Gertie the Dinosaur* (1914).

Max Fleisher's *Invisible Ink: Out of the Inkwell* (1923).

Assignment of Class Presentations and Books for Book Review.

Sept. 1: Alice, Oswald, and Mickey.

*Alice's Wonderland* (1923), *Trolley Troubles* (1927) & *Steamboat Willie* (1928)

Steven Jay Gould's "A Biological Homage to Mickey Mouse" and Maurice

Sendak's "Walt Disney/1" on website .

Neal Gabler's *Walt Disney* (chapters 3 & 4).

Sept. 6: The Silly Symphonies.

*Skelton Dance* (1929), *Flowers and Trees* (1932),

*The Pied Piper* (1933) & *Three Little Pigs* (1933).

"The Ratcatcher (The Pied Piper of Hamelin)" & "The Three Little Pigs" in *Favorite Fairy Tales*.

Neal Gabler's *Walt Disney* (chapter 5)

Presentation on Disney's *Three Little Pigs* \_\_\_\_\_.

Sept. 8: "Snowdrop (Snow White & Seven Dwarfs)" in *Favorite Fairy Tales*

Disney's *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1937).

Neal Gabler's *Walt Disney* (chapter 6)

Presentation on Disney's *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*

\_\_\_\_\_.

- Sept. 13: Carlo Collodi's *Pinocchio* (chapters 1-15).
- Sept. 15: Carlo Collodi's *Pinocchio* (chapters 16-36).
- Sept. 20: Walt Disney's *Pinocchio* (1940).  
 Neal Gabler's *Walt Disney* (chapter 7).  
 Maurice Sendak's "Walt Disney/2" & Joan Acocella's "The Transformation of Pinocchio" in *The New Yorker*, link on website .  
 Presentation on Disney's *Pinocchio* \_\_\_\_\_.
- Sept. 22: Felix Salten's *Bambi* (chapters 1-10).
- Sept. 27: Felix Salten's *Bambi* (chapters 11-35).
- Sept. 29: No class: **Book Review Due (1,000 words).**
- Oct. 4: Disney's *Bambi* (1940).  
 Disney's *Der Fuehrer's Face* (1943).  
 Neal Gabler's *Walt Disney* (chapter 8).  
 Kathryn Schulz's "*Bambi* is Even Bleaker Than You Thought" on website.  
 Presentation on Disney's *Bambi* \_\_\_\_\_.
- Oct. 6. Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and Chapters 2 & 4 of *Through the Looking-Glass*.
- Oct. 11 Disney's *Alice in Wonderland* (1951).  
 Disney's *Thru the Mirror* (1937).  
 Disney's *Donald in Mathematic Land* (1959).  
 Neal Gabler's *Walt Disney* (chapter 9).  
 Presentation on Disney's *Alice in Wonderland*\_\_\_\_\_  
**Conference Proposal (250-300 words) and Copy for the Conference Call for Papers Due.**
- Oct. 13: Disney on Television and Disneyland.  
*Mickey Mouse Club* (1955) & *Walt Disney's Disneyland: Davy Crockett* (1955).  
 Neal Gabler's *Walt Disney* (chapter 10).  
 Kathy Merlock Jackson's "Synergistic Disney: New Directions for Micky & Media 1954-1955," Richard deCordova's "Mickey Mouse in Macy's Window: Childhood, Consumerism, & Disney Animation," & Margaret J. King & J.G. O'Boyle's "The Theme Park: The Art of Time and Space" on website.
- Oct 18: Virginia Lee Burton's *The Little House*.  
 Disney's *The Little House* (1952).  
 Steven Watts's "Disney and American Culture" on website.  
**Proposal for critical paper (250-300 word) Due.**
- Oct. 20: Eleanor Porter's *Pollyanna* (chapters 1-15).

Oct. 25: Eleanor Porter's *Pollyanna* (chapters 16-32).

Oct. 27: Disney's *Pollyanna* (1960).

K. Brenna Wardell's "'Almost a golden glow around it': The Filmic Nostalgic of Walt Disney's *Pollyanna*" on website.

Presentation on Disney's *Pollyanna* \_\_\_\_\_.

Nov. 1: P.L. Travers's *Mary Poppins* (chapters 1-6).

Nov. 3: P.L. Traver's *Mary Poppins* (chapters 7-12).

Nov. 8: No class: Election Day.

Nov. 10: Disney's *Mary Poppins* (1964) .

Neal Gabler's *Walt Disney* (chapter 11).

Sue Matheson's "From Page to Screen: Dysfunction, Subtext and Platonic Idealism in *Mary Poppins*" on website.

Presentation on Disney's *Mary Poppins* \_\_\_\_\_.

Nov. 15: Rudyard Kipling's *The Jungle Books*: "Mowgli's Brothers" "Kaa's Hunting" "Tiger-Tiger!" "How Fear Came," "Letting in the Jungle," "Red Dog" & "The Spring Running."

Nov. 17: Disney's *The Jungle Book* (1967).

Presentation on Disney's *The Jungle Book* \_\_\_\_\_.

Nov. 22: Thanksgiving Break: no class.

Nov. 24: Thanksgiving Break: no class.

Nov. 29: A.A. Milne's *Winnie-the-Pooh*.

**Critical Paper on Disney film adaptation of a Children's Books (12-15 pages & 100-150 word abstract) Due.**

Dec 1: Disney's *Winnie the Pooh and the Honey Tree* (1966) .

Paula Connolly "The Metafictive Playgrounds of Disney's *Winnie the Pooh*: The Movie *Is* a Book" on website.

Presentation on Disney's *Winnie the Pooh and the Honey Tree* \_\_\_\_\_.

Dec. 6: H.C. Andersen's "The Snow- Queen" in *Favorite Fairy Tales*.

Dec. 8: Disney's *Frozen* (2013).

Presentation on Disney's *Frozen* \_\_\_\_\_.

Dec. 12-15. Final Exam (TBA) **7-10 Minute Presentation of Critical Papers. Bring abstract to distribute all members of the class.**

**Required Texts:**

Neal Gabler. *Walt Disney. The Triumph of the American Imagination*. Vintage.

M.C. Waldrep, ed. *Favorite Fairy Tales: 27 Stories by Brothers Grimm, Andersen, Perrault, and Others*. Dover.

Lewis Carroll. *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland and Through the Looking-Glass*. Bantam Classics

Carlo Collodi. *Pinocchio*. Jack Zipes, ed. Penguin Classics.

Eleanor Porter. *Pollyanna*. Dover.

Rudyard Kipling. *The Jungle Books*. Signet.

Felix Salten. *Bambi*. Simon and Schuster.

A.A. Milne. *Winnie-the-Pooh*. Puffin Books

Virginia Lee Burton. *The Little House*. Clarion Books.

P.L. Travers. *Mary Poppins*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

**Recommended Text:**

Modern Language Association. *MLA Handbook Ninth edition*. MLA.

**Course Description:**

It can be argued that Walt Disney has had more influence on twentieth-century children's literature and culture than any other individual. The continued influence of the Disney Corporation on children and adults' access to and understanding of children's literature continues unabated in the twenty-first century on an increasingly global scale. Love him or loathe him, Walt Disney, Disney films, Disney theme parks, and the countless Disney products produced under the Disney brand have become a major aspect of childhood around the world.

Disney's prominent role in contemporary children's and youth culture should be of interest to graduate students working in areas of children's literature, popular culture, film studies, adaptation studies, and gender studies. This graduate seminar will examine the history and development of Disney animated and live-action films and explore how these films have adapted and transformed viewers understanding of the original texts. The seminar will examine how Disney films reflect the culture and ideologies of the historical periods in which they were produced and ways that Disney films have evolved over time.

**Course Format:**

The course will be conducted as a seminar which means that students are expected to come to class for active discussion of the reading assignments during both face-to-face sessions and Zoom sessions. Each student will write a longer critical paper (12-15 pages) and (100-150 word) abstract of their critical paper. Critical papers will focus one of the Disney film adaptations discussed in class. Prior to writing the critical paper, students will submit a proposal for their critical paper and well as a conference proposal. Students will give a 7-10 minute presentation on their critical paper. Students will write a book review of a critical text that examines Disney films or Disney culture selected from a list provided by the instructor. Throughout the semester, there will be other shorter written assignments related to the primary texts and critical readings. Students will be expected to attend class and contribute to the class discussion.

**Class Attendance:**

Class attendance is an important and valuable aspect of the course. If you aren't in class, you ought to have a good reason for your absence. As the class meets twice a week and you can't be two places at the same time, avoid scheduling other activities during class time. If you must miss a session, contact me before class by email or telephone, if possible. Since class participation will be evaluated as part of your responsibilities in this course, missing more than two class sessions will lower your final grade one half a letter grade for each additional class sessions missed.

**Critical Paper:**

Students will write a critical paper (12-15 pages) on some aspect Disney's influence on children's literature or children's culture that has been approved by the instructor. Students are encouraged to focus on one film adaptation of a children's text that has been common reading in the class. Students will write a (250-300 word) proposal for their research topic, which will be reviewed and approved by the instructor. For the final exam, students will present a 7–10 minute presentation on their research paper and provide 100–150 word abstract of the research paper for every member of the class. Written work should conform to the format presented in the *MLA Handbook, Ninth Edition* for appropriate quotation and citation. Critical papers need a minimum of **six secondary sources** in their Works Cited section. Only half of the secondary sources used in the Works Cited should be electronic sources. Students need to keep a copy of all their written work.

**Course Format:**

Sessions of this class will be held both face-to-face and online via Zoom. Students are required to attend and participate in both the face-to-face sessions as well as the Zoom sessions. While wearing masks on the ISU campus is optional, however students are encouraged to wear masks during the class.

The class will be reading and discussing a variety children's texts that have been adapted into Disney films . Students need to read/view the assignments prior to class and be prepared to discuss them in class. There will be a significant amount of reading that will be expected to be completed before each class session. Students will write a longer critical paper, a scholarly book review, and a conference proposal. Class participation will be factored into the final grade, which means that class attendance will be factored into the final grade.

**Class Attendance:**

Students are responsible for attending class & completing all academic work. Arrange in advance with the instructor if you need to miss a class session due to participation in a sanctioned university activity or to fulfill a religious obligation. Class attendance is important and is intended to be a valuable experience. If you must miss class, you should have a good reason for 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 and comments contributed to chat for Zoom sessions. If you know are going to miss a class, you should email the instructor by 10 a.m. the day of the class you will miss. If you must

miss class due to an extended illness (3 or more consecutive class days) or a bereavement, you should contact the Dean of Students at 309-438-2008 or visit their office in Room 387 of the Student Service Building.

### **Critical Paper:**

Each student will write a 12–15 page critical paper on one of the Disney film adaptation of a children's book read in common during the class. Students will write a short (250-300 word) proposal for their critical paper that needs to be approved by the instructor. Written work should conform to the format presented in the *MLA Handbook, 9<sup>th</sup> Edition* for appropriate quotation and citation. Critical papers need a minimum of **six scholarly secondary sources** in their Works Cited section. Written work submitted for this class needs to be your own and written specifically for this class.

### **Proposal for Critical Paper:**

In preparation for writing your critical paper on one of the Disney film adaptation of a children's text read in common by the class, students will write a short proposal for their longer research project. The proposal should be 250-300 words in length and include a Works Cited section including least **four** possible secondary sources. These sources should be annotated. The proposal needs to conform to the format provide in *The MLA Handbook, Ninth Edition*. *The MLA Handbook* shows how to cite material and how to create a Works Cited section. The proposal should have a working title, a description of the focus of your paper, and a Works Cites page with at least **four annotated** secondary sources.

### **List of Books for Scholarly Book Review:**

Each student will write a 1,000-word academic book review from a list of scholarly books about Disney films or Disney culture provided by the instructor. Before selecting the book for your book review, be sure that you have access to it and review the table of contents of several books on the list to confirm the book you select will be of interest and helpful to your research.

Annalee R. Ward. *Mouse Morality: The Rhetoric of Disney Animated Film*. University of Texas Press, 2002. (Milner, print).

Russell Merritt & J.B. Kaufman. *Walt in Wonderland: The Silent Films of Walt Disney*. Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993. (Milner, print).

Henry A. Giroux. *The Mouse That Roared: Disney and the End of Innocence*. Rowman & Littlefield, 1999. (Milner, print).

John Wills. *Disney Culture*. Rutgers University Press, 2017. (Milner, online).

J.P. Telotte. *Disney TV*. Wayne State University Press, 2004 (Milner, print)

Janet Wasko, Mark Phillips, Eileen Meehan, eds. *Dazzled by Disney? The Global Disney Audience Project*. Leicester University Press, 2001. (Milner, print).

Johnson Cheu, ed. *Diversity in Disney Films: Critical Essays on Race, Ethnicity, Gender, Sexuality and Disability*. McFarland, 2013. (Milner, online).

Tison Pugh & Susan Lynn Aronstein, eds. *The Disney Middle Ages: A Fairy-tale and Fantasy Past*. Palgrave, 2012. (Milner, online).

Eric Smoodin. *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*. British Film Institute, 2012. (Milner print).

Douglas Brode. *From Walt to Woodstock: How Disney Created the Counterculture*. University of Texas Press, 2004. (Milner, print)

### **Conference Proposal:**

Students will locate a conference paper call for an academic conference where they would be able to submit a proposal that deals Disney film adaptations or Disney culture. While conferences that focus on Children's Literature or Disney Studies are obvious choices, students should also consider other possible conferences. Students will write conference proposal tailored for that conference (250-300 words). Students are not required submit the conference proposal. When turning in the conference proposal, students should also submit the paper call for the conference.

### **In-Class Oral Report:**

Each student will give a class presentation that will introduce one of the Disney film adaptation the class will be discussing. The 15-minute presentation should include a Power Point presentation with between 5-7 slides and 1 or 2 shot clips from the film. One of the slides should provide secondary sources on the topic

### **Class Assignments:**

Throughout the semester, students will be asked to complete a series of short homework assignments linked to the reading and class discussion. A student missing a class in which an in-class assignment is given or a class when a homework assignment is due will be unable to turn in the assignment late. These assignments will be factored into your Class Assignment section of your final grade.

### **Communication/Netiquette:**

Given that a portion of this course will be conducted online, students and the instructor need to use appropriate netiquette or internet etiquette. Students should interact in a positive, cooperative, and supportive manner, and display respect for the privacy and rights of others. For Zoom classes, students will need to have their video on, unless otherwise told. To preserve privacy, students are asked to have an appropriate virtual background screen. Students should dress appropriately for class: as you would for a typical face-to-face course. The following netiquette guidelines has been developed for ISU classes:

- Keep questions & comments relevant to the topic. If another student posts a comment or question that is off topic, do not reply. The instructor will reply in private to the participant.

- Be courteous & treat other students with respect, using the same standards of behavior online that would be appropriate in a face-to-face class discussion.
- Be respectful & open to opinions & ideas that differ from your own. Being deliberately hostile & insulting online or in person is not appropriate. When responding to messages or posts made by others address the ideas not the individual.
- Communication should be conducted in Standard American English to ensure understanding among diverse participants. Avoid using slang terms or texting abbreviations. Avoid using all caps as it is interpreted as yelling.
- Read all the messages in a thread before replying.
- The instructor reserves the right to remove posts that are not collegial or fail to meet ISU netiquette guidelines.

### **Excused Students Absences Due to Communicable Disease:**

If a student is required to be absent from class because of a required self-isolation or quarantine based on the directive of a public health official or health provide for a reason related to a communicable disease, the absence will be considered excused. Reasonable modifications/extensions will be offered for required work. For an absence to be excused, the student must provide appropriate documentation of a required quarantine/self-isolation to the Dean of Students Office at [DeanOfStudents@IllinoisState.edu](mailto:DeanOfStudents@IllinoisState.edu) and arrange to complete missed classroom work as soon as possible. Students are responsible for material covered in class sessions missed. If a student needs a return to class notice issued to their instructors, they should email the release notice provided by a public health official or health provides to [DeanOfStudents@IllinoisState.edu](mailto:DeanOfStudents@IllinoisState.edu)

### **Recording of Class Sessions:**

Any recordings that the instructor makes are available for use only by students enrolled in the course. Recordings cannot be reproduced, shared with those not in the class, or uploaded to publicly accessible webs environments. Do not independently record the course without written permission of the instructor. Students who violate this policy may be subject to legal sanction for violations or copyright law & disciplinary action under ISU's Code of Student Conduct.

### **Plagiarism/ Cheating:**

Please review the Illinois State University policy in the *Graduate Catalog* under "Academic Integrity" (29-30) and sections dealing with plagiarism" in the *MLA Handbook, Ninth Edition* (pages 96-103). Plagiarism and cheating are serious academic offenses and will be punished by failure on an exam, paper, project, and in some cases result in failure in the course and/or expulsion from the university. All written work submitted for this course needs to be your own and produced for this specific course. Please consult the *MLA Handbook* for appropriate format for quotations and citations for your written work.

### **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, (309) 438-5853 (voice), (309) 319-7682 (Sorensen), or visit the website at StudentAccess.IllinoisState.edu. Students using this service. Students using this service need to notify the instructor and provide the appropriate credentials.

**Grading:**

Grades will be based on the following point scale: Grades for papers:

A+=100	B+= 87	C+=77	D+=67	F=50
A=95	B=85	C=75	D=65	
A-92	B-=82	C-=72	D-=62	

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=59 and below.

Students earn grades by performance, not negotiation. If you have a question concerning a grade on an assignment or exam, contact me during my office hours to discuss it. Students should keep all grades assignments. The course grade will be based on the following assignments, which will be weighted as follows:

Grades will be assigned according to the following:

Book Review: 10%  
 Class Presentation: 10%  
 Class Assignments/Short Papers: 25%  
 Critical Paper: 40%  
 Class Participation: 15%