

HL8029: Children and Literature

Instructor: Dr. Katherine Wakely-Mulrone
Meeting Time: Wednesdays, 3:30-6:30p.m.



Course Description

Together, the words “children” and “literature” are a fertile combination. They may bring to mind texts authored by adults for children, such as Lewis Carroll’s *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*, or texts that are about children, such as Henry James’s *What Maisie Knew*. We may even think of texts authored by children themselves, such as Anne Frank’s *The Diary of a Young Girl*. Though these stories differ in terms of genre and historical period, each has imparted its own, lasting impression of what “childhood” represents in today’s world.

In this class we will study works from the nineteenth century to the present that have shaped our conception of childhood as a literary and cultural construct. Focusing on the ideological, aesthetic, even clinical implications of writing for and about children, this course explores our enduring fascination with the the inner lives and secret worlds of the very young.

Core Texts to Purchase

Norton Juster, *The Phantom Tollbooth* (1961)

Roald Dahl, *Matilda* (1988)

Michael Ende, *The Neverending Story* (1979)

Core Texts Available Online

Lewis Carroll, *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*: <https://ia600300.us.archive.org/16/items/AlicesAdventuresInWonderland/alice-in-wonderland.pdf>

Lewis Carroll, *Through the Looking-Glass, and What Alice Found There*: <https://birrell.org/andrew/alice/IGlass.pdf>

All other texts (marked with a * below) are available in the Course Reader.

All films will be screened during class.

Assessment

Paper Proposal 10%

Term Paper 40%

Final Exam 50%

Late Penalties

Late work submitted without an approved extension will be penalized one half-mark per day late – an A paper submitted one day late would drop to an A-, etc.

Course Schedule

1. 13th January - Introduction

2. 20th January - Romantic Childhood

William Blake, selections from *Songs of Innocence and of Experience* (1789)*

William Wordsworth, selections from the *Lyrical Ballads* (1798)*

3. 27th January - Child Interiority

Robert Louis Stevenson, "Child's Play" (1878)*

4. 3rd February - Children and Animals

Rudyard Kipling, "Rikki-Tikki-Tavi" (1894)*

Film: *My Neighbour Totoro* (1988)

5. 10th February - The Child Saviour

Oscar Wilde, "The Happy Prince," "The Selfish Giant" (1888)*

6. 17th February - Children's Poetry

Edward Lear, selections from *A Book of Nonsense* (1846)*

A. A. Milne, selections from *When We Were Very Young* (1924), *Now We Are Six* (1927)*

Shel Silverstein, selections from *Where the Sidewalk Ends* (1974), *A Light in the Attic* (1981)*

7. 24th February - Child Writers

Opal Whiteley, selections from *The Story of Opal* (1920)*

Recess Week

8. 9th March - Disaffected Youth

Norton Juster, *The Phantom Tollbooth* (1961)

9. 16th March - The Gifted Child

Roald Dahl, *Matilda* (1988)

Film: "The Royal Tenenbaums" (2001)

10. 23rd March - The Child in Danger

Christina Rossetti, "Goblin Market" (1862)*

11. 30th March - Child Pilgrimage

Michael Ende, *The Neverending Story* (1979)

12. 6th April - The *Alice* Books

Lewis Carroll, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865) and *Through the Looking-Glass, and What Alice Found There* (1871)

13. 13th April - Alice and Popular Culture

Lewis Carroll, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865) and *Through the Looking-Glass* (1871)

Term Paper: Wednesday, March 9th