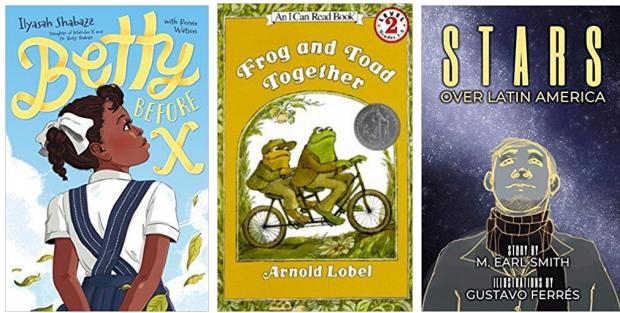


Children's Literature: Texts and Contexts

CRN 43461, ENGL 02.317, Section 3

Fall 2018

Monday/Wednesday, 3:30-4:45, Enterprise 409



Professor M. Earl (Martin) Smith, A.M.; A.A.

Office hours: Holly Pointe Café, 11-2/5-7, Monday/Wednesday, and by FaceTime as needed.

Contact: Email: [contact@mearlsmith.com](mailto:contact@mearlsmith.com); Phone: 267-721-0007

**Required Texts:**

- Wilder, Laura Ingalls. *Little House on the Prairie*
- Watson, Renee and Shabazz, Ilyasah. *Betty Before X*
- Baum, L. Frank. *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*
- Martin, Ann M. *The Baby-Sitters Club #1: Kristy's Great Idea*
- DiCamillo, Kate. *Flora and Ulysses*
- Williams-Garcia, Rita. *One Crazy Summer*
- Smith, M. Earl. *Stars Over Latin America*
- Tamaki, Jillian and Mariko. *This One Summer*
- Woodson, Jacqueline. *Locomotion*
- Lobel, Arnold. *Frog and Toad Together*

**Course Description:** As it stands today, nearly every single piece of literature for children happens to be written by an adult. And while it's fair to postulate that, since every adult was once a child themselves, they have a vision for what it is to write for children. However, this is not always the case. Instead of being a reflection of children's values, we often end up with literature that is a reflection of the time, space, and historical period in which it is conceived. Instead of simple works of aesthetic joy, we often end up with deep, multilayered works, reflective of the values and thoughts of a generation. Childhood, as we all know, is not simply defined by a single class, race, or geographic region. Rather, the experience of growing up is varied. In this course, we will explore how these works for children communicate various types of experiences, while gaining a greater understanding into the role of children's literature in the literary canon as a whole.

### **Course Objectives:**

- To appreciate, by exploration of various forms and styles, the art of children's literature.
- To understand the timeline and history of the various works in the children's genre.
- To identify, understand, and discuss the role that various themes play in the genre, and how those themes are influenced by literary, social, and cultural conventions.
- To develop strong critical reading, writing, and thinking skills.

### **Course requirements:**

**Participation/Attendance (10%):** It is expected that you will bring the assigned reading with you to class each and every session. We will often refer back to the work in the course of our discussion, and each student is expected to be able to participate in class discussion. If you are unable to attend class, it is strongly encouraged that you contact me before class to make alternative arrangements for any work that is due.

**Reading Journals (20%):** For each work, you will be required to complete a weekly reading journal. This journal is a weekly reflection of your thoughts and concerns around a reading, both from a critical and a personal point of view. This will also afford you the chance to discuss the reading, what you liked about it, what you didn't understand, and how the reading fits within the realm of children's literature. These responses should be no longer than a single double-spaced page (250-300 words) and will be uploaded to Blackboard by Friday of a given week. *NOTE: I will grade these on both content and grammar/structure, which should conform to MLA standards.*

**Discussion Forums (20%):** Each week, there will be a discussion form on the reading at hand on Blackboard. This will allow you to continue the discussion around a work beyond what takes place in the classroom, while expanding, with my prompting, on some of the issues and concepts within a given text. In addition to your responses to the prompt, you will be expected to respond to at least two of your classmates' responses.

**Paper 1 [3-4 Pages] (15%):** See rubric for details

**Paper 2 [5-8 Pages] (25%):** See rubric for details

**Exam (10%):** There will be a final exam in this course. This will constitute 10% of your grade, and will consist of multiple choice, true/false, short answer, and essay questions.

**EXTRA CREDIT:** Each semester, I have students approach me about ways in which they may earn extra credit. While, in the past, I have resisted offering such assignments, I have decided to do so this semester. Extra credit will consist of a creative writing assignment, one which must be a form of children's writing, and one which will display one of the core themes/values/styles that we discuss in class. Details on how this will affect your grade, and what is expected of you, will be provided when the time comes.

**Grading Scale:**

A = 93-100 (4.0)	A- = 90-92 (3.7)	
B+ = 87-89 (3.3)	B = 83-86 (3.0)	B- = 80-82 (2.7)
C+ = 77-79 (2.3)	C = 73-76 (2.0)	C- = 70-72 (1.7)
D+ = 67-69 (1.3)	D = 63-66 (1.0)	D- = 60-62 (0.7)
F=59 and below		

**Academic Integrity:** Plagiarism consists of “copying or imitating the language, ideas and thoughts of another author and passing off the same as one’s original work” (*American College Dictionary*). It is academic dishonesty and violates the integrity of the academic process. Academic dishonesty, in any form, will not be tolerated. (See below for additional details.)

**English Department Attendance Policy:** After a student has accumulated more than two weeks of absences (i.e., four 75-minute classes, two evening classes of 2 1/2 hours each, or three 2-hour summer classes), a faculty member in the English Department will evaluate whether a student’s semester grade should be lowered and will have the right to advise the student to withdraw from the course or, alternatively, to fail the student for excessive absences.

**Due dates:** Due dates for all assignments are firm. Your grade will be lowered one grade level (+/-) for each day late. If you miss a scheduled exam, please be aware that the instructor can only offer a make-up in the case of official University activities, documented illness, death of a family member or loved one, and inclement weather. You must provide timely notice and verification of the situation.

**Course schedule:****Week One**

September 5<sup>th</sup>: Course introductions, syllabus discussion, housekeeping.

**Week Two: Old-School American “Values”**

September 10<sup>th</sup>: Wilder, *Little House on the Prairie*, through the end of “Pa Goes to Town”

September 12<sup>th</sup>: Wilder, *Little House on the Prairie*, through the end.

**Week Three: Lines Blurred: The Children and the Adults**

September 17th: Tamaki and Tamaki, *This One Summer*, to page 160

September 19th: Tamaki and Tamaki, *This One Summer*, to end

**Week Four: Mass-Market Insanity**

September 24<sup>th</sup>: Martin, *The Baby-Sitters Club #1*, to page 80 (NOTE: We will not be having class on this day, as I will be in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, for a book signing)

September 26<sup>th</sup>: Martin, *The Baby-Sitters Club #1*, to end

### **Week Five: Social Justice, Through the Eyes of a Child**

October 1<sup>st</sup>: Williams-Garcia, *One Crazy Summer*, to 110

October 3<sup>rd</sup>: Williams-Garcia, *One Crazy Summer*, to end

### **Week Six: Almost a Graphic Novel!**

October 8<sup>th</sup>: DiCamillo, *Flora and Ulysses*, 1-131

October 10<sup>th</sup>: DiCamillo, *Flora and Ulysses*, 132-end

### **Week Seven: *The Wizard of Oz***

October 15<sup>th</sup>: Baum, *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, Chapters 1-13

October 17<sup>th</sup>: Baum, *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, Chapters 14-26

### **Week Eight: We're Not in Kansas Anymore!**

October 22<sup>nd</sup>: Begin film of *The Wizard of Oz*

October 24<sup>th</sup>: Conclude film of *The Wizard of Oz*

### **Week Nine: Biography for Middle Grade**

October 29th: Shabazz and Watson, *Betty Before X*, Chapters 1-17

October 31st: Shabazz and Watson, *Betty Before X*, Chapters 18-End

### **Week Ten: Poetry and Poetics**

November 5<sup>th</sup>: Woodson, *Locomotion*, to page 72

November 7<sup>th</sup>: Woodson, *Locomotion*, to end

### **Week Eleven: The Classics**

November 12<sup>th</sup>: Lobel, *Frog and Toad Together*

November 14<sup>th</sup>: Lobel, *Frog and Toad Together* continued.

## **Week Twelve: Ah, Memories!**

November 19<sup>th</sup>: Selections from Group 1

November 21<sup>st</sup>: Selections from Group 2

## **Week Thirteen: Individual Conferences**

November 26<sup>th</sup>: Group 1

November 28<sup>th</sup>: Group 2

## **Week Fourteen: Critique the Professor!**

December 3<sup>rd</sup>: Smith, *Stars Over Latin America*

December 5<sup>th</sup>: Smith, *Little Karl* (Available on Blackboard)

## **Week Fifteen: Review, Writing, and The Business**

December 10<sup>th</sup>: Writing for children and the publishing business

December 12<sup>th</sup>: In-class final review

## **Finals Week:**

## **FINAL DATE AND TIME TBD**

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**Academic Accommodations:** Your academic success is important. If you have a documented disability that may have an impact upon your work in this class, please contact me. Students must provide documentation of their disability to the Academic Success Center in order to receive official University services and accommodations. The Academic Success Center can be reached at 856-256-4234. The Center is located on the 3rd floor of Savitz Hall. The staff is available to answer questions regarding accommodations or assist you in your pursuit of accommodations. We look forward to working with you to meet your learning goals.

**Academic Integrity Policy:** According to Rowan University policy, students committing any act of academic dishonesty may fail the assignment and/or fail the course, at the faculty member's discretion. All violations of Academic Integrity MUST be reported to the Provost's office using the RAIV process. Serious cases will be brought to a hearing. In order to avoid plagiarism, students should provide appropriate documentation whenever quoting, paraphrasing, summarizing, or otherwise using the language or ideas of others. Multiple submission (handing in a paper written for one class to another class) is also a form of academic dishonesty and will

be treated accordingly. For University policy and procedures, visit the following website:  
<https://confluence.rowan.edu/display/POLICY/Academic+Integrity+Policy>

Do not cut and paste. Revising another writer's prose – even revising it substantially – is plagiarism unless you properly cite your original source.

Most English classes use turnitin.com to upload and/or submit papers. Such programs give faculty members a useful archive of your papers, which helps them be specific when you ask them to write you letters of recommendation. No one else can access your work. Turnitin.com's primary purpose is to check for plagiarism. The website does not make that determination itself; it shows the faculty members the correlations and lets them make the decision.

Students have rights as well as responsibilities; if you feel you have been unjustly accused of plagiarism, there is a mechanism for addressing that in a hearing. Again, see the Provost's website for more information.

**Student Professionalism:**

The English Department is committed to assuring that every class meeting contributes to equitable learning and scholarly inquiry for all. To that end, the Department asks all students to help create a positive classroom environment by adhering to the following guidelines of professional behavior:

- Arrive to class on time.
- Stay for the entire class; do not come and go.
- Be attentive, involved, and respectful to everyone.
- Focus on class material, rather than other coursework.
- Consider others' interpretations with an open mind.
- Contribute to discussions without interrupting others.
- Use language appropriate to a classroom setting
- Snack discreetly (if unavoidable), and do not leave trash behind.
- Avoid signaling when class time is over (i.e., packing bags, donning sunglasses).

Outside the classroom, students should:

- Use appropriate format, tone, and diction in emails.
- Keep appointments (or reschedule beforehand).
- Contact faculty before missing a class or exam.

**Electronics Policy:** Students are not allowed to have cell phones, tablets, or laptops out during class time, unless specifically permitted by the instructor.

**Student Handbook:** Students should review the University policy page:  
<https://confluence.rowan.edu/display/POLICY/Home>

**Student Learning Outcomes:** This course fulfills the following English Department SLOs:

*[Faculty: please list only appropriate SLOs for this course, but maintain the original number.]*

1. Think and write critically about literature, building arguments that are supported with textual evidence;
2. Work with the formal elements of literature (plot, setting, style, figurative language, symbols, etc.);
3. Read carefully, distinguishing between what a text states directly and what it implies;
4. Perform accurate and insightful close readings of literary texts;
5. Understand how issues of nation, culture, and social status help shape literary texts;
6. Realize how schools of literary theory can offer new perspectives from which to read literary and non-literary texts;
7. Participate in class: speaking cogently as well as listening carefully and responding to others' ideas;
8. Demonstrate an understanding of correct spoken and written English;
9. Understand and demonstrate academic integrity.

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#### **IMPORTANT POLICIES AND DATES**

**See Registrar's website <http://www.rowan.edu/registrar> for more complete information.**

**Withdrawals:** If you decide not to take this course, you may drop it using Banner during the first few days of the term, in which case the course will not be recorded on your transcript.

After the Drop/Add period, follow the procedure and timeline – as well as locate the relevant form – for Withdrawal at <https://sites.rowan.edu/registrar/forms1/registration-related-forms.html>. If you plan to withdraw, do so as soon as possible. If you stop attending class without officially withdrawing, you will fail the course. Also remember that you can take a course only twice. Withdrawal after the Drop/Add period constitutes one course attempt.

**Withdrawal:** Requires a signature from your professor; a W will be recorded on your transcript.

**Late Withdrawal:** Requires a signature from your professor and the Department Chairperson, Dr. Joe Coulombe. Your last date of attendance will be recorded, and you will receive either a WP (withdrawal passing) or a WF (withdrawal failing).

**Hardship Withdrawal:** Follow this link:

<https://sites.rowan.edu/academic-affairs/officeofacademicaffairs/registration-adjustment-after-a-deadline/index.html>

For CHSS, this process is managed by the Assistant Dean, Dr. Stephen Fleming. **Note:** the Dean will only approve a withdrawal for hardship circumstances beyond your control (academic failure will not warrant a withdrawal at this point).

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#### **REPEATING A COURSE**

In the event that a student must or voluntarily chooses to repeat a course, the grade received for the repeated course will constitute the final grade for cumulative GPA purposes—whether the grade is higher or lower than the grade received in the original course. The original grade, although not counted in the cumulative GPA, remains on the student's transcript. **By University policy, the same course may not be taken more than twice, including withdrawals.**

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## INCOMPLETES

Incompletes are given only in the event of a last-minute emergency that keeps a student from finishing a final paper or final examination. It is the student's responsibility to arrange an incomplete with the faculty member before final grades are submitted. If you fail to turn in a final paper or final examination but haven't talked with your professor, he or she will have the right to fail you; you will not automatically be given an incomplete. **The Incomplete will convert to an F if it is not extended or resolved.** It is the student's responsibility to keep track of his or her Incompletes.

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## INCLEMENT WEATHER CLOSING

The University will remain open and classes will be held during inclement weather whenever possible. It is your decision, based on your assessment of the situation, whether or not to attend class. If you do not attend, please make arrangements with your professor as to how the missed work will be completed.

Rowan will notify the University community of a closing through the following ways:

- Rowan Mass Notification System (register)
- Rowan homepage ([www.rowan.edu](http://www.rowan.edu))
- Email
- Rowan Radio 89.7 WGLS-FM
- Dial 856-256-INFO (856.256.4636), press "1"
- Social Media

<http://www.rowan.edu/emergency/weather/weather.cfm>

## The Rowan English Department's Lexicon of Key Terms for Writing

**A thesis** is the paper's governing claim, something arguable. Your thesis presents an assertion someone could reasonably argue against; it provides unexpected insight, goes beyond superficial interpretations, and/or challenges, corrects, or extends other arguments. A strong thesis will have a **motive**.

The **motive** is the question that interests you and drives the paper; what is original about the essay; an incongruity, puzzle, or surprise in the primary sources; and/or holes, limitations, or disagreements in the secondary sources.

An **argument** is the extended proof of your thesis. An effective argument requires: a *claim*, your thesis; *supporting textual evidence* that explains, develops and defends your governing claim; and consideration of *limitations* and potential *objections* to your claim (counter-arguments).

**Structure** is the paper's line of reasoning, from beginning to end and also within and between paragraphs.

- An effective structure leads the reader logically from one idea or argument to the next, developing the overall argument dynamically rather than merely providing a list or examples.
- A well-structured paper has strong *topic sentences* (mini-theses) that clearly introduce each stage in the development of your argument in support of your governing thesis, or claim.

**Analysis** is the practice of interpreting sources in order to substantiate claims. Strong papers typically analyze primary sources at several levels. Effective interpretation moves beyond the first reasonable response to include multiple possible readings that work simultaneously to advance an argument.

**Evidence** consists of the various materials used to develop an argument. *Primary sources* (e.g. literary works) are texts that, when analyzed, function as evidence for your argument. *Secondary sources* (e.g. literary criticism or theory) are texts that make direct claims about the topic and may be used to establish a problem or question worth addressing, the standard opinion(s) on the topic, the standard way(s) the problem or question is approached, or the current state of knowledge in the field. Secondary sources also provide evidence for your claims.

**Citations** allow readers to track down a paper's sources and allow you to acknowledge the intellectual conversation in which you are participating. Every quotation, paraphrase, summary, and reference must be documented using MLA style. Improper or missing citations constitute plagiarism, a form of academic fraud.

**Revision** is the act of rethinking your work—literally re-seeing it—and then rewriting it. Revision entails addressing comments your readers may have given you, but then going beyond what is noted on the page to fundamentally re-examine what you've written.

**Mechanics** are grammar, punctuation, spelling, and citation format. Editing for mechanics should be your final step in writing and is a process quite distinct from **revision**. University-level work should be free of mechanical errors.

## Grading Rubric<sup>1</sup>

A paper in the A range deploys several elements of the essay with exceptional grace and mastery:

- Thesis: interesting, arguable, incisive; precise in scope; expressed clearly in the introduction and present throughout the paper

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<sup>1</sup> Adapted from the “Writing Standards” of the Princeton Writing Program.

- Analysis: insightful and original; developed in depth; progresses through multiple layers of interpretation; goes well beyond summary, paraphrase, or description; explains how evidence supports thesis
- Evidence: well-chosen, on-task, selective (don't over-quote); presented fluidly within analysis; introduced and explained; solid evidence is the backbone of the argument
- Structure: logical and progressive (avoids circling back to the same point); unified yet developed paragraphs; contains effective transitions between ideas;
- Sources: relevant and applicable; deployed effectively in a range of ways (to support the argument, to argue against, to provide key terms, etc.); avoids over-quotation; introduced and cited correctly
- Style: clear and accessible, yet precise and sophisticated; diction level appropriate to audience; smooth, stimulating, a pleasure to read.

A B range paper may in part resemble an A range paper but may also exhibit any of the following qualities:

- Thesis: arguable and clear, but lacks insight and specificity; may feature nonintegrated parts; may not be argued throughout paper
- Analysis: good but not exceptional; misses opportunities to expand an idea and/or see another level; inconsistent connections between evidence and thesis; more self-evident than an A paper
- Evidence: generally solid but may not always be the best available support; tends to over-quote, rather than use just what is relevant; parts are not fully explained or developed
- Structure: generally logical but sometimes confusing (missing transitions/links); often discusses text strictly in linear fashion; recognizes few complications or considerations of counter-arguments; some disorganized paragraphs (either bloated or skimpy)
- Sources: quoted and cited correctly (for the most part) but deployed in limited ways, often as a "straw" person or simply as affirmation of writer's basic viewpoint
- Style: generally clear and solid, but lacking in sophistication; may be weighed down by diction meant to impress rather than clarify.

A C range paper may in part resemble a B range paper but may also exhibit any of the following qualities:

- Thesis: vague, simple, general, descriptive, or confusing; parts nonintegrated (e.g., three unrelated prongs); only implied or not stated early on; not argued throughout; disappears in places
- Analysis: some moments of promise, but not capitalized upon; lapses into summary with implied analysis; may present some obvious mis-readings (suggesting a lack of evidence and/or close reading); confusing
- Evidence: either missing or lacking relevance and applicability; unexplained (not linked to argument/thesis); taken out of context; frequently over-quotes (undigested filler)
- Structure: lacks coherence (big jumps, missing links) or predictable; disorganized paragraphs (usually skimpy); headed with descriptive (versus argumentative) topic sentences; c randomly inserted; used as filler or affirmation of writer's viewpoint; inadequate usage, or not used at all; quoted and cited incorrectly
- Sources: unclear/confusing and difficult to understand; simplistic; may evince many technical errors

A D paper may in part resemble a C range paper but may also exhibit any of the following qualities:

- Thesis: missing or descriptive (a topic, statement of fact), or may be a grievous misreading
- Analysis: missing or simplistic; summarizes plot; misinterpretations suggest a lack of familiarity with the text(s)
- Evidence: very few good examples; undigested quotations; taken out of context
- Structure: confusing; lacks development; repetitive; disorganized paragraphs (also usually short); papers might be short, but may be long and rambling
- Sources: arbitrary; irrelevant, or unused; incorrectly quoted or cited; used as filler
- Style: simplistic or difficult to comprehend; riddled with technical errors

A “D” essay has trouble engaging with the assignment and may not show awareness of the conventions of academic discourse. It does, however, show signs of *attempting* to engage not only with the instructions and expectations of the assignment, but also with its issues, topics, and sources.

An F essay is similar to a D essay but differs in length, degree of engagement with the assignment and sources, and degree of independent thought. Specifically, a failing essay:

- is significantly shorter than the assigned length;
- fails to take the assignment seriously in any genuine way
- plagiarizes.