



TLPL340 Introduction to Children's Literature and Critical Literacy

Term: Spring 2024

Professor: Cody Norton

Office Phone: n/a

Email: cnorton@umd.edu

Credits: 3

Course Dates: Jan. 25 - May 9

Course Times: TuTh 1:00 pm - 2:15 pm

Classroom: ASY 3203 ([UMD map](#))

Office Hours: By appointment

Course Outline

Course Description

As defined by Allan Luke (2012), "[c]ritical literacy is an overtly political orientation to teaching and learning and to the cultural, ideological, and sociolinguistic content of the curriculum. It is focused on the uses of literacy for social justice in marginalized and disenfranchised communities. This involves both redistributive and recognitive social justice" (p. 5). We will develop our capacities to critically analyze literacy materials for young people and evaluate how to enact culturally sustaining pedagogies in our future classrooms.

Learning Outcomes

After successfully completing this course, you will be able to:

- Define and explain critical literacy and its key concepts (e.g., power, bias, perspective, social justice).
- Refine one's critical consciousness to recognize the oppressive forces and systems in the world.
- Evaluate and analyze children's literature critically, uncovering implicit and explicit messages, stereotypes, perspectives, and cultural representations that support or detract from culturally sustaining pedagogy.
- Design instructional activities and facilitate discussions that compel colleagues to question, analyze, and reflect on course content using a critical literacy framework.

Required Resources

All required readings and course materials will be available on Canvas.

Suggested Resources

This course requires you to read and analyze various texts, so you may find using text-to-speech applications practical as you engage with assignments. Here are two potential resources that can support you:

- [Speechify](#) (app and website)
- [NaturalReader](#) (app and website)

In addition to text readers, you may find the following tools helpful when clarifying and streamlining your writing:

- [Wordtune](#) (website)
- [Grammarly](#) (app and website)

Acknowledgement: As someone committed to recognizing my community, I want to thank Dr. Shannon Kane and Dr. Olivia Williams for their assistance in providing me with resources and thoughtful guidance to craft this syllabus.

Major Assignments

Educational Autobiography

Format (2-3 written pages, not including photographs, artwork, playlists, etc.) - You will explore your educational journey through the lens of a multimodal autobiography. Beyond traditional written formats, this assignment encourages a creative expression of your experiences with schooling. Consider the social forces, systems, and power structures that shaped your education. Reflect on the impact these factors have had on defining your values and identities (personal, social, and cultural). The multimodal aspect of this assignment invites you to incorporate various forms of expression, such as art, pictures, drawings, or songs that hold personal significance or explain the societal forces influencing your education. This assignment aims to cultivate a deep understanding of the interplay between personal experiences, societal structures, and identity.

Professional Autobiography

Format (2-3 written pages, not including photographs, artwork, playlists, etc.) - You will envision the type of literacy educator you aspire to become. Articulate your values and beliefs as an educator in critical literacy. Reflect on the principles and philosophies that will guide your teaching approach. Consider what you will prioritize in the classroom, such as fostering inclusivity, challenging biases, and promoting social awareness. Share your vision for creating a dynamic, engaging learning environment that encourages critical thinking and inquiry. This multimodal assignment allows for creative expression, so feel free to incorporate art, images, or any other medium that enhances your educational philosophy. Your exploration of your future role as a literacy educator will contribute to a thoughtful and personalized understanding of the impact you wish to make in the lives of your future students.

Content Reflections

Format (2-3 written pages OR 6-8 minutes audio/video response OR 3-4 multimedia selections with 1-2 written pages of explanation OR an approved combination of written and audio response) - Throughout the course of the semester, you will be asked to reflect on your learning as it relates to course materials and discussions. You will select 2-3 texts from the previous weeks and analyze them in depth. Any of the following questions can guide your reflection, or choose your own:

- What did you like/dislike about the readings and/or class discussions?
- What questions remain unanswered, and how are you processing them?
- What surprised or challenged you from the readings and/or class discussions?
- What connections exist between the readings and/or class discussions? Why are they important?

Student Presentations

Format (45-60 minute co-facilitated session) - As an opportunity to co-construct knowledge and guide the curriculum, you and some classmates will facilitate a session on a critical literacy topic of your choice. You will choose the delivery method and content, whether teaching an article, guiding a text analysis, engaging in a critical literacy read-aloud, analyzing a form of media, or employing another approach. Assessment will consider the clarity, depth, engagement, and effectiveness of your presentation in fostering critical literacy skills among your peers.

Critical Literacy Analysis

Format (5-7 page APA style paper OR 12-15 slide APA style presentation) - This culminating research project requires you to comprehensively analyze picture or chapter books by applying a critical lens. You will select and analyze 5-7

picture books, 2-3 chapter books, or a combination of picture and chapter books, employing a critical literacy framework to develop skills in analysis, synthesis, critique, and evaluation. The assignment aims to deepen your understanding of the narratives, themes, and representations present in these texts and to reflect on their impact on young readers.

Grading Structure

Assignments and Grading	Weight	Final Grade Cutoffs	
Engagement & Participation (Due May 9) 10% - Instructor assessed 10% - Student assessed	20%	A+	100%
Multimodal Autobiographies (Due Feb. 8 and May 9) 5% - Educational Autobiography (graded for completion) 5% - Professional Autobiography (graded for completion)	10%	A	≥93.00%
		A-	90.00%
		B+	86.00%
		B	83.00%
		B-	80.00%
Content Reflections (Due Feb. 22, March 14, and April 25) 30% - 3 submissions for 10% (graded for content)	30%	C+	76.00%
		C	73.00%
		C-	70.00%
Student Presentations (Due April 23 - May 7) 10% - Lesson Plan and Execution (graded for content) 10% - Lesson Reflection (graded for completion)	20%	D+	66.00%
		D	63.00%
		D-	60.00%
		F	<60.00%
Critical Literacy Analysis (Due May 16) 20% - 1 submission (graded for content)	20%		
Total	100%		

Course Outline

This tentative schedule is subject to change as necessary – monitor the course ELMS page for current deadlines.

Module 1 - Critical Pedagogies and Course Introductions
Week 1 - Course Introductions No materials needed
Week 2 - Inclusive Language in Social Sciences; Critical and Engaged Pedagogies APA (2023) Inclusive Language Guide (skim) Freire (1974) - Pedagogy of the Oppressed Chapter 2 (pp. 71-86) hooks (1994) - Teaching to Transgress Chapter 2 (pp. 13-22)
Week 2 - Culturally Sustaining and Culturally Relevant Pedagogies Ladson Billings (1995) - Toward a Theory of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (pp. 465-491) Paris (2012) - Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy: A Needed Change in Stance, Terminology, and Practice (pp. 93-97)
Week 3 - Critical Race Theory and Intersectionality Anderson (2022) - The State of Critical Race Theory in Education

Crenshaw (2016) - [The Urgency of Intersectionality](#)

Module 2 - Introduction to Critical Literacy - Theory and Practice

Week 3 - Introduction to Critical Literacy

Berhman (2006) - Teaching about language, power, and text (pp. 490-498)

Vasquez et al. (2019) - Critical Literacy as a Way of Being and Doing (pp. 300-311)

Week 4 - Critical Text Selection and Analysis

Reese (2018) Critical Indigenous Literacies (pp. 389-393)

[Guide for Selecting Anti-Bias Children's Books](#)

[American Indians in Children's Literature \(skim\)](#)

Selected children's literature (forthcoming)

Week 4 - Critical Text Selection and Analysis

Johnson et al. (2017) - Through the Sliding Glass Door: #EmpoweringTheReader (pp. 569-577)

Jiménez (2021) - Mirrors and Windows with Texts and Readers (pp. 156-161)

CBS (2021) - [Why diverse children's books are important tools for teaching kids about themselves and others](#)

Selected children's literature (forthcoming)

Week 5 - Critical Text Selection and Analysis

Leland et al. (2023) - Supporting Literature Discussions - Chapter 6 (pp. 121-145)

Learning for Justice (2022) - Social Justice Standards (pp. 1-9)

Selected children's literature (forthcoming)

Module 3 - Critical and Resistant Reading of Children's Literature

Week 5 - Critical Text Selection and Analysis

Ryan and Hermann-Willmarth (2018) - Chapters 1 & 2 - Introducing LGBTQ People Into Your Teaching (pp. 1 - 36)

Ramsey (2019) - [Is My Child Too Young To Learn About Being Gay?](#)

Selected children's literature (forthcoming)

Week 6 - Critical and Resistant Reading Perspectives

Herman et al. (2022) - How Many Adults and Youth Identify as Transgender in the United States (skim)

Hermann-Wilmarth et al. (2017) - Critical Literacy and Transgender Topics in an Upper Elementary (pp. 15-27)

Selected children's literature (forthcoming)

Week 6 - Critical and Resistant Reading Perspectives

Vehabovic (2021) - Picturebooks as Critical Literacy (pp. 382-405)

Selected children's literature (forthcoming)

Week 7 - Critical and Resistant Reading Perspectives

Brownell & Rashid - Building Bridges Instead of Walls (pp. 76-94)

Selected children's literature (forthcoming)

Week 7 - Critical and Resistant Reading Perspectives

Piper (2019) - Pre-School Aged Children's Gender Identity Development (pp. 15-26)

Butler (2023) - [Berkeley professor explains gender theory](#)

Selected children's literature (forthcoming)

Week 8 - Critical and Resistant Reading Perspectives

Tondreau & Rabinowitz (2021) - Analyzing Representations of Individuals with Disabilities (pp. 61-71)

Selected children's literature (forthcoming)

Week 8 - Critical and Resistant Reading Perspectives

Braden (2018) - Do You Have Papers? Latinx Third Graders Analyze Immigration Policy Through Critical Multicultural Lens (pp. 464-480)

Selected children's literature (forthcoming)

Week 9 - Spring Break**Week 9 - Spring Break****Module 4 - Counternarratives and Restorying****Week 10 - Counternarratives and Restorying**

Demoiny & Ferraras-Stone (2018) - Critical Literacy in Elementary Social Studies (pp. 64-73)

Selected children's literature (forthcoming)

Week 10 - Field Trip to Hyattsville Branch Library; Identifying Resources for Critical Literacy Analysis

No materials needed

Week 11 - Counternarratives and Restorying

Vlach (2022) - Elementary Literacy Teachers Change the Underlying Story Through Transformative Read-Aloud Curricula (pp. 33-44)

UBC Okanagan (2018) - [Critical Literacy: Children as Changemakers in their Worlds](#)

Selected children's literature (forthcoming)

Week 11 - Counternarratives and Restorying

Leland et al. (2023) - Teaching Children's Literature - Chapter 9 (pp. 193-214)

DW News (2022) - [Culture Wars: Why book bans are trending in the US](#)

Selected children's literature (forthcoming)

Week 12 - Counternarratives and Restorying

[Griffith \(2023\) - Moms for Liberty is winning its fight to remove books from one Maryland school district](#)

[Kast & Bermas-Dawes \(2023\) - National rise in book bans and restrictions come to Maryland](#)

Tolin (2023) - [The Most Banned Picture Books of the 2021-2022 School Year](#)

Selected children's literature (forthcoming)

Week 12 - Counternarratives and Restorying

Woods (2022) - Racial Literacy - Building Racial Consciousness through Picture Books (pp. 47-55)
Othering and Belonging Institute (2023) - [Structural Racism Explained \(video\)](#)
Selected children's literature (forthcoming)

Week 13 - Counternarratives and Restorying

Vlach et al. (2023) - Activating Joy Through Culturally and Historically Responsive Read-Alouds (pp. 121-130)
Selected children's literature (forthcoming)

Module 5 - Critical Literacies in Practice

Week 13 - Student Presentations

TBA

Week 14 - Student Presentations

TBA

Week 14 - Student Presentations

TBA

Week 15 - Student Presentations

TBA

Week 15 - Course Reflections

No materials needed

Course Structure

This course meets in person twice weekly. This is a 300-level course that requires your attendance, engagement, and participation. I understand how we have been socialized to engage in classrooms connects to our identity, culture, and experience, so we can discuss how we can all create an environment that invites people to share their perspectives in ways that may be challenging yet affirming.

Attendance is essential to your success and that of your classmates. I recognize that, at times, absences may occur because of conflicting commitments or a need to attend to our physical and mental health. Please let me know before class if you plan to be absent. You're welcome to share the details about your absence, but I respect your privacy, so all you need to share is, "I'm not feeling well" or "I have a conflict." Your final engagement and participation score may be deducted if you accrue more than five absences.

Tips for Success in this Course

1. **Participate.** I invite you to engage deeply, ask questions, and discuss the course content with your classmates. You can learn from discussing ideas and perspectives with your peers and me. Participation can also help you articulate your thoughts and develop critical thinking skills.
2. **Manage your time.** Students are often very busy, and I understand you have obligations outside this class. However, students do best when they plan to devote adequate time to coursework. Block your schedule and set aside plenty of time to complete assignments.

3. **Ask for help if needed.** If you need help with ELMS-Canvas or other technology, contact IT Support. Contact me and your classmates for support if you struggle with a course concept.

Language Use

Although this course will be delivered in English, I recognize and respect that we all come with expansive linguistic repertoires. All forms and dialects of English and other languages (signed and spoken) are welcomed. If you feel you can better articulate a concept or idea through translanguaging—the ability to fluidly move between multiple languages—you may absolutely use this skill. Regarding assignments, I am happy to discuss how translanguaging can be employed. Although the specifics may be negotiable, if you decide to complete an assignment using multiple languages, at least 75% of an assignment would need to be completed in English. This adaption applies to assignments graded for completion.

Grades

All scores will be posted on the course ELMS page. If you want to review your grades or have questions about how something was scored, please email me to schedule a meeting.

I am happy to discuss any of your grades with you, and if I have made a mistake, I will immediately correct it. Any formal grade disputes must be submitted in writing within one week of receiving the grade. Final letter grades are assigned based on the percentage of total assessment points earned. To be fair to everyone, I have to establish clear standards and apply them consistently, so please understand that being close to a cutoff is not the same as making the cut (89.99 $\neq$ 90.00). It would be unethical to make exceptions for some and not others.

For Spring 2024, final grades will be submitted by Tuesday, May 21, 2024.

Academic Integrity

For this course, some of your assignments will be collected via Turnitin on our course ELMS page. I have chosen to use this tool because it can help you improve your scholarly writing and help me verify the integrity of student work. For information about Turnitin, how it works, and the feedback reports you may have access to, visit [Turnitin Originality Checker for Students](#)

The University's Code of Academic Integrity is designed to ensure that the principles of academic honesty and integrity are upheld. In accordance with this code, the University of Maryland does not tolerate academic dishonesty. Please ensure that you fully understand this code and its implications because all acts of academic dishonesty will be dealt with in accordance with the provisions of this code. All students are expected to adhere to this Code. You are responsible for reading it and knowing what it says so you can start your professional life on the right path. **As future professionals, your commitment to high ethical standards and honesty begins with your time at the University of Maryland.**

It is important to note that course assistance websites, **such as CourseHero, or AI-generated content** are not permitted sources unless the instructor explicitly gives permission. Material taken or copied from these sites can be deemed unauthorized material and a violation of academic integrity. These sites offer information that might be inaccurate or biased, and most importantly, relying on restricted sources will hamper your learning process, particularly the critical thinking steps necessary for college-level assignments.

In this course, I encourage you to use artificial intelligence (AI) powered programs such as ChatGPT or DALL-E to help you with some assignments. When you use these tools, it is your responsibility as a scholar to ensure you clearly communicate the AI involvement in your work. Please make sure to use phrases such as “[your name] via DALL-E 2” (for images) or “This paper was generated with the help of GPT-3” (for essays). Please review the instructions in each assignment for more details on how to show your work.

Additionally, students may naturally choose to use online forums for course-wide discussions (e.g., Group lists or chats) to discuss concepts in the course. However, collaboration on graded assignments is strictly prohibited unless otherwise stated. Examples of prohibited collaboration include asking classmates for answers on quizzes or exams, asking for access codes to clicker polls, etc. Please visit the [Office of Undergraduate Studies’ full list of campus-wide policies](#) and reach out if you have questions.

	 OPEN NOTES	 USE BOOK	 LEARN ONLINE	 GATHER CONTENT With AI	 ASK FRIENDS	 WORK IN GROUPS
Content Reflections	✓	✓	✓	---	✓	---
Multimodal Autobiographies	✓	✓	✓	---	✓	---
Student Presentations	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Critical Literacy Analysis	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	---

Policies and Resources for Undergraduate Courses

It is our shared responsibility to know and abide by the University of Maryland’s policies that relate to all courses, which include topics like

- Academic integrity
- Student and instructor conduct
- Accessibility and accommodations
- Attendance and excused absences
- Grades and appeals
- Copyright and intellectual property

Please visit www.ugst.umd.edu/courserelatedpolicies.html for the Office of Undergraduate Studies’ full list of campus-wide policies and contact me if you have questions.

Course Guidelines

Diversity and Inclusion in the Classroom

TLPL is committed to creating a nurturing climate for students, staff, and faculty. Our mission is to improve the lives of children, families, and education through equitable research partnerships. We value diverse perspectives and experiences because we believe education and science are much richer with the inclusion of individual strengths and identities. Our views of diversity are broad, and we value diversity across numerous groups (e.g., race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, and abilities). We are aligned with the broader College of Education and UMD's commitment to DEI efforts and supporting a diverse campus.

To foster a supportive and appreciative environment, students are encouraged to participate in discussions with their classmates who may represent diverse individual beliefs, backgrounds, and experiences. We each have the right to be heard and understood; therefore, we are responsible for listening and attempting to understand. Statements and questions should be shared respectfully. People might make mistakes in an authentic and honest discussion, and we will pursue mutual understanding when this inevitably occurs.

Names/Pronouns and Self-Identifications:

The University of Maryland recognizes the importance of a diverse student body, and we are committed to fostering inclusive and equitable classroom environments. I invite you, if you wish, to tell us how you want to be referred to in this class, both in terms of your name and your pronouns (he/him, she/her, they/them, etc.). Remember that the pronouns someone uses do not necessarily indicate their gender identity. Visit trans.umd.edu to learn more.

Additionally, it is your choice whether to disclose how you identify in terms of your gender, race, class, sexuality, religion, and dis/ability, among all aspects of your identity (e.g., should it come up in classroom conversation about our experiences and perspectives) and should be self-identified, not presumed or imposed. I will do my best to address and refer to all students accordingly, and I ask you to do the same for all of your fellow Terps.

Communication with Instructor:

Email: If you need to contact me, please email me at cnorton@umd.edu. It is always helpful to review the syllabus FIRST before contacting me. I will do my best to respond to emails within 24 hours.

ELMS: I will send announcements via Canvas. To avoid missing any messages, you must ensure that your email and announcement notifications (including changes in assignments or due dates) are enabled in ELMS. You are responsible for regularly checking your email and Canvas/ELMS inbox.

Communication with Peers:

With diverse perspectives and experience, we may find ourselves in disagreement and/or debate with one another. As such, it is important that we agree to conduct ourselves professionally and work together to foster and preserve a virtual classroom environment in which we can respectfully discuss and deliberate controversial questions. I encourage you to confidently exercise your right to free speech—bearing in mind that you will be expected to craft and defend arguments that support your position. Keep in mind that free speech has its limit, and this course is NOT the space for hate speech, harassment, and derogatory language. I will make every reasonable attempt to create an atmosphere where each student feels comfortable voicing their argument without fear of being personally attacked, mocked, demeaned, or devalued.

Any behavior (including harassment, sexual harassment, and racially and/or culturally derogatory language) that threatens this atmosphere will not be tolerated. Please alert me immediately if you feel threatened, dismissed, or silenced at any point during our semester together and/or if the learning environment has somehow hindered your engagement in discussion.

Resources & Accommodations

Accessibility and Disability Services

The University of Maryland is committed to creating and maintaining a welcoming and inclusive educational, working, and living environment for people of all abilities. It is also committed to the principle that no qualified individual with a disability shall, based on disability, be excluded from participation in or denied the benefits of the university's services, programs, or activities or be subjected to discrimination.

The **Accessibility & Disability Service (ADS)** provides reasonable accommodations to qualified individuals to provide equal access to services, programs, and activities. ADS cannot assist retroactively, so it is generally best to request accommodations several weeks before the semester begins or as soon as a disability becomes known. Any student who needs accommodations should contact me as soon as possible so that I have sufficient time to make arrangements.

For assistance obtaining accommodation, contact Accessibility and Disability Service at 301-314-7682 or email them at adsfrontdesk@umd.edu. Information about [sharing your accommodations with instructors, note-taking assistance](#), and more is available from the [Counseling Center](#).

Student Resources and Services

Taking personal responsibility for your own learning means acknowledging when your performance does not match your goals and doing something about it. I hope you will come to talk to me so that I can help you find the right approach to success in this course. I also encourage you to visit [UMD's Student Academic Support Services website](#) to learn more about the wide range of campus resources available to you.

In particular, everyone can help sharpen their communication skills (and improve their grade) by visiting [UMD's Writing Center](#) and scheduling an appointment with the campus Writing Center. You should also know there are resources to support you with whatever you need ([UMD's Student Resources and Services website](#) may help). If you feel it would be helpful to have someone to talk to, visit [UMD's Counseling Center](#) or [one of the many other mental health resources on campus](#).

Notice of Mandatory Reporting

Notice of mandatory reporting of sexual assault, sexual harassment, interpersonal violence, and stalking: As a faculty member, I am designated as a "Responsible University Employee," and I must report all disclosures of sexual assault, sexual harassment, interpersonal violence, and stalking to UMD's Title IX Coordinator per University Policy on Sexual Harassment and Other Sexual Misconduct.

If you wish to speak with someone confidentially, please contact one of UMD's confidential resources, such as [CARE to Stop Violence](#) (located on the Ground Floor of the Health Center) at 301-741-3442 or the [Counseling Center](#) (located at the Shoemaker Building) at 301-314-7651.

You may also seek assistance or support from UMD's Title IX Coordinator, Angela Nastase, by calling 301-405-1142 or emailing titleIXcoordinator@umd.edu. For further information on the above, please visit the [Office of Civil Rights and Sexual Misconduct's](#) website at ocrsm.umd.edu.

College of Education Hate and Bias Policy:

The College of Education at the University of Maryland is committed to creating a robust, inclusive, and inviting climate in which all students, staff, and faculty are inspired to achieve their full potential. We believe in the dignity and humanity of all people and **value the identities of our students, faculty, staff, and alumni**. We seek opportunities to provide development in the facilitation of positive interactions among our college and campus community. The COE **consistently strives to reduce barriers across race, ethnicity, gender, age, religion, language, dialect, health, veteran status, abilities/ disabilities, sexual orientation, gender identity, socioeconomic status, and geographic regions**. Racist, sexist, homophobic, or other oppressive language or behavior should be immediately reported. Those experiencing harm can report their experiences to

- The department chair, program coordinator, or director of undergraduate studies;
- Associate Dean of Faculty Affairs or Undergraduate Studies; or
- A member of the COE Bias Incident Response Team and the Office of Diversity and Inclusion [Bias Incident Support Services](#) as appropriate.

Review the full [COE Hate and Bias Policy](#).

Basic Needs Security

If you have difficulty affording groceries, accessing sufficient food to eat every day, or lack a safe and stable place to live, please visit UMD's Division of Student Affairs website for information about the campus's resources, and let me know if I can help in any way.

Veteran Resources

UMD provides some additional support to our student veterans. You can access those resources at the Office of [Veteran Student Life](#) and the [Counseling Center](#). Veterans and active-duty military personnel with special circumstances (e.g., upcoming deployments, drill requirements, disabilities) are welcome and encouraged to communicate these in advance to the instructor.

Participation

- Given this class's interactive style, attendance will be crucial to note-taking and performance. Attendance is particularly important because class discussion will be critical to your learning.
- Each student is expected to make substantive contributions to the learning experience, and attendance is expected for every session.

- Students with a legitimate reason to miss a live session should communicate in advance with the instructor, except in an emergency.
- Students who miss a live session are responsible for learning what they miss from that session.
- Additionally, students must complete all readings and assignments in a timely manner in order to fully participate in class.

Course Evaluation

Please submit a course evaluation through Student Feedback on Course Experiences in order to help faculty and administrators improve teaching and learning at Maryland. All information submitted to Course Experiences is confidential. Campus will notify you when Student Feedback on Course Experiences is open so you can complete your evaluations at the end of the semester. Please go directly to the [Student Feedback on Course Experiences](#) to complete your evaluations. By completing your evaluations each semester, you will be able to access the evaluation reports for the thousands of courses for which 70% or more students submitted their evaluations through Testudo.

Copyright Notice

Course materials are copyrighted and may not be reproduced for anything other than personal use without written permission.