University of Kentucky
School of Library & Information Science

Critical Analysis of Children’s Literature
LIS611 – Spring 2011
January 12 – May 8, 2011

**SYLLABUS**

Instructor
Stephanie D. Reynolds, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor
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(e-mail is preferred contact method)
Phone: (859) 257-5894

Office Hours
• Mondays 9:00 AM to 12:00 PM;
  Wednesdays 4:00 PM to 5:00 PM; or
  By Appointment
• If you need to reach me or to schedule an appointment, contact me via e-mail.

Class Information
• Wednesdays 6:00pm to 9:00pm

COURSE INFORMATION

Course Description

Course Purpose
The purpose of this course is to improve the ability to discern high-quality books and illustrations; to gain knowledge of literary criticism and its importance in the improvement in the arena of children’s literature; and to develop an appreciation of the wide scope of implications in the field of children’s literature.

Course Objectives
• To achieve expertise in judging the quality of children’s books.
• To study literary criticism as it pertains to children’s books, with the intent of developing a degree of proficiency in writing original critiques and book reviews.
• To improve research capabilities in the field of children’s literature.
• To develop a foundational understanding of children’s book and to develop comprehension of current trends effecting children’s books produced for today’s market.
Required Reading

Recommended Texts:

Children’s Literature:
http://sites.google.com/site/youthlitmatters/index/611-course-resources

Other Required Reading: This course requires a tremendous amount of “outside” reading. Expect to spend a good deal of your time in the library. The complete course reading list is included at the end of this syllabus. It is each student’s responsibility to obtain the required reading materials.

Integration of the Syllabus with the Themes of Diversity, Assessment, and Technology

All UK professional education programs address and affirm the value of diversity in education, the use of technology to support all aspects of instructional programming, and the importance of attaining high levels of skill in assessing the outcomes of instruction. This course will provide students an opportunity to demonstrate attention to these themes and reflect on the mechanisms that this course has provided to demonstrate improved skills in these areas.

Integration of Syllabus with UK Educator Preparation Unit Themes

This course will address the four themes of the conceptual framework for the UK professional education unit: research, reflection, learning, and leading. Students will be given the opportunity to review, analyze, discuss, and apply *research* from diverse perspectives in education, including professional scholarship and practitioner inquiry, in order to reflect on their own practices as they study, observe, and practice in P-12 school and university classrooms. *Reflection* will also be integrated into students’ learning opportunities through the production of written essays and analyses of observation and teaching experiences to help students take advantage of the analytical and problem-solving skills that comprise critical professional reflection on one’s own teaching. This course emphasizes the commitment of the professional education unit to assure that its graduates move into their professional lives equipped for lifelong *learning* as educators who will be active in *leading* colleagues in their schools, districts, and professional organizations. The ultimate goal in addressing these four themes is to produce teacher leaders who work together to improve student learning among diverse populations and improve education in Kentucky and beyond.

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STUDENT EVALUATION

Grading Parameters

- Participation/Attendance: 100 pts – 20%
- McConnell Presentations: 400 pts – 25%
- Book Reviews: 20 pts each – 20%
- Critical Analysis Paper: 100 pts – 10%
- Newbery Discussion Event: 200 pts – 10%
- Research Paper: 100 pts – 15%

Grading Rubric

(See Submission of Course Assignments for details.)

- Files with incorrect naming scheme: -5 points
- Work that is not “proofed” (i.e., more than 2 errors): -10 points minimum
- Unexcused late work will not be accepted.
- Incomplete or missing citations: -5 points minimum each
- Deductions for assignments that do not meet the minimum requirements will vary.

Grading Scale

- 90% – 100% = A (Exceptional Achievement: work that goes above expectations)
- 80% – 89% = B (High Achievement)
- 70% – 79% = C (Average Achievement)
- 0% – 69% = E (Failing)

Participation/Attendance

Class participation is an important component of your grade for this class. Class attendance and participation in all group projects is expected. This course does require participation in the McConnell Conference (February 25-26, 2011). The conference registration fees and meals will be covered for you. If you are unable to attend class on a given night, it is your responsibility to notify the instructor. If you live outside of Lexington and the weather is creating hazardous travel conditions, please check Blackboard and/or e-mail before heading to campus for class.

Communications

Although this is a face-to-face class, there will be a Blackboard presence. You may communicate with me via Blackboard, e-mail or phone. E-mail will elicit the timeliest response. While I am generally available on the weekends and will always respond as quickly as I can, please do not wait until the day before an assignment is due (or the day it is due) to ask questions. It is the student's responsibility to make sure that all course communications are accessible. E-mails sent from within Blackboard will be delivered to the e-mail address stored in Blackboard. Your UK e-mail address is the default. To change your default e-mail address, follow the Course Tools link from the course navigation bar to edit your Personal Information.
Submission of Course Assignments

IMPORTANT: Unless otherwise indicated, all assignments are to be submitted electronically via Blackboard by 11pm on the date indicated on the course schedule.

The use of proper English is expected at all times. This includes discussion posts and journal entries, if applicable. Writing and citation guides will be provided in the course materials in Blackboard. If you need additional assistance with writing skills, please contact the UK Writing Center (http://www.uky.edu/AS/English/wc/). APA (6th edition) formatting is required for citations. Detailed expectations will be provided in Blackboard.

Unless otherwise indicated, if you send me an assignment electronically it must be submitted as Word (or comparable) document. While documents with .doc or .docx extensions are preferred, .rtf and .txt are also acceptable. Microsoft Office products are free for students. Click https://iweb.uky.edu/MSDownload/ to download. All documents must be written in either 12-point Times New Roman or 12-point Arial (other similar fonts are acceptable) with 1-inch margins. Please use single-line spacing unless otherwise indicated. Proper citations/references are always required; this includes picture books, novels, and other materials. Again, proper use of the English is expected. I encourage you to set your Word spelling and grammar review criteria to Technical, and to use the AutoCorrect feature to assist you (e.g., I have it set so that if I type lit, the word "literature" results). Please proof your work and ask someone else to as well.

Full names and course information must be included on the first page of all documents submitted for course credit. Please include your last name and page numbers on all subsequent pages. If you are submitting your assignments electronically, please use the following naming scheme for your files LastnameFirstInitial_DueDate (month and day only). For example, JohnsonT_0619.doc or SmithB_0705.doc. Incorrectly named files will lower your grade.

Late Work

It is expected that you will submit course assignments on time. However, life happens. “Normal” life does not stop for any of us just because a semester is in progress. I am always willing to work with you if you get into a bind, but please be proactive. If you are going to be late with an assignment, let Dr. Reynolds know before the due date. Late assignments will not be accepted without prior approval.

ACADEMIC STANDARDS

Academic Integrity

All of your work for this class is expected to be original work. You may not use work submitted for a grade in another class or collaborate with anyone unless required for completion of the assignment. Proper citations are expected for all sources used for any course work. Please review the University’s plagiarism policy. http://www.uky.edu/StudentAffairs/Code/part1.html http://www.uky.edu/Ombud/Plagiarism.pdf http://www.uky.edu/StudentAffairs/Code/part2.html (section 6.3.1)
Disability Accommodation
Any student with a disability who is taking this course and needs classroom or exam accommodations should contact the Disability Resource Center, 257-2754, room 2 Alumni Gym, jkarnes@uky.edu.

Incompletes
Student requests for an Incomplete (an I grade) will be considered within University guidelines and only in extreme circumstances. See section 5.1.3.2 http://www.uky.edu/StudentAffairs/Code/part2.html.

TECHNOLOGY INFORMATION & RESOURCES

Distance Learning Students are expected to have a minimum level of technological acumen and the availability of technological resources. Students must have regular access a computer with a reliable Internet connection and audio capabilities. Internet Explorer 7 (IE) or Firefox 2.x are the recommended browsers for those using a Windows-based PC. Those using Firefox 3.x may encounter problems with assignment uploads. Those using an Apple computer with MAC OS X (10.5.x) may use Firefox 3.x or Safari 3.x. Please be certain that your computer and/or browser allow you to view Adobe Reader documents (.pdf). Microsoft Office and other software products are free for students: https://iweb.uky.edu/MSDownload/.

As your instructor, I am your first go-to person for technology problems. Please e-mail me at stephanie.reynolds@uky.edu for the timeliest response. I will generally respond within a few hours, but longer wait times are possible. If you need more immediate assistance, please contact TASC or UKIT.

Teaching and Learning Services Center (TASC)
http://www.uky.edu/TASC/; 859–257–8272

Information Technology Customer Service Center (UKIT)
http://www.uky.edu/UKIT/; 859–257–1300

Information on Distance Learning Library Services
http://www.uky.edu/Libraries/DLLS
• Carla Cantagallo, DL Librarian
• Local phone number: 859 257–0500, ext. 2171; long-distance phone number: (800) 828–0439 (option #6); Email: dllservice@email.uky.edu
• DL Interlibrary Loan Service: http://www.uky.edu/Libraries/libpage.php?lweb_id=253&llib_id=16
# COURSE SCHEDULE

## Class Schedule

Blackboard will be used for the purposes of communication, assignment submission, and grading. Attendance at the McConnell Conference on February 25-26, 2011 is required.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>CLASS MEETING</th>
<th>ACTIVITIES</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>January 12, 2010</strong></td>
<td>• Course Introduction and Syllabus Review</td>
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<td>• 2011 ALA Youth Media Awards Discussion</td>
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<td>• Reading List Discussion</td>
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<td>• Conference Committee Selection</td>
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<td>• <em>What is a good book?</em> Discussion</td>
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<td><strong>January 19, 2010</strong></td>
<td>• Book Reviews due</td>
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<td>• The Evolution of the Picture Book Discussion</td>
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<td>• <em>What is a genre and why do I care?</em> Discussion</td>
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<td><strong>January 26, 2010</strong></td>
<td>• Book Reviews due</td>
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<td>• Conference Bios Due</td>
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<td>• Realistic Fiction Discussion</td>
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<td>• Conference Preparation</td>
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<td><strong>February 2, 2010</strong></td>
<td>• Book Reviews due</td>
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<td>• Historical Fiction Discussion</td>
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<td>• Conference Preparation</td>
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<td><strong>February 9, 2010</strong></td>
<td>• Book Reviews due</td>
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<td>• Multicultural Fiction &amp; Graphic Novels Discussion</td>
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<td>• Conference Preparation</td>
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<td><strong>February 16, 2010</strong></td>
<td>• Book Reviews due</td>
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<td>• SciFi/Fantasy Discussion</td>
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<td>• Conference Preparation</td>
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<td><strong>February 23, 2010</strong></td>
<td>• Final Conference Preparation &amp; Rehearsal</td>
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<td><strong>February 25-26, 2010</strong></td>
<td><em>42nd McConnell Conference</em></td>
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<td><strong>March 2, 2010</strong></td>
<td>Post-Conference Break - NO CLASS</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>March 9, 2010</strong></td>
<td>• Post-Conference Discussion</td>
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<td>• Preliminary 6th Grade Newbery Event Planning</td>
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<td>• Critical Analysis Topic Discussion</td>
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<td><strong>March 16, 2010</strong></td>
<td>SPRING BREAK</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>March 23, 2010</strong></td>
<td>• Research Paper Topic Discussion</td>
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<td><strong>March 30, 2010</strong></td>
<td>• Social Networking</td>
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<td><strong>April 6, 2010</strong></td>
<td>• Critical Analysis Papers Due &amp; Discussion</td>
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<td><strong>April 13, 2010</strong></td>
<td>• Non-Fiction Literature Discussion</td>
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<td>• Research Paper Planning and Assistance</td>
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<td><strong>April 20, 2010</strong></td>
<td>• Final 6th Grade Newbery Event Preparations</td>
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<td><strong>April 27, 2010</strong></td>
<td>• 6th Grade Newbery Books Event</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>May 4, 2010</strong></td>
<td>• Research Papers &amp; Final Presentations Due</td>
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COURSE PROJECTS

Before submitting any work, please review the assignment submission guidelines on page 4 of the syllabus, as well as the grading rubric on page 3.

1. Book Reviews – Due Every Week Through Conference
   • Review one of the Newbery or Printz Honor Books or Medal Winners, or the Morris Winner.
   • Use From Cover to Cover (available in the McConnell Center) and read reviews in the book review journals to help you prepare your review.
   • Reviews should be approximately 200 words, but length will vary depending upon the length of the work you choose.
   • Be prepared to read and discuss your review in class.
   • Use the formatting guidelines outlined in the syllabus (p. 4).

   Evaluation: Complete, yet concise evaluation of the reviewed title.
   Learning Outcomes: Increased knowledge of how to critically evaluate youth literature and how to prepare a constructive review.

   • All students will present at the conference. Basic registration fees are covered.
   • Each student will be randomly assigned to present on the Caldecott, Newbery, or Printz winners. Assignments will be made on January 12.
   • Presentations will be of a critical nature.
   • We will be using a blog in Blackboard to share thoughts on titles.
   • Each group will be responsible for preparing conference handouts.
   • All students must read all the winners for all three awards.

   Evaluation: Your complete participation, from beginning to end, in your group’s preparation for its McConnell Conference presentation.
   Learning Outcomes: Successfully working in a group; performing critical analysis of youth literature; developing conference presentation skills.

3. Critical Analysis Paper – April 6
   • Choose a work, body of works, author, genre, etc. to critique.
   • Prepare a paper of 1,200-1,800 words, not including citations.
   • This is a subjective paper, not research, but be sure to provide support for your statements where necessary.
   • Be prepared to discuss your work informally in class.

   Evaluation: Thoroughness of your critique; your ability to assess critically and to support your assertions; and your critique’s relevance to youth literature.
   Learning Outcomes: Increased ability to evaluate critically, especially as it relates to the discipline of youth literature.
4. **6th Grade/Newbery Books Discussion – April 27**
   - The class will read approximately 10 books and prepare to discuss those titles, and the 2011 Newbery Award winners with a 6th grade advanced reading class.

   **Evaluation:** Your complete participation in the preparations for this meeting.
   **Learning Outcomes:** A better understanding of how youth perceive, enjoy, and relate to juvenile literature.

5. **Research Paper – May 4**
   - Choose a topic related to youth literature to research.
   - Complete your research using books, journal articles, Websites, etc. (8 sources minimum; Wikipedia may not be used).
   - Prepare a paper of 2,500-3,000 words, not including citations.
   - You will present your research to the class using PowerPoint or similar.

   **Evaluation:** Thoroughness, relevance, and presentation of research.
   **Learning Outcomes:** Knowledge of the issues critical to understanding to youth literature, its advocates, and most importantly, its readers.

**Possible Topics:**
- Attitudes and mores in children’s literature
- The culture of poverty in children’s books of a particular era
- Multiculturalism in children’s literature
- Depiction of traditional heroes versus modern heroes
- Depictions of a defined group in picture books
- Comparison of an identified issue from two cultural perspectives
- Pros and cons of realistic young-adult fiction
- Coming of Age stories in children’s literature
- Opposing viewpoints: sex, violence, strong language, etc. in children’s literature
- The effect Social Networking (i.e., Facebook, Twitter) has on the attitudes youth have about reading