

Children's Literature in Faith and Life

January 4-25, 2010

9:00-11:30, Schlegel Hall 123

General elective in either Pastoral Care or Christian Education (cross-listed in catalog), but the course does not fulfill the requirement in either field. Students choose which way to list.

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Course Description

Children's literature is as an accessible and imaginative resource for ministry, bringing fresh images and enlivening narratives to the arts of ministry such as preaching, teaching, and pastoral care. It also provides a powerful medium for understanding—voicing to adults the kinds of questions, delights, struggles, and concerns at work in the lives of young people, including their lives of faith. Children's literature offers a rich resource for children and youth to better understand themselves and to better imagine others—especially those of different times, places, and cultures. This course exposes students to a sampling of books from pre-school age through adolescence that, through illustrations and stories, ask “big questions” related to the meaning of life, death, injustice, suffering, difference, danger, decision-making, relationships, love, wonder, and God.

Hopes and Activities:

Through reading and discussing children's literature written for various ages, we hope students will:

- Better appreciate the lives, questions, and existential struggles of children and youth
- Recognize general developmental patterns and concerns in child development
- Learn the art of asking good questions and leading book discussions
- Enjoy reading

Through reflective writing and responses to the reading, we hope students will:

- Explore with others possible uses of children's literature in churches and homes
- Interpret theologies and themes at work in the reading
- Be able to identify similarities and differences between materials that are explicitly faith oriented from those that are not

By creating an annotated bibliography based upon field trips to book stores, libraries, and resource centers as well as through “virtual trips” to key web sites, we hope students will:

- Discover a great variety of materials, including those showing promise for ministry in church and home situations
- Together create an annotated bibliography of children's literature for the entire class

Through a final project, we hope students will:

- Have a chance to pursue an interest or passion (relevant to the course) in a form they choose (e.g. research paper, curriculum, writing stories, psycho-educational workshop)
- Deepen or extend their understanding of ideas and themes critical to the course

Evaluation

- 1/3 Notebook
- 1/3 Annotated bibliography
- 1/3 Final Project

Attendance and active participation are assumed—grades will be adjusted for unexcused absences, leaving class early, doing email in class, or other forms of non-participation.

Core Assignments

(More detailed guidance for each of the following will be provided once the class meets.)

Notebook

Students will keep a notebook and bring it to class daily. For every reading and for many of the class sessions, students will be assigned questions or tasks designed to pursue the hopes of the course. Some entrees will be assigned as homework; some will occur in class. Notebooks can be handwritten and must be turned in during the last day of class, Friday, January 22.

Annotated Bibliography

Once per week students are to spend at least 2-3 hours in a place where they can survey and skim lots of books (e.g. bookstore, library, resource center, special web sites). This will allow students to discover many more resources than is feasible to require/assign for the course. Students will take preliminary notes on what they discover for approximately 40-50 books and submit completed sections of the bibliography in process each Thursday.

Final Project

Students will design their own final projects, with various options; if time and class size permit, students will present a portion of their projects to the class for feedback. The projects must be of obvious relevance to the course. The work involved should be roughly the equivalent of the time and energy involved in a 20-page research paper, but practice-oriented projects are highly valued as well. The time could be spent teaching, writing, interviewing, organizing, creating, or providing resources for your project. Typically a 20-page paper is calculated at approximately 20 to 30 hours of work. Some possibilities are:

Writing a curriculum for an educational setting

(e.g. 6-week study of various books that could be used in a parent-child church book group; a weekend retreat for youth built around a particular book or two; a faith and children's literature course; a parenting workshop employing children's literature)

Writing a research paper on a relevant subject

(e.g. literary theory in relation to children; the role of narrative in identity; theodicy in relation to a particular series/author; the role of play and imagination in child development)

Conducting qualitative research

(e.g. interview Sunday school teachers, parents, or children; interview children's book author)

Write or begin a book

(e.g. write the first three chapters of a children's book of fiction; create a set of biblical devotions for children; write what could be a chapter of a book on a theological theme for youth)

School Policies

Inclusive Language

In accordance with seminary policy, students are to use inclusive language in class discussions and in written and oral communication by using language representative of the whole human community in respect to gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, age, and physical and intellectual capacities. Direct quotations from theological texts and translations of the Bible do not have to be altered to conform to this policy. In your own writing, however, when referring to God, you are encouraged to use a variety of images and metaphors, reflecting the richness of the Bible's images for God. See for further assistance, http://www.lpts.edu/Academic_Resources/ASC/avoidinggenderbiasinlanguage.asp.

Academic Honesty

All work turned in to the instructors is expected to be the work of the student whose name appears on the assignment. Any borrowing of the ideas or the words of others must be acknowledged by quotation marks (where appropriate) and by citation of author and source. Use of another's language or ideas from online resources is included in this policy, and must be attributed to author and source of the work being cited. Failure to do so constitutes plagiarism, and may result in failure of the course. Multiple occurrences of plagiarism may result in dismissal from the Seminary. Students unfamiliar with issues relating to academic honesty can find help from the staff in the Academic Support Center. For the Seminary policy, see The Code of Student Conduct, 6.11; the Student Handbook, p. 19.

Citation Policy

Citations in your papers should follow the Seminary standard, based on these guides:

American Psychological Association. *Concise Rules of APA Style*, 6th ed. Washington, D.C.: APA, 2010 or *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*, 6th ed. Washington, D.C.: APA, 2010.

Turabian, Kate. *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 7th ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007.

The Chicago Manual of Style, 15th ed. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2003.

Copies of these guides are available at the library and in the Academic Support Center.

Special Accommodations

Students requiring accommodations for a documented physical or learning disability should be in contact with the Director of the Academic Support Center (kmapes@lpts.edu) during the first two weeks of a semester and should speak with the instructor as soon as possible to arrange appropriate adjustments. Students with environmental or other sensitivities that may affect their learning are also encouraged to speak with the instructor.

Attendance Policy

According to the Seminary catalog, students are expected to attend class meetings regularly. In case of illness or emergency, students are asked to notify the instructor of their planned absence from class, either prior to the session or within 24 hours of the class session. Missing 1/4 of the course or more may result in a low or failing grade in the course.

Resources

Common Readings:

Curtis, Christopher Paul. *Bud, Not Buddy*. New York: Random House Children's Books, 1999.

Kadohata, Cynthia. *kira-kira*. New York: Aladdin Paperbacks, 2004.

L'Engle, Madeleine. *A Wrinkle in Time*. New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1962.

Lewis, C.S. *The Magician's Nephew*. New York: MacMillan Publishing Co., 1955.

Paterson, Katherine. *Jacob Have I Loved*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1980.

Sanchez, Alex. *The God Box*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2007.

Short, picture books that will be presented and discussed in class (copies provided by professors and/or on reserve in library):

Boles, Elaine. *Speaking Without Sound*. Wooster, OH: Ten O'clock Press, a division of Greater Midwest Publishing, LLC, 2008.

Bridges, Ruby. *Through My Eyes*. New York: Scholastic Press, 1999.

Coles, Robert. *The Story of Ruby Bridges*. New York: Scholastic Press, 1995.

Durell, Ann and Marilyn Sachs, eds. *The Big Book for Peace*. New York: Dutton Children's Books, 1990.

Hughes, Langston. *Poetry for Young People*. New York: Sterling Publishing Co., Inc., 1994.

Ladwig, Tim, illustrator. *The Lord's Prayer*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Books for Young Readers, 2000.

_____. *Psalm Twenty-Three*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Books for Young Readers, 1993.

Lawrence, Jacob. *Harriet and the Promised Land*. New York: Aladdin Paperbacks, 1997 edition.

Lawrence, Jacob. *The Great Migration: An American Story*. New York: HarperCollins, 1992.

Ramshaw, Gail. *Every Day and Sunday, Too*. Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1996.

Rappaport, Doreen. *Martin's Big Words: The Life of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.* New York: Jump at the Sun, Hyperion Paperbacks for Children, 2001.

Sasso, Sandy Eisenberg. *Adam & Eve's First Sunset: God's New Day*. Woodstock, VT: Jewish Light Publishing, 2003.

_____. *Cain & Abel: Finding the Fruits of Peace*. Woodstock, VT: Jewish Light Publishing, 2001.

_____. *In God's Name*. Woodstock, VT: Jewish Light Publishing, 1994.

_____. *Noah's Wife: The Story of Naamah*. Woodstock, VT: Jewish Light Publishing, 2002.

Tyler, Anne. *Tumble Tower*. New York: Orchard Books, 1993.

Williams, Mary. *Brothers in Hope: The Story of the Lost Boys of Sudan*. New York: Lee & Low Books, 2005.

Secondary sources:

L'Engle, Madeleine. *Trailing Clouds of Glory: Spiritual Values in Children's Literature*. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1985.

Lewis, C.S. *On Stories and other Essays on Literature*. New York: Harcourt, Inc., 1966.

Myers, Doris E. "Growing in Grace: The Anglican Spiritual Style in the Chronicles of Narnia." In *The Pilgrim's Guide: C.S. Lewis and the Art of Witness*, edited by David Mills, 185-202. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998.

Nesbett, Peter. *Jacob Lawrence: The Complete Prints (1963-2000)*. Seattle: Francine Seders Gallery in association with University of Washington Press, 2005 (Paperback edition).

Paterson, Katherine. *Gates of Excellence: On Reading and Writing Books for Children*. New York: Lodestar Books, 1981, 1988.

Paterson, Katherine. *The Invisible Child: On Reading and Writing Books for Children*. New York: Dutton Children's Books, 1981, 1989, 2001.

Plantinga, Jr., Cornelius. "Reading and Preaching." *Perspectives* (May 1989): 4-7.

Sasso, Sandy. "The Role of Narrative in the Spiritual Formation of Children." *Family Ministry* 19, no. 2 (Summer 2005): 13-26.

Schakel, Peter S. *Imagination and the Arts in C.S. Lewis*. Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2002.

Schakel, Peter S. *The Way into Narnia: A Reader's Guide*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2005.

Shadowlands. VHS. Directed by Richard Attenborough. New York: HBO Video, 1994.

Travers, Barbara E. and John F. Travers. *Children's Literature: A Developmental Perspective*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2007.

Class Schedule

WEEK 1

M	1/4	Introductions
T	1/5	Field Trip #1
W	1/6	Discussion of <i>The Magician's Nephew</i> and Doris Myers chapter
Th	1/7	AB (Annotated Bibliography) Due; Watch "Shadowlands"
F	1/8	Discussion of <i>Bud, Not Buddy</i>

WEEK 2

M	1/11	Secondary readings: Sandy Sasso article, etc.
T	1/12	Discussion of <i>A Wrinkle in Time</i>
W	1/13	Field Trip #2
Th	1/14	AB Due; Discuss ideas for final project, etc.
F	1/15	Discussion of <i>kira-kira</i>

WEEK 3

M	1/18	NO CLASS, Martin Luther King, Jr. Birthday
T	1/19	Discussion of <i>The God Box</i>
W	1/20	Field Trip #3
Th	1/21	AB Due; Discussion of <i>Jacob Have I Loved</i> and Katherine Paterson's Newberry Acceptance Speech (1981) for <i>Jacob Have I Loved</i>
F	1/22	Notebooks Due; Katherine Paterson, "In Search of Wonder" essay Wrapping up

Final projects due: Friday, January 29, by 5:00 pm in Carol's office, Schlegel 302