

Childhood's Books

COURSE DETAILS

Course Designator and Number: LNDN 3252

Number of Credits: 3

Language of Instruction: English

Contact Hours: 45

Instructor: On-Site Faculty

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course examines writing for young people, with a focus on children's books about cities. We will consider how representations of childhood in literature change over time and in response to specific historical and cultural events, with special focus on literary representations of children in urban environments and the role of the city in the development of children's literature as a genre. We will explore the relationship between books for children and the historical experiences of children in London. Readings will include classic and contemporary children's literature by British, American, and African authors, including *Peter Pan*; *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*; and *Zarah the Windseeker*, including novels and picture books. The class will take field trips to notable sites in London relevant to the history of childhood and children's literature. Students will write regularly in response to course readings, field trips, and lectures, and they will conduct original research about the relationship between the history of children's literature and the city of London, then present that research in class.

Course Objectives

Upon completion of the course, students will be knowledgeable about the history of children's literature in English. Students will be familiar with critical theories of childhood and of the relationship between cultural identity and practices of representation. They will develop and practice close reading skills and scholarly methods of textual analysis and critique. And they

will cultivate habits of mind that take children and childhood seriously in everyday life and in scholarly inquiry. Students will have substantial opportunities to practice written and oral communication, and in Internet-based assignments, they will practice basic forms of digital literacy and online participation.

Methodology

Students will be expected to complete substantial reading, writing, and preparation outside of class. Class meetings will include lecture, discussion, small group work, and student presentations.

Field Component(s): CAPA provides the unique opportunity to learn about the city through direct, guided experience. Participation in the field activity(s) for this course is required. You will actively explore the global city you are currently living in. Furthermore, you will have the chance to collect useful information that will be an invaluable resource for the essays/papers/projects assigned in this course.

The assigned field component(s) are:

- Kensington Gardens, London W2 2UH
- The Foundling Museum, 40 Brunswick Square, London WC1N 1AZ
- Ragged School Museum, 46 Copperfield Road, London E3 4RR

Students are strongly encouraged to participate in co-curricular program activities.

Required Readings/Materials

- J.M. Barrie, *Peter Pan in Kensington Gardens and Peter and Wendy* (Oxford World's Classics) (Also available for free online as Project Gutenberg: <https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/26998> and <https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/26654>)
- Marcia Brown, *Dick Whittington and His Cat* (Atheneum Books for Young Readers)
- Frances Hodgson Burnett, *A Little Princess* (Dover) (Also available for free online at Project Gutenberg: <https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/37332>)
- Charles Dickens, *Oliver Twist* (Penguin Classics) (Also available for free online at Project Gutenberg: <http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/47529>)
- C. S. Lewis, *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* (HarperCollins)
- Mark Haddon, *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* (Vintage)
- China Miéville, *Un Lun Dun* (Del Rey)
- Maribeth Boelts, *Happy Like Soccer* (Candlewick)
- Faith Ringgold, *Tar Beach* (1991)
- Barbara Shook Hazen, *Tight Times* (1979)
- Ezra Jack Keats, *The Snowy Day* (1962)
- Don Freeman, *Corduroy* (1976)
- Nnedi Okorafor, *Zahrah the Windseeker* (HMH Books for Young Readers)

Contents of the Reader or E-Reader if Needed

- John Newberry, *A Pretty Little Pocket-Book*
- *Dick Whittington and His Cat* versions

Grading

Grading Rubric

Letter grade	Score or percentage	Description
A	93–100	Achievement that is outstanding relative to the level necessary to meet course requirements.
A-	90–92	Achievement that is significantly above the level necessary to meet course requirements.
B+	87–89	
B	83–86	
B-	80–82	Achievement that meets the course requirements in every respect.
C+	77–79	
C	73–76	
C-	70–72	Achievement that is worthy of credit even though it fails to meet fully the course requirements.
D+	67–69	
D	60–66	
F	0–59	Represents failure (or no credit) and signifies that the work was either (1) completed but at a level of achievement that is not worthy of credit or (2) was not completed and there was no agreement between the instructor and the student that the student would be awarded an I.

Summary of How Grades are Weighted

Assignments	Percentage of grade
Participation	20%
Weekly paper	20%
Oral presentation	10%
Discussion facilitator	10%
Paper 1	20%
Paper 2	20%
Final grade	100%

Assessment Details

Weekly Papers: Students will be expected to turn in a short piece of writing each week (300 words). Assignments will include questions designed to elicit personal reflection about each student's relationship to children's books as well as one or several short-answer questions designed to facilitate reviews of the books and themes discussed each week. The assignments will be related to the week ahead so that each student will come prepared with decompressed thoughts on the content.

Oral Presentation: After paper topics are approved, each week one or two students (depending on the class size) will deliver a formal 20-minute presentation to the class based on the research they are doing for their final paper.

Discussion Facilitator: Each week a small group of students will be responsible for taking the lead in facilitating the discussion via introductory class presentation. The discussion facilitators will be expected to turn in their enhanced papers (600 words) for the week prior to the class meeting. Particular pieces of recommended reading will be required of the facilitator for the week. Students will be expected to turn in their detailed notes and be prepared to present on the identified topics.

Research Papers: Students will complete two 10-page research papers on topics related to children and literature in London. The first is due in class on week 7, and the second is due in class at the final class meeting. Over the course of the semester, each student will deliver a 20-minute formal presentation to the class based on their research.

COURSE CONTENT

Unit 1

The Beginnings of British Publishing for Children and New Ideas About Children

- READ BEFORE CLASS: John Newberry, *A Little Pretty Pocket-Book*
- IN CLASS: Lecture about the history of children's literature
- IN CLASS: We'll schedule discussion facilitators for the rest of the course today

Unit 2

Urban Orphans in Early Children's Literature

- READ: Several versions of *Dick Whittington and His Cat* (multiple authors); Hugh Cunningham, *Children and Childhood in Western Society Since 1500* (selections)
- WRITE: First weekly paper due in class

Unit 3

Urban Orphans in History

- READ: Hugh Cunningham, *Children and Childhood in Western Society Since 1500* (selections)
- VISIT: Meet at the Foundling Museum
- IN CLASS: Tour Foundling Museum
- WRITE: Second weekly paper due electronically

Unit 4

Urban Poverty & Race in Contemporary Picture Books

- READ: Maribeth Boelts, *Happy Like Soccer* (2012); Faith Ringgold, *Tar Beach* (1991); Barbara Shook Hazen, *Tight Times* (1979); Ezra Jack Keats, *The Snowy Day* (1962); Don Freeman, *Corduroy* (1976)
- WRITE: Third weekly paper due in class

Unit 5

Urban Orphans & Golden-Age Fantasy

- READ: J. M. Barrie, *Peter Pan in Kensington Gardens* and *Peter and Wendy* (selections)
- VISIT: Kensington Gardens
- IN CLASS: If the weather allows, we'll tour Kensington Gardens together and meet for class outside to discuss Peter Pan and the upcoming paper assignments
- WRITE: Draft of first 10-page paper due in class

Unit 6

Urban Orphans & Golden-Age Realism

- READ: Frances Hodgson Burnett, *A Little Princess*
- WRITE: Final version of first 10-page paper due electronically

Unit 7

Break

Unit 8

- READ: Hugh Cunningham, *Children and Childhood in Western Society Since 1500* (selections)
- VISIT: Field trip to Ragged School Museum
- IN CLASS: Tour Ragged School Museum
- WRITE: Fourth weekly paper due electronically

Unit 9

Escaping from the City

- READ: C. S. Lewis, *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*
- WRITE: Fifth weekly paper due in class

Unit 10

Escaping from the City (a very different approach)

- READ: Nnedi Okorafor, *Zahrah the Windseeker*
- WRITE: Sixth weekly paper due in class

Unit 11

Escaping into the City

- READ: Mark Haddon, *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*
- IN CLASS: Discuss upcoming paper assignments
- WRITE: Seventh weekly paper due in class

Unit 12

Escaping into the City

- READ: China Miéville, *Un Lun Dun*
- IN CLASS: Final presentations
- WRITE: Draft of second 10-page paper due in class

Unit 13

Wrap-Up

- PRESENT: Final in-class presentations about research projects
- WRITE: Second 10-page paper due in class

POLICIES

Attendance Policy

Students are expected to be on time and attend all classes while abroad. Many instructors assess both attendance and participation when assigning a final course grade. Attendance alone does not guarantee a positive participation grade; the student should be prepared for class and engage in class discussion. See the on-site syllabus for specific class requirements.

CAPA has a mandatory attendance policy. Attendance is taken at the beginning of every class. Unless otherwise expressed by your instructor, the first time a student has an unexcused absence for a class, his/her grade will not be impacted. The second time a student has an unexcused absence in that class, it will result in a 3 percent reduction of the final grade (for example: an A- [92] will become a B+ [89]). The student will be placed on academic probation at this time. Three unexcused absences per class will result in failure of the course. A pattern of three absences in more than one course will result in dismissal from the program.

Absences are only excused for medical reasons, for a family emergency or for a religious holiday. To request an excused absence, students must contact excused.absence@capa.org ahead of time and provide evidence (e.g. a doctor's note) of the reason for his/her absence,

otherwise, the absence will not be excused. Even if the student knows the absence will not be excused, the student should still contact CAPA to inform CAPA they will not be in class. In addition to contacting excused.absence@capa.org, it is the responsibility of the student to contact his/her instructor and make up any missed assignments.

University of Minnesota Policies & Procedures

Academic integrity is essential to a positive teaching and learning environment. All students enrolled in University courses are expected to complete coursework responsibilities with fairness and honesty. Failure to do so by seeking unfair advantage over others or misrepresenting someone else's work as your own can result in disciplinary action. The University Student Conduct Code defines scholastic dishonesty as follows:

Scholastic Dishonesty

Scholastic dishonesty means plagiarizing; cheating on assignments or examinations; engaging in unauthorized collaboration on academic work; taking, acquiring, or using test materials without faculty permission; submitting false or incomplete records of academic achievement; acting alone or in cooperation with another to falsify records or to obtain dishonestly grades, honors, awards, or professional endorsement; altering forging, or misusing a University academic record; or fabricating or falsifying data, research procedures, or data analysis.

Within this course, a student responsible for scholastic dishonesty can be assigned a penalty up to and including an "F" or "N" for the course. If you have any questions regarding the expectations for a specific assignment or exam, ask.

Student Conduct

The University of Minnesota has specific policies concerning student conduct. This information can be found on the Learning Abroad Center website.