

# Traditions in Children's Literature NEN52601

**Class Time:** Thursdays CD, 8:10-10:05, Room R0405

**Website:** <http://english.scu.edu.tw/jmklassen/>

**Professor:** Jonathan Klassen

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**Office Hours:** Mondays 10:10-1:00; Th 3:00-6:00 and by appt

## Texts

- *Alice in Wonderland*, by Lewis Carroll
- *Pippi Longstocking*, by Astrid Lindgren
- *Charlotte's Web*, by E. B. White
- *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*, by C. S. Lewis

## Class Goals

- To become critical readers.
- To be able to converse and write critically about children's literature.
- To articulate and modify your own ideas about children's literature and culture.

This semester long class investigates children's literature from a traditional perspective. This includes, but is not limited to the history of children's literature in English, folk literature, and historical development of childhood issues. Students will read poetry, folk and fairy tales, as well as modern texts that incorporate traditional elements. Students will also be required to read both picture books and novels. Emphasis will be given to defining the genre, understanding its subgenres, and noting the development of children's literature over time.

A schedule of weekly readings, topics, and assignments are available on the class website. Students are responsible to know all deadlines in order to finish all readings before the appropriate class and hand in all assignments on time

Since this is a literature class, we will be reading, thinking, discussing, and writing about the books we read from a **critical literary perspective**. We will investigate the messages communicated in the literature and how the messages are conveyed. It is important to continually **challenge yourself** to ask provoking questions and see the texts from fresh perspectives. As we **question the assumptions** of the authors, cultures, and consumers involved in the production of the texts we read, it is also important to **analyze our own assumptions** about life, literature, and childhood. We'll glimpse the wide range of genres encompassed within children's literature and pay attention to their separate and overlapping conventions.

This class combines lecture, small group work, and large group discussion. This is your class and much of the responsibility for making the class meaningful is yours. It is supremely important to say what you think while respecting and considering contrary viewpoints. The most engaging classes are those where students participate actively and share a wide variety of ideas. Additionally, I encourage you to bring in or refer to additional books, newspaper/magazine articles, movies, or any other information that may be relevant to what we are discussing in class.

## How the class will work

**Basic expectation:** Complete all the reading in English before class each week.

**Study groups** (4-5 students) for the semester will be formed in the second week of class.

**Evaluated work:** Two presentations within small groups, two short papers (2-3 pages), no exams ☺, several quizzes.

**Moodle:** Use the moodle system to download handouts, assigned reading, lecture PPTs, and other information.

## Class Schedule and Policies

Please refer to the class website listed above for class policies, reading schedule, supplementary reading, assignments, homework, class topics, and exam times.

**Timeliness:** Late attendance, absences, and late assignments will affect your grade. You are always responsible to know the schedule, arrive on time, and complete all assignments on time. Check the website and discussion group members for any information you may have missed. Talk with me about anything you don't understand.

**Note:** Since the official schedule is posted on-line, it is subject to change. Be sure you check it regularly.

## Grading

Participation	10%	Attendance, Discussion, Groupwork, etc.
Quizzes	20%	Weekly quizzes covering the reading and previous lectures.
Book Responses	20%	Brief written response to 3 of our four main books.
Comparison Paper	30%	One 4-5 page paper, comparing the childhoods of two characters from two class texts
Presentations	20%	Two presentations. Folk Tale Presentation and Why is it a classic? presentation

☺ Finally, I hope you learn a lot, work hard, and enjoy this class (in that order). ☺

WEEK	MON 56	READING AND ASSIGNMENTS	IN-CLASS LECTURES AND ACTIVITIES
1	9/10	Introduction	Lecture: What is childhood? What are children? What is children's literature?
2	9/17	Traditional Fantasy Read the Grimm Brothers and Perrault sections from the <b>folktales packet</b> : pp 2-12. Know the differences between the different versions of the same stories.	Lecture: folk literature, the oral tradition in children's literature. Red Riding Hood and Cinderella.
3	9/24	Read The Three Little Pigs and some random Rhymes from <b>The Real Mother Goose</b> (1916). We'll read some in class. <b>Prepare a fairy tale to share</b>	Lecture: Mother Goose, nursery rhymes, and English folk stories.
4	10/1	Tales from the Arabian Nights Andrew Lang (1898): Read: <b>Preface; The Arabian Nights; The Story of the Merchant and the Genius</b> Optional: Sir Francis Richard Burton 1855 version <b>Sign up for your fairy tale</b>	Lecture: The Arabian Nights and the exotic in children's literature (Orientalism).
5	10/8	Read the Hans Christian Andersen section from the folktales packet: pp 13-26.	Lecture: Anderson and literary fairy tales
6	10/15	<b>Prepare your presentations</b>	Lecture: Archetypes <b>Fairy Tale Presentations in small groups</b>
7	10/22	<i>Alice in Wonderland</i> Chs 1-4	Lecture: Lewis Carroll and Alice
8	10/29	<i>Alice in Wonderland</i> Chs 5-8	Lecture: From Alice to Dorothy, the first golden age of children's literature
9	11/5	<i>Alice in Wonderland</i> Chs 9-12	Lecture: Nonsense
10	11/12	<i>Alice Paper Due.</i> <i>Pippi Longstocking</i> first half	Lecture: Humor & Breaking social constraints
11	11/19	<i>Pippi Longstocking</i> second half <b>Sign up for your group's classic book</b>	Lecture: Didacticism, condescension, Rainbow Fish
12	11/26	<i>Charlotte's Web</i> first half	Lecture: Characterization: flat, round, dynamic, static, and foil characters
13	12/3	<i>Charlotte's Web</i> second half	Lecture: The willing suspension of disbelief
14	12/10	<i>The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe</i> First half	Lecture: Fantasy & Epic fantasy
15	12/17	<i>The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe</i> Second half	Lecture: Children's Literature past and present
16	12/24	<b>Holiday</b>	
17	12/31	Read your group book	Review and Work on your presentation
18	1/7	Prepare your presentations	<b>Book Presentations: Why is it a classic?</b>