

ELAN 3110: Children's Literature and Oral Language

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T: 8:00-12:15

Aderhold 114

Course Text

Russell, David L. (2005). *Literature for children: A short introduction*. NY: Longman.

Short, Kathy G. (1997). *Literature as a way of knowing*. Los Angeles, CA: Stenhouse.

Course Novels

- *Locomotion* or *Love That Dog*
- *Holes*, *Maniac Magee*, *Hatchet* or *The Watson's go to Birmingham—1963*
- *Because of Winn Dixie*, *The Great Gilly Hopkins*, *Walk Two Moons*, or *The Watson's go to Birmingham—1963*
- *Charlotte's Web*, *Tuck Everlasting*, *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*, *The Giver*, or *Among the Hidden*
- *Out of the Dust*, *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*; *Kira-Kira*; *Catherine, Called Birdy*; or *The Midwife's Apprentice*
- *Lincoln: A Photobiography*, *Eleanor: A Life of Discovery*, or *Confucius: The Golden Rule*

**Additional readings will be available on the course WebCT as indicated.*

General Information

Purpose and Goals

ELAN 3110 is the first in a two-course sequence of instruction in children's language and literacy development for Early Childhood Education majors at UGA. The primary focus of this course is on children's literature, how it might be used in elementary classrooms, and criteria available for determining quality literature. During this course, we will focus on oral language development, cultural awareness, and the connections between children's literature and other literacy practices.

The goals of this class are:

- to gain a better understanding of ourselves as readers
- to explore children's literature across multiple genres
- to become familiar with criteria and resources for selecting quality literature
- to explore language diversity and classroom implications
- to develop an awareness of cultures different from our own

Outline of Requirements

Attendance, Participation and Oral Literacy

Attendance and *active* participation are required. You need to be in class in order to learn from classmates, and for them to learn from you. While I do understand that health, work, and family responsibilities at times may preclude attendance, if it is necessary for you to miss a day of class, I would appreciate it if you let me know in advance.

While we all have varying comfort levels of class participation, it is expected that everyone will support the class community and their own learning by engaging in class discussions. The success of the class depends on what each of us brings and the manner in which we bring it. There will be very little lecture in this class; therefore, it is essential that you have read, thought, and written about assigned readings *prior* to class. *Active* participation is defined as:

- (1) providing evidence that you have read the assigned material
- (2) engaging in thoughtful and reflective oral and written response to the reading
- (3) demonstrating respect for the ideas of others
- (4) working productively in small groups.

As evident in the above, we will make oral literacy part of our classroom practices through our whole group and small group discussions. You are encouraged to think beyond the confines of this class and enliven our discussions with your reflections on other readings and experiences. Literacy classes must be, by definition, safe and nurturing spaces, and we will work together to create the kind of supportive learning environment in which good written and oral communication can flourish.

Grading Policy

I anticipate that you all will do excellent work in this class, but I do have views on what “excellent” means.

- *A* means excellent work that shows you have not only met the requirements of the assignment but also are challenging yourself and displaying creativity and initiative in your work.
- *B* means good work that meets the requirements of the assignment in a thoughtful and adequate way.
- If I feel that your work does not meet the level of either an *A* or *B*, I will request a conference so we can discuss ways to improve your performance in the class.
- Since so much of classroom learning is social and derived from our collective dialogues, I reserve the right to deduct up to 5 points from your final grade due to lack of participation.

Academic Honesty

Our class will strictly adhere to UGA’s guidelines for academic honesty. If you are unfamiliar with them, I strongly urge you to read about the policy, particularly section 5 (http://www.uga.edu/ovpi/academic_honesty/culture_honesty.htm).

Email

You’ll need to have a working email account for this class. Please check your email twice a week for any messages I might need to send you. Likewise, I will check my email daily for any messages from you.

Late Work

All work is expected at the start of class time on the day it is due unless otherwise noted.

- Work turned in within the 24 hours after the due time will result in the deduction of half a letter grade.
- Work turned in after 24 hours will result in the deduction of a full letter grade.
- No paper will be accepted three days after the due date.

Cell Phones

Please turn them off when you enter class.

Note: This syllabus is open to change depending upon the needs of the class.

Assignments

All written assignments should be done in 12 pt. Times New Roman font, *spaced appropriately*, unless you need to alter size, format and font for creative purposes. **All papers should be revised, proofread, and edited before they are turned in.**

Assignment	Weight	Due Date
1. Reading responses (WebCT postings)	30%	Daily
2. Reading autobiography	10%	September 5
3. Poetry anthology	10%	September 19
4. Field reports	20%	During fieldwork
5. Author study	15%	November 28
6. Final reflection	15%	December 5

Explanation of Assignments:

1. WebCT postings—responses to readings (due daily)

Responding in writing to literature and academic texts can be a powerful way to reflect on important and difficult ideas and issues raised by those readings. Written responses will be used to set the stage for our classroom discussions. After completing the readings for each class, you will need to post a written response on WebCT no later than Monday evening by 5pm. Three full paragraphs in length is a good guideline to keep in mind, though I encourage you to deviate as needed to support your own writing practice.

In the responses, I'm primarily interested in things that pique your interest and emotions. I'm not looking for summaries of the books or the arguments in the academic texts. Your comments about the novels might include thoughts about the memories and feelings the work evokes; the author's craft and construction of plot, setting, character, or theme; or the book's perspective on life in general. Responses should also include any questions that arise from the novels or articles—issues that trouble you or aspects of the text that are unsettling or unclear. *Please include APA style citations for all readings.*

2. Reading autobiography (due September 5)

This is a short paper about who you are as a reader (2-4 pages, double-spaced, typed). You might organize your autobiography chronologically, categorically, or other ways you see fit; I encourage you to think openly about what you can include as reading (i.e., comics, novels, music lyrics, notes from friends, letters, even body language). You might consider the following questions:

- What earliest memory do you associate with reading?
- When or how did you learn to read?
- What did you read as a child and how did you make those choices?
- Who influenced your reading (positively or negatively) and how?
- How have you used reading in your everyday life?

3. Poetry Anthology Project (due September 19)

Choose a children's literature poet and write a one page biography (single-spaced) including any information that could be useful for elementary teachers when introducing a poet and his/her work to the class—i.e., a brief history, interesting facts, websites for poems. *Bring in copies of two poems (one that rhymes, one that does not) to contribute to a classroom poetry anthology.* We'll assemble the poems together during the class session.

4. Field Reports (due weekly during fieldwork)

Rather than one overarching evaluative report, you will have three short reports to complete for this course while you are in the schools. These reports work in conjunction with your READ course this semester and are due weekly while you're in the field.

1) *Reading program analysis*—gather information about the reading program used in your school. You may find it helpful to pose questions to your mentor teacher and/or the literacy coach, reading specialist and media specialist. Write a 2-3 page (double-spaced) report—including a brief description of the program—addressing the following:

- How is children's literature incorporated into the program?
- How does the information you gained and your observations relate to what you know so far about children's language and literacy development?
- What do you think are the strengths and weaknesses of the program?

2) *Teaching with children's literature*—Integrate the use of children's literature into your 3-5 consecutive day lesson plans for your Early Childhood class and give me a copy. Write a 2-3 page (double-spaced) report describing how the lesson went and what you might change if you could do it again. Did you notice anything unexpected (i.e., children's responses) with the literature you chose?

3) *Cultural response*—Write a 2-3 page (double-spaced) cultural response to your work in the field. Consider the following questions:

- How does what you have observed in the field compare with your own school experiences?
- What do you think are the potential cultural challenges ahead of you as an elementary school educator?
- What are your *current* thoughts and intentions concerning the use of children's literature in your future classroom? Why?
- How do you think your perspective differs from or is similar to your mentor teacher's philosophy?

5. Author study (due November 28)

Working alone or in groups of no more than four students, choose a single children's literature author to study in depth. Your written compilation will be approximately 5-10 (single-spaced) pages and will include four main parts:

1) *Rationale*—Write a brief rationale for your decision to select your author. Why did you (or your group) decide to choose this author? What was it about his/her work that led you to make this decision? Consider including specifics about content, theme, style of writing, illustration, perspective on life, characters, and/or other elements that led to your decision.

2) *Personal responses to books*—Similar to our daily WebCT postings, write your personal reactions to each of the books you selected. (See WebCT posting assignment description).

3) *Web resources*—Find at least four online resources (websites) that relate directly to your author and/or illustrator. Write a 2-3 sentence description of each site pointing to features that you find particularly useful.

4) *Classroom application*—Write a brief description of the literary/curricular focus or foci of your author study. In other words, in what ways might a classroom teacher use this author's work (i.e., what are possible mini-lessons and/or cross-curricular links). Consider including connections to other literature and other forms of media.

Also, be mindful of the cultural diversity present (or absent) in the books you choose. Each group's work will serve as one section in a combined Author Study Collection—a resource that will hopefully provide useful information in your future classroom teaching. On November 28, your group will give a presentation (30-45 minutes) during which each member will be expected to give a book talk. Some questions to consider when giving your book talk: 1) *Why did you choose this particular book?* 2) *What do you think the strengths and weaknesses are?* 3) *How might this book be used in your teaching?*

6. Final Paper—Overall course reflection (due December 5)

This final paper (8-10 pgs. double-spaced) is intended to synthesize your thinking throughout the semester, drawing specifically on what you've read, written, and observed. Consider using your daily reading responses as well as your experiences in the field to compose this final analysis. Also, you may want to include what impact your reading autobiography has had on your thinking about literacy and your future teaching career. *Use references/quotes from our professional readings and reference all citations using APA style.*

ELAN 4120, Spring 2005—Course Schedule

Date	Focus	Readings/Assignments
August 22	<p style="text-align: center;">Introductions</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Overview of course/syllabus</p>	
August 29	<p style="text-align: center;">What is children’s literature? What is “response” to literature?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Literature circles</p>	<p>Readings Short: Chs. 1, 2 4 Russell: Skim ch. 1, read ch. 4</p> <p>Assignments WebCT posting</p>
September 5	<p style="text-align: center;">Picture books (Caldecott Medal) Picture book potluck</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Language acquisition/ linguistic diversity</p>	<p>Readings Russell: Ch. 6, 7 Bring one picture book to read aloud Short: Ch. 3 Delpit (WebCT)</p> <p>Assignments WebCT posting Reading autobiography due</p>
September 12	<p style="text-align: center;">Traditional literature/ folklore</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Cultural diversity/ multiculturalism</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Intro to poetry/ verse novels</p>	<p>Readings Russell: Chs. 8, 5 Yolen (WebCT) Bishop (WebCT) Choose one of the following (WebCT): <i>The People Could Fly</i> (Hamilton) <i>Her Stories</i> (Hamilton) <i>Cut From the Same Cloth</i> (San Souci)</p> <p>Assignments WebCT posting</p>
September 19	<p style="text-align: center;">Poetry novel discussion Poetry book potluck</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Intro to realistic fiction (Newbery Awards)</p>	<p>Readings Russell: Ch. 9 Choose one of the following: <i>Locomotion</i> (Woodson) <i>Love That Dog</i> (Creech)</p> <p>Assignments WebCT posting Poetry anthology project due</p>
September 26	<p style="text-align: center;">Realistic fiction I (boys as main characters)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Gendered readings</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Response roles</p>	<p>Readings Russell: Ch. 11 Gendered readings (WebCT) Choose one of the following: <i>Holes</i> (Sachar) <i>Maniac Magee</i> (Spinelli) <i>Hatchet</i> (Paulson) <i>Watson’s go to Bham—1963</i> (Curtis)</p> <p>Assignments WebCT posting Reading response roles</p>

October 3	<p>Realistic fiction II (girls as main characters)</p> <p>Gender issues</p> <p>Intro to fantasy/ science fiction</p>	<p>Readings Ernst (WebCT) Choose one of the following: <i>Because of Winn Dixie</i> (DiCamillo) <i>The Great Gilly Hopkins</i> (Paterson) <i>Walk Two Moons</i> (Creech) <i>Watson's go to Bham—1963</i> (Curtis)</p> <p>Assignments WebCT posting Reading response roles</p>
October 10	<p>Fantasy/science fiction</p> <p>Integrating literature throughout curriculum</p> <p>Intro to historical fiction</p>	<p>Readings Russell: pp. 216-224, p. 232 Ray (WebCT) Choose one of the following: <i>Charlotte's Web</i> (White) <i>Tuck Everlasting</i> (Babbitt) <i>Harry Potter/Sorcerer's Stone</i> (Rowling) <i>The Giver</i> (Lowry) <i>Among the Hidden</i> (Haddix)</p> <p>Assignments WebCT posting Choose response option from WebCT list</p>
October 17- November 14	Field Work	<p>Assignments Field reports due weekly</p>
November 21	<p>Debrief field experiences</p> <p>Historical fiction</p> <p>Intro to biography and information books (Orbis Pictus and Sibert Awards)</p>	<p>Readings Russell: pp. 225-231, p. 237 Choose one of the following: <i>Out of the Dust</i> (Hesse) <i>Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry</i> (Taylor) <i>Kira-Kira</i> (Kadohata) <i>Catherine, Called Birdy</i> (Cushman) <i>The Midwife's Apprentice</i> (Cushman)</p> <p>Assignments WebCT posting</p>
November 28	<p>Biography and information books</p> <p>Author study presentations</p> <p>Georgia Children's Book Awards www.coe.uga.edu/gcba</p>	<p>Readings Russell: Ch. 12 Author study books Choose one of the following: <i>Lincoln: A Photobiography</i> (Freedman) <i>Eleanor: A Life of Discovery</i> (Freedman) <i>Confucius: The Golden Rule</i> (Freedman)</p> <p>Assignments WebCT posting Author study due</p>
December 5	Course/instructor evaluations	<p>Assignments Final response piece due</p>