

California State University, San Marcos  
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

EDUC 400 – Children’s Literature  
Fall 2002

Jill M. Halaska  
[jhalaska@csusm.edu](mailto:jhalaska@csusm.edu)

Office: UH406  
(760)750-8524 (voicemail)

Office Hours: M/W 1:30-2:30, or by appointment

Class Meets: M/W 2:30-3:45PM  
University Hall, Room 460

College of Education Mission Statement

The mission of the College of Education Community is to collaboratively transform public education by preparing thoughtful educators and advancing professional practices. We are committed to diversity, educational equity, and social justice, exemplified through reflective teaching, life-long learning, innovative research, and ongoing service. Our practices demonstrate a commitment to student-centered education, diversity, collaboration, professionalism, and shared governance.

*(adopted by COE Governance Community, October, 1997)*

Students with Disabilities Requiring Reasonable  
Accommodations

Students are approved for services through the Disabled Students Services Office (DSS). This office is located in Craven Hall 5205, and can be contacted by phone at (760 750-4905, or TTY (760) 750-4909. Students authorized by DSS to receive reasonable accommodations should meet with their instructor during office hours, or in order to ensure confidentiality, in a more private setting.

REQUIRED TEXTS: Huck, C. Hepler, S, Hickman, J. Kiefer, B. (2000). Seventh Edition. Children's Literature in the Elementary School. Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich College Publishers.

Taking Sides by Gary Soto

Where the Wild Things Are by Maurice Sendak

Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters by John Steptoe

Phantom Tollbooth by Norton Juster

Bridge to Terebithia by Katherine Paterson

A Single Shard by Linda Sue Park

The Watsons Go to Birmingham by Christopher Paul Curtis

Through My Eyes by Ruby Bridges

Carver: A Life in Poems by Marilyn Nelson

Although it would be worthwhile to have these books in your personal and/or classroom library, it is not essential that you buy them all. They can be found at any public library, the university library, or you could borrow them.

## COURSE OVERVIEW

This course is an introductory study of children's literature with emphasis on selecting, interpreting and using quality literature with children of various needs and developmental levels. It is designed to give experience in selecting what is best and appropriate for children of different "ages and stages". Techniques for introducing literature to children, finding ways to deepen and broaden children's understanding of literature, and extending children's interest in literature are included. Most of all, the course is intended to help students recognize and value good children's literature for its artistic and literary merits and for its importance to children. Specific objectives to be achieved include the following:

### Knowledge

- ◆ Students will become aware of the range of available literary material for children and will become familiar with selected examples of picture books, folk and fairy tales, fantasy, poetry, realistic fiction and historical fiction and informational books.
- ◆ Students will learn criteria for book selection that are appropriate to children's literature.
- ◆ Students will recognize developmental characteristics of children that affect their reading interests, responses and appreciation

### Attitudes/Values

- ◆ Students will display a positive, interested stance toward the reading of children's literature
- ◆ Students will display a commitment to the use of children's literature in the elementary classroom in various areas of curriculum (reading social studies, science, etc.)
- ◆ Students will develop a commitment to foster multicultural understanding through the inclusion of literature from diverse cultures
- ◆ Students will value reading as a means of enjoyment as well as means of getting information.
- ◆ Students will value children's right to read a wide range of literature without censorship.

### Skills

- ◆ Students will practice strategies for bringing children and books together including techniques for :
  - a. encouraging children's reading and response
  - b. presenting literature to children through reading aloud, storytelling, etc.
  - c. planning discussions
  - d. designing creative experiences
- ◆ Students will practice responsible decision making in choosing books and in drawing the line between selection and censorship.

## REQUIREMENTS

**Participation** Attend class regularly, arrive on time, stay for the whole class, bring assigned books to class, complete assignments and display an understanding of material read through class discussions. You are also expected to speak up and out in class, to question not only when you do not understand, but also when you disagree.

**Book Exploration and Response** Read widely among the various published books for children and respond to them in a journal format. **Please read more than picture books.** The purpose of this course is to sample as much children's literature as you can. Be careful that the genres we discuss at the end of the course do not get shortchanged in your own reading. **DO NOT** include Disney, Sesame Street, Berenstain Bears or other commercial books (based on a TV show or toy). Your list should include a balance of ABC books, counting books, concept books, predictable books, picture books, folktales, fairy tales (European and non-European), myths, legends, fables, fantasy, realistic fiction, poetry anthologies and or collections of poetry, historical fiction and nonfiction. Also try to be balanced in the cultures and ethnic groups your book choices represent.

### Journal response guidelines

The front of your journal should have a list of all the books you read including the title, author, publication date and genre. Set up a table like this:

<u>Title</u>	<u>Author</u>	<u>Publication date</u>	<u>Genre</u>
--------------	---------------	-------------------------	--------------

- ◆ You must turn in a response for **at least** 25-30 books. Write one entry for each book you read.
- ◆ Date your entries.
- ◆ Mention the title of the book(s) you're talking about in your entries
- ◆ Write about one or more of the following: What strikes you? Tell what you noticed. Tell what you thought and felt and why. Tell what you liked and didn't and why. What were the best parts of the book? Worst? Discuss what you think is a good piece of literature for children and a bad piece. What is quality literature? Tell how you read and why. Tell what these books said and meant to you. What is the author saying about life and living through this book? What connections are there between the book and your own life? In what ways are you like any of the characters? Do any of the characters remind you of friends or family? What character would you like to be in this book? What would you talk about with the characters? **Do not write a summary of each book you read.** Ask questions or ask for help. See the response rubric at the end of the syllabus for ideas.

You will turn in your journal approximately every three weeks. See calendar for turn in dates. I will divide the class evenly and alphabetically.

Some suggestions for books can be found at:

- ◆ Children's Literature Website Guide
- ◆ Newberry Medal and Honor Books
- ◆ Caldecott Medal and Honor Books
- ◆ San Diego County SCORE site
- ◆ Coretta Scott King Award Books

15 Hours of contact with children This is a requirement of the course as mandated by the university. This can take several forms: if you currently volunteer in a classroom, volunteer in a library to read to children, volunteer at the Boys and Girls Clubs, Headstart, take your children or a friend or neighbor's children to the library or volunteer in their classroom. This requirement is very negotiable in terms of the form it will take. If you are **currently** enrolled in a course that has the same requirement, those hours will be sufficient. The point is to observe and/or participate in situations with children in which they interact with books. Write about this experience in your journal (see next item).

**Possible sites:** Headstart Programs, Libraries, Boys and Girls Clubs, After school programs, and area schools.

### Journal response guidelines

In a second section of your journal, keep track your contact time with children. Keep a running record of the date and time you spent with children and books.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Place</u>	<u>Amount of time spent</u>	<u>Activities/Books read</u>
-------------	--------------	-----------------------------	------------------------------

- ◆ **At least three** times during the semester, write about what you observe in your contact with children.
- ◆ When you write about your contact with children, write about: what you did, what you observed, what you thought about, what you might like to share with children in the future, what books they are reading, what they like, how they respond to particular books, etc.. Write about when something interesting happens. It is not necessary that you write about every contact you make and please keep it relevant to this class. It's wonderful if you spend recess or math class with the children you observe, but you don't need to write about it. However, this journal should give me a pretty good picture of what your experience was about and what part you played.

**CHECK CALENDAR FOR JOURNAL TURN IN DATES.**

CHOICE ASSIGNMENTS From the following assignments, choose **4** to complete. For one of the assignments try to find another way to represent what you know or have learned without writing it. I will respond to each of your assignments.

**REREAD THE DESCRIPTION OF THE ASSIGNMENT BEFORE BEGINNING.**

**IN-DEPTH EVALUATION** of one of the following:

- picture book or book of traditional literature
- poetry book (by a single author or edited collection)
- fantasy novel
- realistic fiction novel
- historical fiction novel
- nonfiction, biography or autobiography

These evaluations should consider the general guidelines found on page 29 of HHHK (as appropriate) as well as guidelines found in the textbook specific to that genre. These evaluations should also include your personal reaction to the book as well as how it might be used in a classroom setting. Suggested length: about 3-6 typewritten pages. **Please do not choose one of the assigned books.**

**JOURNAL REVIEWS** Do an oral critique (4-5 minutes) and a visual display of a single issue of a magazine for children or of a literature-related professional periodical. Be sure to include how often the journal is published in a year, how much it costs, what age it is appropriate for and what kinds of things the magazine features. To avoid duplication, select from the list below and **sign up in class by September 11**. (If a journal you would like to review is not on this list, please check with me before reviewing it)

Children's Magazines:

3-2-1 Contact  
American Girl  
Baby bug  
Chickadee Magazine  
Child Life  
Children's Playmate  
Cobble stone (history magazine)  
Chispa (Spanish)  
Crayola  
Cricket  
Highlights for Children  
Kid City (previously the Electric Company)  
Kids Discover  
Jack and Jill  
Ladybug  
Merlyn's Pen (student writing)  
New Moon: The magazine for girls and their dreams  
Owl  
Ranger Rick  
Sesame Street Magazine  
Scholastic Magazine  
Sports Illustrated for Kids  
Stone Soup  
Stork Magazine  
3-2-1 Contact  
Time Magazine for kids  
Turtle Magazine for Preschool Kids  
U\*S\* Kids  
Weekly Reader  
World Magazine (National Geographic)  
Your Big Backyard  
Zillions  
Zoobooks  
Zoonooz

Professional Periodicals

Book Links  
BookList  
The Horn Book  
Language Arts  
The New Advocate  
The Reading Teacher  
School Library Journal  
Storytelling Magazine  
Voices from the middle  
The WEB  
Children's Literature in Education

**IN-DEPTH EVALUATION OF A VIDEOTAPE OR SOFTWARE PROGRAM** for children and/or teachers. Check with me for some samples of guidelines or use existing guidelines from various organizations (ALA has guidelines for evaluating video), or create your own . You may wish to bring in the video or software to share when reviewing it for the class. Unless it is a short video, please choose a representative clip to share. If you wish to share a piece of software, please let me know in advance so that I can schedule the appropriate equipment. When evaluating, consider the appeal to children and/or teachers, accessibility (for software), applicability (in what situations could you envision it being used) and overall quality. Suggested length: 3-6 typewritten pages.

**COMPARE A BOOK TO A VIDEO** Often children think that watching a movie can take the place of reading a book. Can it? Find a children's book which has been made into a film (not a reading of the book - like Reading Rainbow- but the story told in film version). Check local libraries, school libraries, and even video stores under the children's section. **NO DISNEY.** Analyze how well the film represents the book. Is it true to the story? What does it add or leave out? How is the pacing? Does the story move along well? If parts are added or taken away was it to help move the story along or were they difficult to portray on screen? How well does the film tell the story compared to the book? Better? Worse? About the same? How does the setting and characters of the film compare to the book? If it is an animated version, was animation a good choice for this particular book? Is it done well? How might the film enhance or extend a child's understanding of the book? Would it be a good companion to the book? Begin with a short summary of the story. Then discuss the similarities and difference of the book and movie. Then discuss how well the movie portrays the book and how the movie might be used in conjunction with the book. Suggested length: 3-6 typewritten pages.

**OBSERVATION WITH ONE BOOK** Alone or with a partner, observe a small group of children being read a picture book or read one aloud yourself. (Choose a book that has not been presented in class) Write at least one page of observational notes on the children's verbal and nonverbal responses during and after the literature experience. Observational notes simply describe what happened without making judgments. If you think the children responded favorably, write down the behaviors that suggested a positive response. (If you are reading the book to the group you may want to have someone else take notes during the sharing or video or audio tape it.) Then write (collaboratively, if with a partner) 3-6 typed pages of your preliminary analysis of and insights on how children experience literature and on their emerging literacy. Describe the setting in which the book was read. What time of day was it? What was the classroom like -- physically? Socially? What were the responses of the children? What body language did you observe? What did the children say? Describe how the children reacted to specific parts of the book (quotes from the book and the children would be helpful here) A tape recording of the read aloud might be helpful when recalling the read aloud. Use assigned readings, class discussions, and knowledge of child development to guide you in your writing. See chapter 2 in HHHK for additional help. Be sure to attach any notes you took to the end of the paper.

**OBSERVATION OF ONE CHILD** Observe and record one child's interactions and responses to books over at least a four week period of time. Keep track of what books the child chooses to read and has read to him or her. Do you see any pattern in the child's selections? How does this child make selections? What do the child's choices, reactions, comments and questions reveal about cognitive skills or moral judgment? Do you see any changes that reflect experiences with books? Write a 3-6 page typed paper of your observations and your interpretation of this child's experiences with books. Be sure to attach any notes you collected to the end of the paper.

**VISUAL RESPONSE** Produce a visual representation of **your** response as a reader, not as a teacher or parent, to a piece of children's literature. The art should speak for itself. It will be displayed in our classroom (so make it big enough for the whole class to see). Please use appropriate mounting/display techniques to enhance your work. On a small card, to be displayed with your piece, briefly present the author and book to which you are responding and your process in creating your piece. The caption may be typed or hand lettered. Be sure to read through chapter 13 of HHHK for examples that children have produced. **Please do not choose one of the required books.**

**MAKE A BIG BOOK WITH A CLASS (or group of students)** Choose an appropriate book (for the age you are working with - probably under age 10), read it to the children, prepare the text for them (or if they are capable let them write the text), let them illustrate the book, bind it in some sturdy fashion, share it with our class and give it to the class with which you worked. This is not a book that you do, but rather the students each do a page and it becomes their book. **Do not do this until we have done it in class.**

**PICTURE BOOK/TEXT SET** Complete an annotated bibliography of **at least 20** picture books with a **focus or a theme** in mind. For example, you might choose themes such as *friendship, families, changes, death, environmental preservation*, etc. However *multicultural* is not a theme, nor is a genre like *fairy tales* or *ABC books*. All the books in your bibliography must be related to the theme and the annotations should be in **your words**. Be sure to identify the theme around which you have collected the books. Do not include books you would not use with children - only include good examples of this theme. Be sure to include **full bibliographic entry** (APA or MLA style) .

**WEB SITES** Complete an annotated bibliography of at least 20 web sites related to children's literature. Give the address of the web site and a description of what one might find there. Try to include who's sponsoring the site (if you can) so that we know if it is simply an advertisement, a personal web site or one from a professional organization. Please check these out yourself rather than simply copying them out of journals or the like and give your own opinion. Also include whether you think it is primarily an adult site (includes lesson plans, etc.) or whether it is appropriate for children as well.

**STUDY OF AN AUTHOR, ILLUSTRATOR OR POET** Complete an in-depth study of a children's author, illustrator or poet. Your paper should be 4-6 typed pages in length, including books available of the author, illustrator or poet's work. Be prepared to share some of what you learned in class and have copies of a fact sheet of the poet, author or illustrator, a bibliography of his or her works and ways that they could be used with children to pass out in class.

**POETRY COLLECTION** Read widely from among poetry collections and poets. In any format you choose (notecards, notebook, whatever) collect and **organize** the poems **thematically (not by author or book)**. Do not use “miscellaneous” or “other” as a category. With each poem, be sure to include the title of the poem, the author, and the source from which the poem came. Do not let Silverstein and Prelutsky dominate your collection. This should include a range of authors and topics. Also include a bibliography of all your sources. You must have **at least 75 poems** from **at least 12 different sources**. **No more than 20% of your collection should be from the internet**. Choose published books of poetry. Feel free to duplicate poems (rather than writing them over by hand). The purpose of this assignment is to have a large and wide ranging collection of many different types of poems on many different subjects that you could use as a resource with children in, for example, a classroom setting. If you include holidays or seasonal poems, be sure to be inclusive of many cultures and religious groups.

**LEARNING CENTER** Design a learning center/station around a single book or a thematic group of books. A learning center is a place where children can go in a classroom and select from a variety of activities about a particular topic, the things they are interested in learning about or doing. Activities are designed to facilitate children's independent learning across the curriculum and so should include math, science, social studies, art, music and language arts activities. Please try to avoid "worksheet" type activities. A learning center is a place to promote children's inquiry on a particular subject. The learning center should also include a variety of books related to the book which is the center of the study or related to the theme. **Be sure to tie the activities in the center to the books you are using**. For example if the center is designed around *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*, the center might include books about butterflies, insects, life cycles, time - the days of the week, food, etc. Also include the instructions for the center as if the students were completing it independently. Choose the age of children you will gear your center for and that will help focus the study and activities.

**LEAD A BOOK DISCUSSION** Choose one of the required books (except for the first two required books ) and be prepared to lead a class discussion on it. Please submit your book request to me **by September 11. Be prepared to discuss the book by the assigned date of completion.**

Also, please submit a lesson plan or talk with me prior to your discussion with:

- the questions, quotes, and key points or issues which will help you facilitate the discussion
- at least one activity for the entire class, small groups or individuals to do in class, which extends our understanding of the book. See chapter 13 of HHHK, especially pgs. 638-642 for guidance.

Keep in mind that this assignment is about **leading** a discussion, which means you are the **facilitator**, and the class will do most of the talking. **It does not require a presentation by you about the book .**

Teacher education is a professional preparation program. Students will be expected to adhere to standards of dependability, academic honesty and integrity, confidentiality, and writing achievement. Because it is important for teachers to be able to effectively communicate their ideas to students, colleagues, parents, and administrators, writing that is original, clear and error-free is a priority in the College of Education.

## GRADING

The total number of points for this course is 200. The break down of points is as follows:

Choice Projects (20 pts. each)	X 4 =	80
Journal		60
Book Response		
Child contact hours		
Quick Writes (in-class)		30
Attendance		15
Participation		15
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>200 PTS.</b>

A	180-200 points
B	160-179
C	140-159
D	120-139
F	Below 120 points

### Attendance

Due to the dynamic and interactive nature of courses in the COE, all students are expected to attend all classes and participate actively. At a minimum, students must attend more than 80% of class time, or s/he may not receive a passing grade for the course at the discretion of the instructor. If two class sessions are missed, or if the student is late (or leaves early) more than three sessions, s/he cannot receive a grade of "A". If three class sessions are missed, the highest possible grade that can be earned is a "C+". If extenuating circumstances occur, the student should contact the instructor as soon as possible to make appropriate arrangements.