

California State University San Marcos  
College of Education  
EDUC400; Children's Literature; 3 units  
Spring 2002

Instructor: Dr. Schon

Office Hours: Tues 1:30-2:30 and by appointment

Contact Information: (760) 750-4070

**Course Description:**

The course is intended as a survey course dealing with the utilization of literary materials for children from pre-school through junior high school age (4-16 years of age). It is expected that students read literary selections for children in this age range although a certain extent of specialization within an age range is permitted.

**Course Objectives:**

To provide the student with an opportunity to explore and understand literature for children in greater depth; to acquaint students with research in the field; and, to provide avenues for developing meaningful and creative learning activities for children.

Scope of the Course:

Understanding of the development of literature for children.

Critical analysis of the many types of literature for children.

Principles of selection of literature for children.

Contributions of outstanding authors and/or illustrators.

Methods of using literature and presenting literature to children.

Research related to the field of children's literature.

**Required Materials:**

Textbook: *Children and Books*, Ninth Edition, by Zena Sutherland.

**Attendance Policy:**

The attendance policy of the College of Education states: 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. If you miss two class sessions or are late (or leave early) more than three sessions, you cannot receive a grade of "A." If you miss three class sessions, your highest possible grade is a "C+." Should you have extenuating circumstances, contact Dr. Schon as soon as possible.

**Grading Policy:**

Class Participation/Attendance	20%
Required Reading	20%
"Children and Books" Activities	25%
Mid-term Exam	15%
Final Exam	20%

**Course Requirements:**

**Feb. 5-18** **Contact** a school librarian (or teacher) for "Children and Books" Activities.

**Feb. 12** Read Chapter 1, "Children and Books Today." **Be prepared** to discuss VIEWPOINT "A Writer's Social Responsibility" (p.15).

**Feb. 19** Read Chapter 2, "Guiding Children's Book Selection." **Be prepared** to discuss VIEWPOINT "Standards of Criticism for Children's Literature" (p.28). In addition, **read and bring to class** one book listed on pp.60-61. **Due:** Card with your name and name of school, telephone number, name of librarian or teacher for "Children and Books" activities.

ACTIVITY: Familiarize yourself with the collection of the school library where you will be doing your "Children and Books" activities. Notice location of picture books, fiction, nonfiction, award books, etc. Are children encouraged to use the library? Flexible schedules? Attractiveness?

**Feb. 26** Read Chapter 3, "The History of Children's Books." **Be prepared** to discuss VIEWPOINT "Seriousness of Purpose vs. A Sense of Urgency" (p.52). In addition, **read and bring to class** one book listed on p.59 (up to 1884 Johanna Spyri, *Heidi*).

ACTIVITY: Administer an interest inventory to children.

**Mar. 5** Read Chapter 4, "Books for the Very Young." **Be prepared** to discuss VIEWPOINT "Do Children Need Children's Books?" (p.65). In addition, **read and bring to class** one book discussed on pp.98-114.

ACTIVITY: Tabulate the results of the inventory, select several books that may appeal to the children's interests and share the books with the children. What were their responses to the books?

**Mar. 12** Read Chapter 5, "Artists and Children's Books." **Be prepared** to discuss VIEWPOINTS "Storytelling Through Art: Pretense or Performance?" (p.122); and "The Art of Children's Books vs. Graphic Art" (p.146). In addition, **read and bring to class** one book discussed on pp.149-162.

ACTIVITY: 1. Choose a nursery rhyme book appropriate for sharing with young children. Share a book with a group of children and encourage the children to interact with the rhymes by supplying missing words, making up rhyming games, or role playing the characters found in the nursery rhymes.

-OR-

ACTIVITY: 2. Select a picture storybook appropriate for sharing orally with children. Prepare the story for reading and share the book with a group of children.

**Mar. 19** Read Chapters 6 and 7 "Folktales" and "Fables, Myths, and Epics." **Be prepared** to discuss VIEWPOINTS "The Pros and Cons of Reading Fairy Tales to Children" (p.179); and "Meaning Through Fairy Tales" (p.181). In addition, **read and bring to class** one book discussed on pp.193-204 or pp.221-226.

ACTIVITY: 1. Choose a folktale of interest, prepare the story for telling, and share the story with a group of children.

-OR-

ACTIVITY: 2. Select a cumulative tale such as "The Gingerbread Boy" or a simple folktale such as "The Three Bears" and prepare it as a feltboard story. Share the story with a group.

-OR-

ACTIVITY: 3. Choose a folktale that has rapid action appropriate for pantomiming. Lead a group of children through the pantomime.

-OR-

ACTIVITY: 4. Lead a group of children through the five important steps to develop creative interpretations: stimulating interest, presenting the story, guiding the planning, guiding the creative dramatization, and helping the group to evaluate their presentation.

-OR-

ACTIVITY: 5. Select a story from traditional literature that evokes visual images. Share the selection with children, and allow the children to interpret the story using paints, chalk or crayons.

**Mar. 26** Mid-term exam (**Bring** Scantron Green Form #882-ES and #2 pencil.)

**Apr. 9** Read Chapter 8 "Modern Fantasy." **Be prepared** to discuss VIEWPOINT "Fantasy in the Real World" (p.229). In addition, **read and bring to class** one book discussed on pp.260-270.

ACTIVITY: 1. Share a modern fantasy selection that lends itself to artistic interpretations. Interact with a group of children as they interpret the story through a mural, frieze, collage, montage, mosaic, papier-mâché, or diorama. How did various children decide to interpret the story? Did they interact with setting, characters, or plot? Did they account for all three aspects of the story? Did they develop an abstract feeling or mood, or did they create concrete images? Encourage the children to tell about their artistic interpretations.

-OR-

ACTIVITY: 2. Choose a science fiction book and develop an in-depth plan for sharing the book with children. Include in the plan discussion questions, activities that relate science or social studies, creative dramatizations, artistic interpretations, and creative writing suggestions. Share the book with a group of children.

**Apr. 16** Read Chapter 9, "Poetry." **Be prepared** to discuss VIEWPOINT "Misunderstood by Adults" (p.276). In addition, **read and bring to class** one book discussed on pp.307-316.

ACTIVITY: 1. Select a series of poems that encourages physical responses from children. Share the poems with a group of children. Include poems that encourage children to soar through the air, mimic the movements of an animal, or become something other than themselves.

-OR-

ACTIVITY: 2. Choose poems that could be interpreted through choral-speaking arrangements. Select poems appropriate for refrain, line-a-group, antiphonal or dialogue, cumulative, and unison arrangements. Share the poems with a group of children.

**Apr. 23** Read Chapter 10, "Modern Fiction." **Be prepared** to discuss VIEWPOINT "Arrival of the New Realism" (p.345). In addition, **read and bring to class** one book discussed on pp.360-371.

ACTIVITY: Listen to several children tell you about a book they have read. Analyze the children's responses using "Hierarchy of Aesthetic Response" (p.534).

**Apr. 30** Read Chapters 14 and 15, "Literature throughout the Curriculum" and "Encouraging Response to Literature." **Be prepared** to discuss VIEWPOINT "Censorship: Issues and Solutions" (pp.599-602). In addition, **read and bring to class** one book discussed in pp.545-546.

ACTIVITY: Choose African, Native American, Hispanic, or Asian traditional tales, or nursery rhymes. Prepare an appropriate opening, telling style, and ending that reflects the authentic traditional presentation. Share the stories/rhymes with a group of children.

**May 7** Read Chapter 11, "Historical Fiction." **Be prepared** to discuss VIEWPOINT "Political Correctness" (p.389). In addition, **read and bring to class** one book discussed on pp.407-419.

ACTIVITY: 1. Encourage children to select one controversial issue found in historical fiction, pretend to be on the side of one group or another in the story, do additional research on the issue, and take part in a debate.

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ACTIVITY: 2. Select a scene from historical fiction that has both memorable characters and an exciting plot. With a group of children, develop the scene into a creative dramatization.

-OR-

ACTIVITY: 3. Select the folk songs that were popular during a specific period in history. Listen to and read the words and sing the songs. What conflicts, problems, or values are presented through the lyrics? Are the same themes found in historical fiction of that time period?

**May 14** Read Chapters 12 and 13, "Biography" and "Informational Books." **Be prepared** to discuss VIEWPOINT "Upfront with Children" (p.465). In addition, **read and bring to class** one book discussed on pp.449-462 or 500-526.

**Reading record, "Children and Books" activity reports, and signed checklist of activities are due. (Be sure to check your grammar/spelling/typos!)**

ACTIVITY: 1. Visit a public or school library. What reference aids are available to assist children in their search for nonfictional materials? Describe to a group of children the relationship between the author card, the title card, and the subject card in the library card catalog. Ask librarians how they help children find information.

-OR-

ACTIVITY: 2. Select an informational book that encourages children to perform an experiment in order to develop an understanding of a scientific principle. Perform the experiment as directed. Are the directions clearly stated? Should they be modified or clarified to use with children? Make any necessary modifications and encourage the children to perform the experiment. Follow each step of the experiment and discuss the scientific principle with the children.

**May 21** Discussion: Favorite books and activities.

ACTIVITY: Book discussion. Encourage (a) small group(s) of children—from two to six—to share their thoughts/ideas/feelings about a book they have read or a book you read aloud to them. Remember the small group discussion is a student-to-student form of communication that permits students more control over the discussion and more roles to perform as group members. For example, students may assume the role of leader, recorder, arbiter, listener, or devil’s advocate. The students should be in control, have opportunities to express their opinions, and become actively involved. To stimulate the discussion, ask divergent questions that permit them to explore their individual experiences with a book, emphasize that you really want them to discuss with each other their feelings and thoughts about books, such as:

- What made certain parts of this book so funny? Sad? Exciting? Tell which part you are thinking of and why you think it is funny (sad, exciting).
- How do you think the story should have ended, and why do you think so?
- Which part of the story did you like best or least? Why?
- Which character do you identify with? Tell why and how you identify with him or her.
- What has happened in your life that you are reminded of by this story (character, situation)?

**May 28** Final Exam (Bring Scantron Green Form #882-ES and #2 pencil.)

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