This class reads a variety of books written for children: books that explore the hilarity of childhood, but also its poignancies. In addition, we will read poetry, short stories, and novels that use the idea of childhood to explore a variety of themes from poverty to bullying to loss to race, and works of literature written “for adults” that reflect on the literally formative experience that is childhood. We will begin with works that are very old, but spend quite a bit of time reading more recent contributions to children’s literature, including graphic novels; our focus will be on works that are written in English or are highly influential in the English-speaking world.

**COURSE GOALS:**

After engaging with this course, you will be able to:

1. **Identify** several types of literature for and about children, as well as the people, places, and events that shaped the worlds in which these works were written.
2. **Appreciate** the aesthetic qualities of these works, and understand how aesthetics are related to historical context and audience.
3. **Empathize** with historical, geographic, and cultural diversity by reading stories about and for children of various contexts, and understand that age is also a form of diversity. Understand, too, how issues of gender, race, and class affect the experience of childhood in various times and places.
4. **Interpret** various kinds of literature, with due sensitivity to both textual and contextual cues.
5. **Develop close reading skills**, understanding how literary choices create various meanings for audiences of children and adults.
6. **Develop public speaking skills** as you write for oral presentation, and present a book report to the class.
7. **Articulate evaluations** of this literature, in speech and writing, focusing on close analyses of language, tone, and audience.
8. **Apply** interpretive strategies developed in historical literary/theatrical study to other academic and professional contexts.

**TEXTS:**

*Required:*
William Blake, *Songs of Innocence* (Dover Publications)
Lewis Carroll, *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* (Dover Thrift Edition)
Francis Hodgson Burnett, *The Secret Garden* (Signet Classics)
Roald Dahl, *James and the Giant Peach* (Puffin Reprint)
Toni Morrison, *Bluest Eye* (Vintage International)
Sandra Cisneros, *House on Mango Street* (Vintage)
Maurice Sendak, *Where the Wild Things Are* (HarperCollins)
Barbara Park, *Junie B. Jones is a Beauty Shop Guy* (Random House)
Christopher Paul Curtis, *Bud Not Buddy* (Laurel Leaf Reprint)
Marjane Satrapi, *Persepolis: A Story of Childhood* (Pantheon)
Philip Pullman, *The Golden Compass: His Dark Materials* (Yearling)
Gene Lee Yang, *American Born Chinese* (Square Fish Reprint)
Sherman Alexie, *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* (Little, Brown Books for Young Readers Reprint)


Several other reading assignments will be posted to CROPS; they need to be printed and brought to class. You will additionally need to get a ticket to at least one play.

**Requirements:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Percentage of Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reflective essay</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theater essay</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book report</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analytical paper</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creative assignment</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midterm</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quizzes and participation</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Weekly Schedule:**

Readings and assignments are to be completed by the day they appear on the syllabus.

**Early Literature**

**Week 1:**
Thursday, January 22: Selections from *The Original Folk and Fairy Tales of the Brothers Grimm* and Francesca Lia Block, “Wolf” (CROPS)

**The 18th, 19th and Early 20th Centuries**

**Week 2:**

**Week 3:**
Tuesday, February 3: Lewis Carroll, *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*, pp. 1-50 (chs I-VII)
Thursday, February 5: Lewis Carroll, *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*, pp. 51-86 (chs VIII-XII); Peter Hunt, “The Fundamentals of Children’s Literature Criticism: Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland and Through the Looking Glass” (CROPS)
Week 4:
→ Reflection essay due

Week 5:
Tuesday, February 17: Frances Hodgson Burnett, *The Secret Garden*, pp. 178-277 (chs. XX-afterward)
→ Theater essay assigned
• Playing this weekend: *The Winter’s Tale* at MCAC

Mid 20th Century
Week 6:
Tuesday, February 24: Roald Dahl, *James and the Giant Peach*.
→ Analytical essay assigned
• Playing this weekend: *The Winter’s Tale* at MCAC; *Into the Woods* at Playhouse Merced

Week 7:
Thursday, March 5: Toni Morrison, *Bluest Eye*, pp. 94-206 (Spring and Summer).
• Playing this weekend: *Into the Woods* at Playhouse Merced

Week 8:
Tuesday, March 10: e.e. cummings “in just”; Elizabeth Bishop, “In the Waiting Room”; Langston Hughes “As I Grew Older”; Seamus Heaney, “The Railway Children”; (CROPS)
Later 20th Century
• Playing this weekend: *Into the Woods* at Playhouse Merced
→ Midterm in Section

Week 9:
Tuesday, March 17: Sandra Cisneros, *House on Mango Street*, pp. 56-110.
Thursday, March 19: Robert Munsch, *Paperbag Princess* and Barbara Park, *Junie B. Jones is a Beauty Shop Guy*.
→ Theater essay due
→ Analytical essay draft due in section

Week 10:
Spring break, no class.
**Early 21st Century**

**Week 11:**
- Tuesday, March 31: Marjane Satrapi, *Persepolis: A Story of Childhood*.
- Thursday, April 2: Film screening of *Persepolis*
  - Analytical essay due

**Week 12:**
- Tuesday, April 9: Christopher Paul Curtis, *Bud Not Buddy*, pp. 1-129; Reynolds, “Ethical Debates in Children’s Literature” (CROPS)
  - Creative project assigned

**Week 13:**
- Tuesday, April 14: Gene Lee Yang, *American Born Chinese*
- Thursday, April 16: Lan Dong, “Reimagining the Monkey King in Comics: Gene Luen Yang’s *American Born Chinese*” (CROPS)

**Week 14:**

**Week 15:**

**Week 16:**
- Thursday, May 7: Presentation of creative projects.

May 9: Final exam, 3-6 pm
ASSIGNMENT OVERVIEW:

• **Reflection on a childhood book:** A 3 page reflection on a favorite book from your childhood, and how you understand that book differently as you are growing older.

• **Book report:** In the spirit of “Reading Rainbow,” a short report written for oral delivery (and delivered) on an assigned book or author, the way the work or author reflects the time and place in which it was created, and its significance to children’s literature. Must consult one scholarly source (book, library eBook, or journal article).

• **Theater essay:** A 3 page essay describing either how childhood is depicted in Shakespeare’s *Winter’s Tale* or the way fairy tales are altered in *Into the Woods*; bonus points for writing about both.

• **Analytical paper:** A 4-5 page paper on an assigned text, using close-reading and/or historical analyses to advance an argument. Research is encouraged but not required.

• **Midterm and final:** Multiple choice, short answer, and essays based on reading and lectures. The final will include a cumulative portion, with questions and essay bringing both halves of the term together.

• **Creative project:** Working alone or with a group, a creative response to children’s literature which could be a new book or poem; a dramatization or film of a story or poem; a song or piece of visual art; an updated version of an old story. Write a one page reflection on the process of creating the project.

• **Quizzes and in-class writing:** Lectures and discussions may begin with a reading quiz and/or a freewrite. You will be unable to make up quizzes and freewrites if you miss them because you are absent or late to class.

• **Extra Credit:** You may receive extra credit points towards your quiz/participation grade by attending lectures, performing arts events, and other cultural events and writing 1-page reflections about them.

COURSE POLICIES:

**Special Needs:** I welcome all students into this class. If you have any special needs, please speak to me and to Student Services as soon as possible so that we can outline the best ways to promote your success in this course.

**Writing Help:** Students who would like help with their writing are encouraged to visit the Student Advising and Learning Center (SALC) in Kolligian 172. Please check its website (learning.ucmerced.edu) for details on tutoring and other academic assistance. I also highly recommend the book *Writing Tools*, by Roy Peter Clark, for help on all kinds of writing.

**Plagiarism Policy:** As a simple guideline, if you submit your own work, you will avoid all serious types of plagiarism. Nevertheless, a responsible student should also consider the less obvious variants of plagiarism, especially when writing research papers that require citations. Every time you use another person’s words or ideas, you need to cite your sources.

For serious instances of plagiarism, such as submitting an essay obtained from an online “paper mill,” students in this course will automatically fail the assignment, receive a final grade of F, and be recommended for dismissal from the university. There is no excuse for serious plagiarism.

I will also regard unattributed citations—verbatim copying of another’s person’s work without some indication of the source—as a serious form of plagiarism. In other words, do not insert any text in a paper that is not your own without also noting the source.
If you’re uncertain about how to use sources, ask me, or consult this website: http://www.library.ucla.edu/bruinsuccess/. It is your responsibility to comply with principles of academic honesty; it is my responsibility to see that every student receives a fair and accurate grade. Let’s work together in meeting these goals.

**Technology:** Laptops and tablets are **not allowed** in lecture. Cell phones must be turned off, and iPods and other recording devices are forbidden during class. Taping, filming, and photography in class (by camera, cell phone, or any other means) is prohibited. When emailing any instructor, you are expected to write as you would in any professional correspondence, with courtesy, respect, and clarity. Please refer to the “How to email your professor” handout, posted on CROPS.

**Participation and Absences:** Arrive to class on time and do not leave early unless you have emailed the instructor in advance with regards to an urgent prior commitment. Try to use the restroom before coming to class. Please do not read other materials during class, or bring food into the classroom.

If you miss more than **four** classes (including sections) without a valid medical excuse for all four, you will forfeit your entire participation grade for the course. **Every absence after four absences will result in a deduction of a third of a letter grade overall, and if you have six absences you will be in danger of flunking the class outright.** If you miss class, you are responsible for speaking with a classmate about the class discussion to get caught up on the material. Missing class will also seriously affect your ability to do well on quizzes and the exam, as well as on all papers.

**Two significantly late arrivals (or early departures) equal one absence, and texting during class also equals one absence.**

⇒ *I look forward to an exciting semester reading children’s literature with all of you!*