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LIT 6856  
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W 6-8

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### **Into the Archive: Reading in the Baldwin**

Enjoy your archive! That's the idea, anyway (or as Zizek says, the compulsion); this semester, we will haunt and be haunted by the archive, specifically the Baldwin Library of Historical Children's Literature, housed in our very own Smathers Libraries. Rita Smith, the Curator of the Baldwin, will participate in the seminar and will be our intrepid guide. In this course you'll be working on one or more archival research projects, so expect to spend quality time in the Baldwin. You will give regular oral and written reports on your work in progress. The Baldwin is an extraordinary resource even for those not specializing in children's literature, and one aim of the course is to encourage you to explore the collection. Not a few graduate students in English have forged theses and dissertations out of Baldwin material; if you look around, something will catch your interest, no matter your primary subject or field. You can develop projects by period (eighteenth-century forward), or subject clusters (empire/post-colonial studies; sexuality and gender; environmentalism and social justice; science and mathematics; textual studies; history of illustration; didacticism and religion, just to name a few) or genre/form (series books, chapbooks, primers, magazines, Little Golden Books, textbooks, alphabet books, fables, biographies, etc.), or some combination thereof.

We will simultaneously read theory, criticism, and popular nonfiction in three overlapping areas: the archive, library, and collection; children's studies; and English studies. For the first few weeks, as you begin reading projects in the Baldwin, we'll spend most of our class time on these materials, talking about their arguments, anxieties, and investments (and learning a good bit along the way). These three areas seem the most useful given the nature of the course, but it's also true that these readings won't always or even often speak directly to our archival experiences. That's ok. They should give us a framework for thinking about what we do as scholars in and around children's literature and English studies more broadly. The reading is a bit heavier in the first few weeks but then tapers off, as you're developing your research and writing. If need be, we'll cycle back to certain texts later in the semester. There is no assigned reading at all sometimes; my assumption is that you'll use that time to read in the Baldwin.

The course is experimental and we may need to make some adjustments along the way. No doubt you will want to supplement the theoretical and critical material -- for example, we probably ought to read something about the archive in and around the electronic/digital moment -- so I look forward to your suggestions and amendments. We'll stick to the reading schedule as outlined below but we may also add some essays here and there, particularly on days where most of our class time will consist of academic show and tell.

Rita and I are excited about the class and hope you are, too. Let us know how we can make it more productive and fun.

## Texts

Nicholson Baker, *Double Fold: Libraries and the Assault on Paper*  
 Matthew Battles, *Library: An Unquiet History*  
 Michael Bérubé, *The Employment of English*  
 Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever*  
 Jason Epstein, *Book Business*  
 Gerald Graff, *Professing Literature*  
 Caroline F. Levander and Carol J. Singley, eds., *The American Child: A Cultural Studies Reader*  
 Jacqueline Rose, *The Case of Peter Pan, or The Impossibility of Children's Fiction*  
 Francis Spufford, *The Child that Books Built*  
 Carolyn Steedman, *Dust: The Archive and Cultural History*  
 Susan Stewart, *On Longing*

At Goering's on-campus bookstore, of course.

Texts that I didn't assign, but that you might want to check out:

Gillian Avery, *Behold the Child* (researched with Baldwin materials)  
 Nicholas A. Basbanes, *A Gentle Madness; Among the Gently Mad; Patience and Fortitude; A Splendor of Letters*  
 Beverly Lyon Clark, *Kiddie Lit*  
 Janet Malcolm, *In the Freud Archives*  
 countless new books on book history, collecting, bibliomania, and "common reading,"  
 e.g. *Book Lust, Ex Libris, A Passion for Books, Book Row America*, etc.  
 and, no doubt, many others...

## Assignments and Evaluation

For this class, you'll write two essays of 5-7 d-s pp. each on your archive project or projects, in which you describe the material and offer some provisional analysis, drawing from whatever scholarly materials and methods are most helpful. You may report further on the same project in essay 2, or do something different. Please document all sources.

You'll also give at least two in-class, informal oral reports on your research, in which you describe what you're doing, bring in materials, take questions, and lead discussion about your project. The report and discussion should run around 20-30 minutes. They do not have to be linked to the subjects you write about in your essays, but they likely will be. I'd suggest that you provide some written materials for everyone in class -- a draft of the essay, perhaps, maybe a short essay or bibliography. The format should remain informal, though; don't just read a paper to us. I'll look for volunteers to present each time we've got a slot for reports.

And the usual longer essay, this time only 15-20 d-s pp., in which you offer analysis of your archive materials/subject. The longer essay may be an elaboration of either or both of the shorter ones. If you want to do a more theoretical piece, that's fine, but you must make productive and engaging use of your archive research.

As this is a graduate seminar, regular attendance and active participation are essential; please come to class prepared. I'll assign your course grade based on your level of general engagement as well as the quality of your written work.

## Schedule

### August

25 Introductions

### September

1 Battle, *Library*; Baker, *Double Fold*  
 8 Derrida, *Archive Fever*; Steedman, *Dust*  
 15 Stewart, *On Longing*  
 22 Spufford, *The Child that Books Built*; Rose, *The Case of Peter Pan*  
 29 Reports

### October

6 Levander and Singley, *The American Child*  
 13 cont.; reports; **Short essay 1 due.**  
 20 Graff, *Professing Literature*  
 27 Reports

### November

3 Excerpts from Guillory's *Cultural Capital* and Bourdieu's *Distinction*  
 10 Reports; **Short essay 2 due.**  
 17 Berubé, *The Employment of English*  
 24 No class (Wed. before Thanksgiving)

### December

1 Epstein, *Book Business*; reports  
 8 Reports

**Longer essay due December 10.**