

Kenneth Kidd
LIT 6856; R E1-3, TUR 4112
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Office: TUR 4012C

392-6650, ext. 231
kkidd@english.ufl.edu
office hours MTW 1-3 p.m.
& by appointment

The Golden Age of Children's Literature

This syllabus is online at: <http://www.clas.ufl.edu/users/kkidd/index.html>

Texts

L. Frank Baum, *The Wizard of Oz* (1900)
Lewis Carroll, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865)
Carlo Collodi, *Adventures of Pinocchio* (1883)
Frederick Crews, *The Pooh Perplex* (1963)
Mary Mapes Dodge, *Hans Brinker and the Silver Skates* (1865)
George MacDonald, *At the Back of the North Wind* (1871)
Kenneth Grahame, *The Wind in the Willows* (1908)
Gene Stratton-Porter, *A Girl of the Limberlost* (1909)
Jacqueline Rose, *The Case of Peter Pan* (1984)
Salman Rushdie, *The Wizard of Oz* (1992)
A. A. Milne, *Winnie-the-Pooh* (1926)

I would also like you to read either Geoff Ryman's *Was* or Gregory Maguire's *Wicked*, which I have not ordered.

Books have been ordered at Goering's.

Additional required readings are available through electronic Course Reserves on the UF Library Smathers homepage: www.uflib.ufl.edu

I have posted other essays there as well, and we'll likely add more as we come across materials in our investigations -- let me know what to add to the mix.

Overview

Our concern will be the so-called "Golden Age" of Anglo-American children's literature, usually dated from 1865 to about 1930. Golden age texts constitute a literary canon even as they have been widely popularized and transformed into other media. The first Golden Age text, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, was also the first children's book to be made into a film, by Cecil Hepworth in 1903. We all know the 1939 MGM classic *The Wizard of Oz*, but before that, L. Frank Baum himself wrote and produced several Oz films based on his books. Adaptations of *Peter Pan* and *Alice* are also especially

numerous; for better and for worse, we keep finding Neverland. Moreover, Golden Age texts have found their way into academic discourse and even critical theory, as with Frederick Crew's *The Pooh Perplex* (1963), Jacqueline Rose's *The Case of Peter Pan* (1984), Juliet Dusinberre's *Alice to the Lighthouse* (1987), and the anthology *Curioser: On the Queer Lives of Children* (2004).

The course will be concerned both with the Golden Age literary canon and with its cultural afterlife in the form of ongoing adaptations, revisions, extensions, pop-culture spin-offs, etc. We will read the original narratives both separately and in the context of films, videogames, pop-up books, advice literature, and other cultural texts/objects. We will also read less canonical (and/or less popular or recurrent) material, both together in class and individually through a short research project based in our very own Baldwin Library of Historical Children's Literature, whose curator, Rita Smith, will join the class. At issue throughout will be the question of canonicity, in relation to mass media and theories of camp, kitsch, and nostalgia. We'll read the "primary" texts more or less in chronological order, even as we consider them alongside and through more contemporary productions.

In conjunction with the course and with the EGO conference on fantasy, Rita and Laurie Taylor are curating an exhibit in Special Collections called "The Afterlife of Alice," and we'll help with that, too.

Assignments and Grading

This is a seminar, so careful preparation, faithful attendance and active participation are essential. More than one absence from class may result in a grade penalty.

You will write a short essay (6-8 d-s pp.) based on research in the Baldwin Library, and a longer seminar paper (20-25 d-s pp.) on the topic of your choice related to the course theme(s). In the short essay, you will report on Golden Age children's literature housed in the Baldwin library -- anything published between 1850 and 1930. You can write on any genre or author or book you please. You need to have some kind of controlling argument, and I would like to see some analysis beyond plot summary, but this paper can be informational in spirit. If you need a place to start, try any issue of *St. Nicholas* magazine. If you have particular interests but don't know where to start, talk to Rita or me for suggestions. It's fine to use this short paper to begin exploring possible topics for the seminar paper; it's also fine for this paper to be unrelated to the latter.

The seminar paper needs to engage with the course theme(s) but is otherwise open topic. The paper needs to have an argument and to be analytical in method. It should be informed by relevant scholarship, including that used in class but probably other materials as well, depending upon topic. If you focus on a contemporary film version of, say, *The Secret Garden*, I want to see at least some discussion of the original text. I'm always available to discuss ideas and you are welcome to email me with questions, outlines, and drafts.

A final requirement is that you serve as discussion leader one day. I do not expect you to direct discussion for the entire three hours, but you must do the following: 1) give an oral response to and analysis of the assigned reading for at least fifteen minutes -- this time may include questions and you may also bring in related material; and 2) take an active role in the subsequent discussion. Given the nature of the course, I encourage you to incorporate other materials -- you could screen short snippets of films or talk about Oz collectibles. Whatever you do, be sure there's a reason for that inclusion; make clear the connections you're making and/or the questions you want to raise. If you prepare a handout, that's great, but keep it short and focused.

Leading discussion and participation: 15%

Short essay: 25%

Seminar essay(s): 60%

Reading Schedule

August

- 23 Introduction(s) and a tour of the Baldwin with Curator Rita Smith
30 Carpenter; Griswold; Goldthwaite; Hemmings; Kincaid

September

- 6 Rose, *The Case of Peter Pan* (all chapters)
13 Rose cont.; Coats; Mavor; *Alice*
20 *Alice* cont.; Dodge, *Hans Brinker*
27 MacDonald, *At the Back of the North Wind*; Knoepflmacher

October

- 4 Collodi, *Pinocchio*; Stone
11 Baum, *The Wizard of Oz*; Clark; Flieger; Rushdie, *The Wizard of Oz*
18 No class; instead we will attend the Authors Readers Theatre, featuring Avi, Walter Dean Myers, etc. sponsored by the Center for Children's Literature and Culture; *also*, note the 1 p.m. lecture by Beverly Lyon Clark, part of EGO's conference on "fantasy"
25 Baldwin short essay due. In-class reports

November

- 1 Grahame, *The Wind in the Willows*; DusiBerre
8 Stratton-Porter, *Girl of the Limberlost*; Phillips
15 Milne, *Winnie-the-Pooh*; Wullschlager; Payne; Crews, *The Pooh Perplex*
22 Thanksgiving; no class

29 *Was or Wicked*; brief in-class reports on seminar projects

Final essay(s) due December 12. No extensions.