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LIT 6856
Fall 2010
T E1-3

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Hours: TBA and
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Theory's Child and the Subject of Children's Literature

This course tracks theory's child and/or the child in theory, with an eye toward the subject of children's literature. We'll consider the child in, through and across such disciplines and projects as history, philosophy, Marxism, the social sciences, cultural studies, queer theory, and the posthumanities, with special attention to psychoanalysis. We'll examine not only thematic treatments of the child within and across various theoretical projects but also more muted or indirect invocations/uses of the child within critical theory. Students will develop individual research projects that may or may not take up the subject of children's literature.

Texts

Roland Barthes, *Barthes by Barthes*
Walter Benjamin, *A Berlin Childhood*
Clare Bradford, *Unsettling Narratives: Postcolonial Readings of Children's Literature*
Erik Erikson, *Childhood and Society*
Jyotsna Kapur, *Coining Capital: Movies, Marketing, and the Transformation of Childhood*
Annette Kuhn, *Family Secrets: Acts of Memory and Imagination*
Perry Nodelman, *The Hidden Adult*
Jacqueline Rose, *The Case of Peter Pan, or The Impossibility of Children's Fiction*
Kathryn Bond Stockton, *The Queer Child*
Cary Wolfe, *What is Posthumanism?*

And selections from e-reserves, under my name and LIT 6856 (section 5629). Anything listed on the reading schedule below that's not on this list of texts is included in e-reserves.

Assignments and Evaluation

Book review. Review a book taking up the subject of theory/childhood, or children's literature and culture, but not a text we're using in class. Ideally, the book would be important to or useful for your seminar paper in progress. A book review highlights a book's strengths and weaknesses, provides a synopsis of the arguments and organization, and clarifies the book's contribution(s) to the field. The review should be written for possible submission to journals in the field, and if possible, it will be thus submitted. *Children's Literature*, *The Lion and the Unicorn*, and *Children's Literature Association Quarterly* all publish reviews regularly, so take a look at some reviews as you shape your own. The book review is an important genre of professional writing (as well as service) and you will need some practice to get the hang of it. Length should be 3-6 d-s pp.; follow the guidelines of the target journal. Begin this SOON. Book reviews are more time-intensive

than you might imagine, as you must not only digest the book but must also do justice to its arguments, texture, and implications.

Essay prospectus. Submit a prospectus for your seminar research project, describing your topic, your key questions, your possible (tentative) arguments, and the texts and methodologies you hope to engage. This can take the stricter form of an abstract – a more compact and definitive outline – or it can be somewhat looser. But do be as specific as possible. You need to make the case for the importance of the topic – why should we care about this topic and approach? What are the potential intellectual gains? The abstract and the prospectus, too, are important academic genres, used for conference submissions and book and article projects as well (and grants). 2-4 d-s pp.

Draft of seminar essay. 15-20 d-s pp. Submit a draft of your paper, as complete as possible, so that you can get feedback from me and your other classmates before revising for the final version. This version might not be full-length, but should be fairly complete in shape, and should reflect the research undertaken. Bring two copies. You will receive written feedback from me and from one other class member (peer review). See below.

Peer review. Write an evaluation of the essay draft of your colleague. This assignment mimics the process of anonymous peer review for journal publication, and is also an important skill to learn. The most important thing to keep in mind is that you are advising the journal editors what to do, but you are also advising the author on how to strengthen and improve the essay. Because these drafts are not really being submitted to journals, emphasize the advice to the author. Be supportive as well as critical. Talk about the essay's arguments, evidence, rhetorical strategies, and implications. What's not here that should be? What might be developed further? Generally these responses are a few pages at most.

Seminar essay. 20 d-s. pp. Revise your essay draft as thoroughly as possible. Also, attach a note explaining what changes the paper underwent since the draft version, and why.

Regular attendance and active participation are essential; come prepared and plan to miss no more than 1 class. Absences beyond such may affect your course grade.

Book review:	20%
Prospectus:	10%
Essay draft:	20%
Peer review:	10%
Final essay:	40%

Academic Honesty

All students are required to abide by the Academic Honesty Guidelines that have been accepted by the University. Exhibiting honesty in academic pursuits and reporting violations of the Academic Honesty Guidelines will encourage others to act with integrity. Violations of the Academic Honesty Guidelines shall result in judicial action and a student being subject to the sanctions in paragraph XIV of the Student Conduct Code. The conduct set forth hereinafter constitutes a violation of the Academic Honesty Guidelines (University of Florida Rule 6C1_4.017). For more information about academic honesty, including definitions of plagiarism and collusion, see: <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/judicial/academic.php>.

Students with Disabilities

The Disability Resource Center in the Dean of Students Office provides students and faculty with information and support regarding accommodations for students with disabilities in the classroom. Staff at the Disability Resource Center will assist any student who registers as having a disability. Official documentation of a disability is required to determine eligibility for appropriate classroom accommodations. For more information about Student Disability Services, see: <http://www.ufl.edu/disability/>

Harassment

It is the policy of The University of Florida to provide an educational and working environment for its students, faculty and staff that is free from sex discrimination and sexual harassment. In accordance with federal and state law, the University prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex, including sexual harassment. Sex discrimination and sexual harassment will not be tolerated, and individuals who engage in such conduct will be subject to disciplinary action. The University encourages students, faculty, staff and visitors to promptly report sex discrimination and sexual harassment. For more, see: <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/> and <http://www.hr.ufl.edu/eo/harassment.htm>

Schedule

August

- 24 Introductions.
- 31 Kincaid, "Inventing the Child – and Sexuality"; Steedman, "Introduction: Lost and Found"; Blum, "Uses of the Child"; Gittins, "Is Childhood Socially Constructed?"
Buckingham, "The Death of Childhood"

September

- 7 **Evolution, Child Study, the Child as Theorist.** Darwin, "Biographical Sketch"; Konner, "Prologue" and "Introduction"; Blackford, "Apertures in the House of Fiction"; Sully, *Studies on Childhood* (e-book via e-reserves). For Sully, choose at least 3-4 chapters to read and discuss.

Recommended: Dusinberre, *Alice to the Lighthouse*

- 14 **Psychoanalysis.** Payne, "What Difference Has Theory Made?"; Kidd, "Child Analysis, Play, and the Golden Age of Pooh"; Erikson, *Childhood and Society*. For Erikson, focus on Part 1, and read the introductions for Parts 2-4 (skim or read those sections too if you're interested).

Recommended: Freud, case histories of Little Hans and the Wolf Man; Lacan, "The Mirror Stage"; Winnicott, *Playing and Reality*

21 Rose, *The Case of Peter Pan*

Recommended: Coats, *Looking Glasses and Neverlands*; Tribunella, *Melancholia and Maturation*

28 Nodelman, *The Hidden Adult*

October

5 **Cultural Theory and Memory Work.** Benjamin. *A Berlin Childhood*; "Old Forgotten Children's Books"; "Children's Literature," "Program for a Proletarian Children's Theatre"

Recommended: Zipes, "Political Children's Theatre in the Age of Globalization"

12 Ronell, "On the Unrelenting Creepiness of Childhood"; Fynsk, "Part Two"
Book review or prospectus due.

19 Barthes, *Barthes by Barthes*

26 Kuhn, *Family Secrets*
Prospectus or book review due.

November

2 **Capital's Child.** Kapur, *Coining Capital*

Recommended: Langer, "Commodified Enchantment"

9 **Children's Rights.** Wiggin, *Children's Rights* (e-book, available here: <http://manybooks.net/titles/10331033510335.html>); Woodhouse, "How to Think About Children's Rights"

16 **The Postcolonial Child.** Bradford, *Unsettling Narratives*. This is a long book. Concentrate on arguments and methodologies and be able to discuss such.

23 **The Queer Child.** Lesnik-Oberstein and Thomson, "What is Queer Theory Doing with the Child?"; Cobb, "Childlike"; Stockton, *The Queer Child*.

Recommended: Hurley and Thomson, *Curiouser*; Edelman, *No Future*

Essay draft due.

30 **The Child That Therefore I Am? (More to Follow).** Wolfe, *What is Posthumanism?* (Part I only, more if you desire)
Peer review due.

December

7 Reports on long projects.

Seminar essay due December 14