

Dr. Kenneth Kidd
LIT 6855, section 8011 (21550)
Fall 2021
T 9-11 (4:05-7:05pm), online

Virtual Office, Fall 2021
Hours: R 6-8 and by
appointment
kbkidd@ufl.edu

Contemporary Children's Literature Studies

Canvas page: <https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/437245>

Our syllabus is also posted here: www.kbkidd.org

This course will be delivered fully online, at the meeting time above. Our Zoom link for class meetings:

<https://ufl.zoom.us/j/96619007075?pwd=YkRWcmhLSFdBZ0tQS0NQcGtWMiRjdz09>

Our goal is to examine the emergence and ongoing evolution of children's literature studies, with a focus on contemporary scholarship. I want the course to question more than confirm the history, methodologies, priorities, and professional coordinates of "the field," in order to think about the present and the future. What is getting priority now in terms of projects and lines of inquiry? What are the missed opportunities, the roads not yet taken?

We'll think about disciplinarity on at least three levels: 1) how does children's literature studies in English operate in relation to closely-related fields such as education and library science, or to childhood studies?; 2) how does children's literature draw from other subfields or approaches that are already established in literary studies (e.g. postcolonial studies, queer theoretical studies, etc.), and what opportunities might exist for new conversations?; and 3) how does – or how might -- children's literature studies relate to fields beyond literary studies and the humanities more broadly, such as the social sciences, or the natural sciences, or engineering? All of these questions will necessarily reflect the our cultural moment, so, how to have children's literature studies under neoliberalism and in a global pandemic?

Children's literature studies is now beginning a long-overdue process of self-scrutiny, in light of critiques of systemic/structural racism and white privilege in publishing and academia as well as the general culture. We will read and talk about those critiques, too, and about current conversations about diversity, racism, and white privilege going on in and around ChLA and other scholarly organizations.

We'll sample mostly from material published in the last 5-6 years. We will pay close attention to how contemporary scholarship actually looks and works, and we'll talk to graduate students now formulating and completing research projects.

Also, on September 15, Kate Capshaw, Victoria Ford Smith, and Anna Mae Duane are debuting their new podcast *The Children's Table*. If you are interested in attending the launch, which is on September 15 at 7pm, register here:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSc85Wg1QU5c8xx7lZOY0k42g5EGe_jGQ27K9kmWc-5eIJv3Qw/viewform

Major Texts

Lara Saguisag, *Incorrigibles and Innocents: Constructing Childhood and Citizenship in Progressive Era Comics* (2018)

Mandy Suhr-Sytsma, *Self-Determined Stories: The Indigenous Reinvention of Young Adult Literature* (2018)

Elizabeth Wheeler, *Handiland: The Crippiest Place on Earth* (2019)

Ebony Elizabeth Thomas, *The Dark Fantastic: Race and the Imagination from Harry Potter to the Hunger Games* (2019)

*Alison Waller, *Rereading Childhood Books: A Poetics* (2019)

Rachel Conrad, *Time for Childhoods: Young Poets and Questions of Agency* (2020)

Jacob Breslow, *Ambivalent Childhoods: Speculative Futures and the Psychic Life of the Child* (2021)

Marilisa Jiménez García, *Side by Side: US Empire, Puerto Rico, and the Roots of American Youth Literature* (2021)

*available via UF/Proquest

Exercises and Evaluation

Regular attendance and active preparation and participation are essential. I expect everyone to have read the assigned material and be ready to discuss. When we have virtual conversations planned I also expect you to have questions and comments ready for our visitors.

Journal analysis. Read one year's worth of issues from an academic journal of your choice dealing with children's literature or childhood studies. The year should be within the last five years. What do you see in terms of topics, methodologies, rhetorical features/writing styles, general emphases or patterns? If there are special issues or forums, how are those organized and presented? Any commonalities across the issues? Feel free to spotlight articles or features that you find representative. Plan and carry out a 10 minute presentation (max) on your findings, any format. You do not have submit anything written though you are welcome to do so.

Field report on children's literature studies in relation to a field/subfield inside or outside literary studies; e.g writing studies, or creative writing/writing practice, or posthumanism,

or sociology, or computer science. What is the current state of conversation? The big questions or dilemmas? Key works, authors, concepts, concerns? Opportunities for original or timely contributions? Write a 5-10 d-s pp. report and be prepared to present your findings for 10 minutes. Can be informal, but should be specific.

Individual project. Select, design, and complete a writing project of your choice, ideally one useful to you professionally or in terms of your progress through your degree program. Here are some options:

- 1) Expansion of the field report. Expand upon your field report by discussing the current state in conversation in greater detail and/or by focusing on specific elements. Try to double the length of the report (so 10-20 d-s pp.).
- 2) Conference paper. Typically these run 8-9 d-s pp and are to be presented in 15-20 minutes. This option might be ideal for those of you with upcoming conferences.
- 3) Syllabus for English Department special topics course. This might be a good option for anyone wanting to teach a special topics course in-house, including MFA students. Guidelines can be obtained from Dr. Ulanowicz.
- 4) Creative project or creative-critical hybrid project (a story, a series of poems, a reflection on craft practice, creative writing instruction, etc.). (MFA students only)
- 5) Mock dissertation prospectus. This might be especially helpful for those moving out of coursework soon. To be admitted to PhD candidacy, you must write and orally discuss an “exam” of some kind, often a chapter, along with a dissertation prospectus. The exam is typically 30+ pages, while the prospectus is shorter and offers a snapshot of the whole imagined dissertation. The prospectus generally runs 10-15 pp. and outlines the project plan: topic, approach(es), contributions, lit review as appropriate, and chapter outlines. A prospectus is an institutional genre, but shares some territory with grant proposals and even book prospecti. Draft a dissertation prospectus on the project of your choice. It can draw on the work you already did for the field report, or it can be completely unrelated. It does not have to be children’s literature studies focused. Chapter projections will feel the most tentative but try for some anyway.

Active participation	10%
Journal analysis	10%
Field report:	35%
Individual project:	45%

Students Requiring Accommodations

Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the disability Resource Center by visiting <https://disability.ufl.edu/students/get-started/>.

Course Evaluation

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via ufl.bluera.com/ufl/. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/.

Campus Resources:

U Matter, We Care: If you or a friend is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu or 352 392-1575 so that a team member can reach out to the student.

Counseling and Wellness Center: <http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc>, and 392-1575; and the University Police Department: 392-1111 or 9-1-1 for emergencies.

Sexual Assault Recovery Services (SARS)
Student Health Care Center, 392-1161.

University Police Department at 392-1111 or <http://www.police.ufl.edu/>.

Schedule

August

- 24 Introductions; comments on the history of children's literature studies.
- 31 Hintz, intro and Ch. 5 of *Children's Literature (The New Critical Idiom)*.
"#WeNeedDiverseScholars: A Forum," all selections. Capshaw, "Ethnic Studies and Children's Literature: A Conversation between Fields"; Kidd, "ChLA Prizing Chapter" and "Queer Theory's Child."

September

- 7 Clark, "Kiddie Lit in Academe"; Lundin, "Little Pilgrim's Progress" and "The Spider's Web"; Abate, "A is for Adult" (*No Kids Allowed* intro); Schwebel, introduction to *Child-Sized History*.
Virtual conversation with Dr. Abate, 4:00-4:30pm.

- Virtual conversation with Dr. Schwebel, 4:45-5:30pm.
- 14 Sanders, introduction to *A Literature of Questions*; O’Sullivan, “Comparative Children’s Literature.” Anderson, “Zine Eco-Activism and Pedagogies of Hope(lessness) in *World War 3 Illustrated #46*”; Murakami, “Children’s Literature, *Plus Ultra*: A Case Study of the Shōnen Anime *My Hero Academia*.”
- 21 Saguisag, *Incorrigibles and Innocents*.
Virtual conversation with Dr. Saguisag, 4:00-5:00pm.
Virtual AKL UF panel with Brianna Anderson and Brandon Murakami (UF), 5:00-6:00pm.
- 28 Journal analysis due; reports in-class.

October

- 5 Suhr-Sytsma, *Self-Determined Stories*.
Virtual conversation with Dr. Suhr-Sytsma, 4:30-5:30pm.
- 12 Wheeler, *Handiland*. Interview with Wheeler:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pM5lsixziLI>
Virtual conversation with Yvonne Medina (UF), 5:00-6:00pm.
- 19 Waller, *Rereading Childhood Books*.
- 26 Thomas, *The Dark Fantastic*.
Virtual conversation with Dr. Thomas, Time TBD.

November

- 2 Breslow, *Ambivalent Childhoods*.
- 9 Conrad, *Time for Childhoods*.
Virtual conversation with Dr. Conrad, 5:00-6:00p.m.
- 16 Jiménez Garcia, *Side by Side*.
- 23 Field report due. Field reports in-class.
- 30 Emergency Children’s Literature. Reid-Walsh, “The Pop-Up against Coronavirus Project: Child-Made Movable Books Evoking Smiles, Tears, and Hope”; Duckels, “How to Have Children’s Literature in an Epidemic.” Additional readings possible.
Virtual conversation with Gabriel L. Duckels, 4:00-5:00pm.

December

7 Course wrap-up. Preview of individual projects in progress.

13 Individual project due.