

Oklahoma State University  
College of Education  
School of Curriculum and Educational Leadership  
**CIED 5153, Advanced Studies in Children's Literature**  
Spring 2011

Instructor: Seemi Aziz, PhD

Class schedule: 5:30–9:20 p.m.; January 14, January 21, February 11, February 25, March 4,  
March 25, April 8, April 22 & May 6<sup>th</sup>

Classroom: 105 Willard  
Office: STW—239 Willard Hall  
Office hours: 3:30 – 4:30 class days; 10:30 – 12:30 Mondays.  
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**Oklahoma State University Professional Education Council Mission and Conceptual Framework:** The Professional Education Unit (PEU) prepares and develops professional educators who facilitate lifelong learning and enrich quality of life for people in public schools and other educational settings. OSU's Professional Education programs are based upon the L.E.A.D.S. conceptual framework: **L**eadership; **E**thics and Professionalism; **A**cademics and Professional Roles, including Content Knowledge, Integration, Human Growth and Development, Learning Environment, Technology, Teaching/Professional Practice and Assessment; **D**iversity; and **S**ervice Orientation/Community Outreach. These core values are an expansion of the earlier conceptual framework based upon Professionalism, Integration and Diversity.

**Catalog Description:** Study of children's literature within the prevailing political, economic and social factors influencing cultural patterns and values. The tools of research in children's literature and the nature and direction of contemporary children's book publishing.

**Texts and Supplementary Materials:** The reading materials listed below will provide a focus for the course and information useful for class discussions, activities and lectures.

**Required:**

1. Lynch-Brown, C.; Tomlinson, C.M.; and Short, K. G. (2011). *Essentials of Children's Literature* 7<sup>th</sup> edition. Pearson
2. Gopalkrishnan, A. (2011): *Multicultural Children's Literature: A Critical Issues Approach*.
3. Wide variety of children's literature (primarily K – 8 focus)

**Suggested:** Please see D2L for a list of suggested professional resources and a variety of informational links.

**Course Objectives and Student Outcomes:** Students successfully completing the course will have demonstrated basic knowledge and understanding of the following.

The student will:

1. Become familiar with a wide selection of children's literature appropriate for early childhood through middle school engagement. (IRA 2.3, 4.1, 4.2; Academics & Professional Roles)
2. Recognize and select quality literature for children using a variety of resources and applying criteria for age-appropriateness and literary excellence across genres. (IRA 2.3, 4.1, 4.2; Academics & Professional roles)

3. Select quality literature that reflects and appeals to a wide range of diverse readers (e.g., diversity in race, ethnicity, culture, gender, sexual orientation, religion) and to analyze literature for cultural authenticity and absence of bias and stereotyping. (IRA 2.3, 4.1, 4.2, 4.4, 5.1; Diversity, Ethics & Professionalism)
4. Recognize the role of literary elements in authoring and engaging with literature, and understand effective practices for helping young readers understand and respond to literature. (IRA 1.1, 1.4, 2.1, 2.2, 4.3, 4.4; Academic & Professional Roles, Diversity)
5. Understand the role of children's literature in developing content knowledge as well as social, personal, and interpersonal insights. (IRA 1.1, 2.2, 2.3, 4.1, 4.2; Academic & Professional Roles; Ethics & Professionalism)
6. Provide leadership in schools and the broader community to promote meaningful engagement with quality literature. (IRA 5.1, 5.3; Leadership; Ethics and Professionalism, Service)
7. Work individually and in collaboration with peers to research and present scholarship relative to children's literature in professional settings. (IRA 5.1, 5.3; Leadership, Academic & Professional Roles)

**Our class experiences are based on the following beliefs about learning:**

- Learning is an active process.
  - We will immerse ourselves in reading, writing, talking, and responding to professional readings and to adolescent and children's literature.
- Learning is a social process of collaborating with others.
  - We will explore our thinking about our reading and experiences through dialogue.
- Learning occurs as we make connections to our own experiences and as we explore tensions with our current beliefs.
  - Responses to our readings will focus on connections to our lives and teaching experiences. We will also identify and explore tensions with our current beliefs and past experiences to interrogate our values. We will explore the tensions that arise from exploring alternative and oppositional interpretations of literature.
- Choice allows learners to connect to their experiences and feel ownership in their learning.
  - We will have choices in the books we read, our responses to readings, and the specific focus of the final project.
- Learning is reflective as well as active.
  - We will have many opportunities to reflect on what we are learning through writing, talking, sketching, and self-evaluations
- Learning occurs in a multicultural world with many ways of knowing.
  - We will read professional and children's literature that reflects diversity in experiences and ways of expressing those experiences. We will also explore the range of interpretations of literature that arise from our differing cultural and social experiences.
- Learning is a process of inquiry.
  - As learners we need to search out the questions that matter in our lives and to develop strategies for exploring those questions and sharing our understandings with others.

**Style of teaching/Technology:** Various instructional strategies such as lecture, discussion, dialogue, demonstration, inquiry, presentation and application will be used to engage students in learning. As this is an alternatively scheduled class (fewer contact hours in the classroom with

learning supported through technology and outside-of-class engagements), much interaction and content support will take place through the course D2L site (oc.okstate.edu).

### **Policies:**

**Academic Integrity, Special Needs and other very important information: Please see Spring 2010 Syllabus Attachment on D2L.**

**Citizenship:** Optimum learning occurs when all learners feel respected and valued; therefore, central expectations for students in this course include listening respectfully to peers' insights and valuing diverse experiences and perspectives, contributing responsibly and productively to group efforts, using inclusive and respectful language, sharing personal insights and opinions clearly without resorting to derisive comments about others, and generally treating others with kindness. Students whose classroom conduct or interaction with others diminishes the quality of the learning environment will be supported in developing more productive patterns of interaction. If detrimental behavior persists, a student may be asked to drop the course. Interactions on-line and outside of class directly related to this class fall under these parameters as well.

**Attendance:** Class attendance is very important as students who miss class miss vital content and learning experiences. Should an absence occur, the student is responsible for obtaining class notes, handouts and related materials and is responsible for familiarizing herself/himself thoroughly with material addressed. More than one absence will lower your grade by at least one letter grade (grade will continue to be lowered with continuing absences). Individual situations may be taken into account in certain circumstances, and students are encouraged to discuss unavoidable absences with the professor (prior to the absence if at all possible). Two tardy arrivals and/or instances of leaving class early will constitute one absence. In general, attendance will be taken into account when determining the final grade, especially in the case of borderline grades. If you absolutely must miss a class session, leave a message for me in advance by email or in the 245 office. Meet with me at the next class session to determine how you will make up the work for the class you missed.

**Professionalism:** An important part of this course is your demonstrated ability to grow as a professional educator. As such, you are expected to submit work that represents your best effort and professional command of content and language. You are expected to engage in scholarly inquiry, reading assigned materials thoroughly and thoughtfully and actively exploring professional literature beyond assignment basics. You are responsible for turning in all assignments in a timely manner. Assignments (including self or peer assessments) must conform to university policies governing academic dishonesty. In addition, as a professional educator, you are constantly seen as a model for your students; therefore, it is imperative that you communicate well both orally and in writing; poor writing quality will affect your grade. Finally, and perhaps most important, you are expected to participate fully in class, contributing richly to discussion (face to face or online), engaging enthusiastically in learning experiences (including cooperative projects and presentations, face-to-face and online), and coming to each class prepared.

**Inclement Weather Policy:** In the event of severe weather, log onto the course web site for information about whether class will be held. Feel free to call your professor as well. I will make every effort to "poll" all class members about conditions in their areas and will use that information in determining if we hold class. If class is held, you are responsible for determining whether or not it is safe for you to travel to campus. *Because we have limited meeting sessions, if we must cancel a class due to inclement weather we will schedule a make up session that fits class members' schedules as closely as possible.*

**Course Engagements: Detailed information on each of these engagements is available on D2L, including assessment guides (rubrics, checklists, etc.) for each.**

### 1. Response Journal

A central goal of this course is to develop awareness of a wide range of quality literature, across multiple genres and representative of a variety of voices, perspectives and experiences toward the dual goals of developing your personal literary and cultural literacy and preparing you to teach readers and writers who have a wide range of experiences, abilities and interests. You are expected to read broadly as well as deeply, exploring books as assigned and beyond those assignments for each genre and across levels. Keep track of your personal reading using the **log form** provided (add on to the table as needed) and post an updated log for each class session.

*Please place an asterisk next to the date read to indicate books explored beyond basic requirements.* The purpose of the log is for you to reflect on your readings of the literature and the professional articles and chapters which we discuss in class. Record your understandings, questions, and connections to these readings. Write about your response, not summaries of the readings. The journal is a vehicle to reflect on important and difficult ideas and issues raised by our reading.

### 2. Learning Blog

The purpose of this blog is to help you engage thoughtfully and productively with the various texts of this class, both traditional printed texts (the textbook in particular) and the texts (some oral, some written, many communally constructed) that emerge during our time together. Please approach each entry in the following manner: Before reading the assigned text, reflect on the assigned topic and write about your ideas and perceptions going in. After reading, address the following focus questions: *What matters here; what is significant? Why? How have my previously held ideas been strengthened or challenged? What questions does this reading raise for me? How does what I read here invite me to further exploration? How does it apply to who I am and what I do?* It is not necessary to address these questions in a strict question/response format, nor do you need to restrict yourself to only the content suggested by the questions. A response team organization (see D2L) provides a structure for you to begin dialogue with your colleagues. Remember, too, to revisit previous posting with your own comments, perhaps new insights gained as you read and engage in learning dialogue with others.

Respond to the book(s), which we are discussing in literature circles. Your response may include comments about the connections and feelings the book evokes, your thinking about the author's construction of the plot, setting, themes, or characters (including their national, racial, gender or class identities), or reflections on social and political issues in the book. Reflect on your response to the book.

In responding to the professional readings, you can respond to the articles/chapters by focusing on ideas or issues you found interesting or provocative that go across the readings. Or you can respond to one of the articles/chapters of particular interest to you or to an idea that catches your attention.

### 3. Author/illustrator Study

You will research the life and work of the author/illustrator, including reading as many of the books he/she has authored as possible. On the D2L discussion board, discuss your findings and what you notice about their work with your peers. In order to facilitate productive discussion, I have assigned small groups for this project; please see the D2L discussion board for those group

assignments. Reading and a substantial initial discussion should be completed by class time on 2/11. Please post two to three potential questions that you might pose to the author/illustrator.

#### 4. Critical Literary Analysis

Just as you are encouraged to read extensively to broaden your knowledge of children's literature, another goal of this course is to deepen your critical understanding of literature and ability to discern high quality, appropriately challenging and instructionally worthwhile literature. During our class sessions and in text readings, we will explore various approaches to literary analysis and the theoretical groundings of those approaches. We will also explore (and, in some cases, challenge) definitions of various genre and genre-specific evaluation criteria. You will apply this knowledge in conducting critical analyses of the books you read in each genre. These **critical reflections** are designed to help you construct clear and grounded understandings of literary elements and conventions, to develop awareness of the sociological significance of literature, especially literature for children, and to help you perfect your ability to talk and teach effectively about and through literature. Your analysis should be carefully crafted, rarely more than one single-spaced typed page in length. Move beyond "stream of conscience" initial observations to organize your work according to central features and important criteria. Begin each reflection with a brief synopsis (so that the rest of your discussion makes sense) and support your assertions with clear examples from the text. Write to make sense to someone who has not read the book. Post each review to the D2L site so that, at the end of the course, we will have a significant supporting resource of great books to read and teach.

#### 5. Genre Presentations

Working with a team, you and your peers will be responsible for researching a particular genre beyond what is presented in the chapter and giving a class presentation that thoroughly educates your classmates on the genre, including defining (and perhaps, complicating) features, important authors, outstanding literature, and issues and possibilities relevant to a discussion of the genre. Each presentation must include purposeful attention to inclusion of diverse voices and perspectives. Presenters should 1. Use books as supporting examples and should design the presentation to 2. Include effective teaching practices. Genre presentations will be assessed using a **peer response system**. Peers will provide substantive feedback and a numeric score using a form (see D2L). Peer responses will be averaged to come up with one peer score. The instructor will evaluate using the same form for a second score. The presenters will self-evaluate using the same form. The final grade will be determined by averaging the overall peer score and the instructor score. The self-evaluation score will be used for discussion purposes in case of grade concern.

#### 6. Literature Study Groups

In order to develop deeper understandings of genre and literary craft, you will participate in literature study groups, one featuring various paired texts. You will engage with a group of peers in multiple dialogue sessions, following the format set forth in class. After each session, each **participant should submit an e-mail describing the session, literature discussion strategy used, and addressing central insights you gained into the book, the literature study process, and literacy learning as a result of your participation. (Response guidelines will be provided.)**

#### 7. Multicultural Literacy Project

A central goal of this course, in fact of this program, is preparing you to teach knowledgeably, effectively, and respectfully in diverse settings. Toward that end, you will complete a multicultural literacy project with three components: 1) exploring the professional (peer

reviewed) literature on diversity in children's literature; 2) reading children's literature stemming from a particular cultural perspective; and 3) engaging children in dialogue about a multicultural text

A. Select two research-based professional articles or book chapters related to diversity and children's literature, and write an academic summary (e.g. problem addressed, scholarly process, conclusions, and central points for discussion). Post your summaries on the discussion board, then revisit the board to read the summaries posted by your peers. Amend your initial posting with a brief, but well-thought-out synopsis of what you see to be the major issues/considerations in selecting literature that reflects diverse perspectives. Please post all articles by 2/12 and post your synopsis by 2/19.

B. Read at least five novel length texts reflective of a particular culture include a global/international book (you may substitute 2-3 picturebooks for each novel if you prefer) and write a 3-5 page analytic reflection on how culture and class are addressed. (You'll have to do background research on the culture and any issues particularly related to representation of that culture in literature. Article postings, links on D2L and other recommended resources can help a lot here.) The books may be those you read for genre assignments or you may choose books specifically for this assignment. Please submit a proposal for this assignment, including the books you will read and the culture reflected, by 2/12. Your paper is due in the drop box by 3/13.

#### C. Critical Review of a Global Book

Choose one global book from your set of multicultural books to analyze in depth and to write a review based on the submission criteria for WOW Review (wowlit.org). Choose a book that is a recent publication. For this review, research the background of the author and/or illustrator, access reviews on the book (see the Comprehensive Children's Literature Database), and evaluate the book on issues of cultural authenticity. This review is due on April 7.

D. Talking with children about multicultural literature: Working with a peer, locate a group of young learners with whom you can conduct a literature study group and apply what you have learned by taking over the teacher role, from selection to reflection, for two sessions. Identify level appropriate selections that encourage multicultural insights and allow participants choice in those selections. Each partner should take the lead teacher role for one complete session, with the non-teaching partner in each session actively participating while taking observational notes. After each session, share insights in a collaborative discussion. In a well-organized, thoughtfully crafted written reflection (post to D2L), 1) describe your process, 2) share what happened that was significant, and 3) share insights gained about how literature study dialogue encourages significant literacy and sociocultural learning. You should be prepared to present your findings in class on 4/. Prepare a handout and display of books to share with class members on March 27. Also write a reflection on the issues that emerged from your analysis of this collection of books along with a description of why you chose this particular culture and of your process of research

#### 5. Inquiry Project

Choose a question or issue of concern to you in relation to multicultural or global children's and adolescent literature. Once you have chosen a particular question, decide on how you will conduct your inquiry to explore that question or issue. You can research through professional

readings, children's books, discussions, interviews, observations, and/or work with students. You can choose to do your inquiry project alone or with others. The only limitations are that your project should relate to global issues in children's/adolescent literature and is on a question that matters to you.

Options for your project include:

- an indepth critical analysis of a set of books from a particular country or cultural group
- an issue (e.g. translation, censorship, stereotypes, cultural authenticity)
- an author or theme relevant to our focus on internationalism
- responses of children, adolescents, or adults to a particular set of global books.
- awards given to international literature or to literature within a particular country
- write your own piece of literature that is based in a specific cultural experience
- your proposal

A project proposal will be due **March**. On this proposal, describe your project in as much detail as possible, including your rationale for undertaking the project, your theoretical framework, your methods of researching your question or issue, etc. Your project will be due on **April 22**. The inquiry projects will be presented to other class members during the last two class sessions.

### **Evaluation:**

Since this is a literacy class, and because teaching is a field that requires excellent communication skills, numerous opportunities will be provided for students to explore ideas about and through language, both written and oral. A strong emphasis will be put on the ability to communicate clearly in writing (including clear, well-developed concepts and mechanical proficiency.) For each assignment, grades will be determined using a point scale and criteria. Students are encouraged to communicate with the professor regarding any evaluative concerns. A grade of incomplete will only be assigned to those students who experience a catastrophic event (severe illness, etc.) that prevents them from completing course work.

For each major project, you will turn in a self-evaluation in which you state your goals for that project and evaluate the process you went through in reaching those goals. I will add my evaluative comments based on your goals. You will also *write a mid-term evaluation* of your learning and the course that includes your goals for the rest of the semester as well as a final self-evaluation at the end of the semester.

Your final grade will be based holistically on both your and our evaluation of your growth and learning, the quality of your written work, and your attendance, participation, and preparation for class sessions. While you can negotiate the ways in which you define and complete class projects, you must complete all of these projects to fulfill course requirements and your final grade for the course will be based on the thoughtfulness and quality of this work with a B reflecting the completion of all course projects at a satisfactory level.

**Grading Overview:** Course assignments will be scored and weighted as follows:

	ASSIGNMENT	Possible points
<b>1</b>	Reading Log	6
<b>2</b>	Learning Blog	48
<b>3</b>	Author/illustrator Study	6
<b>4</b>	Critical Literary Analysis	84 (7 genre/12 pts each)
<b>5</b>	Genre Presentations	25
<b>6</b>	Literature Study Groups	14

<b>7</b>	MLP Article Review & Discussion	16
	MLP Cultural Perspectives Paper	15
	MLP Multicultural Literacy Project	15 (Total MLP: 46)
<b>8</b>	Inquiry Project	25

Grading scale: A = 93 – 100%, B = 82 – 92%, C = 81 – 70%, D = 69 – 60%, F = ⇒

**Paired Texts:**

**Contemporary/ Historical: *City Boy* Jan Micheal (Malaway) & *Between Sisters* by Adwoa Badoe (Sudan)**

***Way to Live Forever* by Sally Nicholls & *Shadows of Ghadames***

***Friends from the Other Side* [Gloria Anzaldua](#)**

(Author), [Consuelo Mendez](#) (Illustrator) & ***Composition***

***Kira Kira &***

***Dust Bowl: Children of the Dust Bowl: The True Story of the School at Weedpatch Camp* by Jerry Stanley**

***The American Plague***