

Kent State University

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## Multicultural Voices in Children's and Young Adult Literature

Online edition-Summer 2012

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**Office hours:** Summer online courses use email and phone access. Use the phone number above during regular business hours, or send email with questions, or request a phone appointment.

**Text and Readings:** This course uses scholarly readings provided inside the course in PDF or other formats, AND articles posted on library e-reserve. This is linked in the course content but can also be accessed via the library website. You will find a pull down menu on the library welcome page which includes electronic reserves. Search by Instructor to find our course listing. Our password is voice32 for summer 2012.

**Assignments and Evaluation:** This course is organized as such:

### Module 1 – Getting started and Introduction (10 points)

1. Powerpoint overview of our course
2. Readings (and response) -3 points

Follow up discussion on bulletin board- 2 points

Listening/viewing

3. Activity (this is graded) 5 points

4. Making your literature circle selection (due: June 8) in order to be put into a group so your group can get started scheduling reading and meetings.

5. Deciding if you want instructor to arrange a pen pal or find one on your own.

6. Browsing all course resources

7. Introduce yourself with a podcast using audacity or any similar means and post on the site. Limit 3 minutes. Tell your name, where you work (if currently employed), a bit about your teaching background, and what you hope to learn from this class.

8. Your course documents, this syllabus and your course outline is located in this module.

**WEEK ONE CHECK IN.** (June 4-8). I am aware some of you may still be teaching. Try to at least read this syllabus, choose your literature circle book, do the course overview powerpoint. Then, once, during regular business hours and up to 6pm, call me and check in with any questions that you may have. This also helps our online course feel less impersonal. Call 330-676-0613.

## **Module 2 – African American Literature (10 points)**

Readings (and response) -2 points

Viewing/Listening (and response)- 1 point

Activity – 2 points

Browsing – 5 points

## **Module 3 – Hispanic American Literature and Native American Literature (10 points)**

Readings (and response) -2 points

Viewing/Listening (and response)- 1 point

Activity – 2 points

Browsing – 5 points

#### **Module 4 – Asian and Asian American Literature (10 points)**

Readings (and response) -2 points

Viewing/Listening (and response)- 1 point

Activity – 2 points

Browsing – 5 points

#### **Module 5 – Literature of the Middle East and the Indian Subcontinent (10 points)**

Readings (and response) -2 points

Viewing/Listening (and response)- 1 point

Activity – 2 points

Browsing – 5 points

#### **Module 6 – International Literature Europe, U.K., Africa, and Australia. (10 points)**

Readings (and response) -2 points

Viewing/Listening (and response)- 1 point

Activity – 2 points

Browsing – 5 points

### **Module 7 – Literature Reflecting Disabilities (10 points)**

*Readings (and response) -2 points*

Viewing/Listening (and response)- 1 point

Activity – 2 points

Browsing – 5 points

Subtotal 70 points from modules

### **Cultural Aspects of this Course (30 points total)**

15 points – Everyone participates in literature circles. You are required to meet 3-4 times, in any format acceptable to group members, as long as the meetings are synchronous. These are your course points for literature circles:

5 points – the meetings and reports of those meetings posted on the bulletin board. After each meeting, one member of the group writes a summary of your meeting and posts it on the discussion board.

5 points – your personal literature response blog, also found in your toolbar on the left of the LEARN screen under tools. You write a minimum of 5 times during the reading of your novel. You will be evaluated on your thoughtfulness, effort, connections, and insights during your reading.

5 points – Your group's collaborative virtual presentation about what the book meant to you all. Your group plans and executes a presentation using any technology that can be posted and shared with classmates. Presentations should not exceed three minutes. If you use video, you will upload it on KSUtube and put

the link on your submission. Presentations share what the book meant to you, and never give away too much (you establish a place on KSUtube logging in with your flashline credentials).

15 points for cultural considerations. These include:

10 points – Once or more during the course you will schedule yourself an experience you have never had, that will widen your cultural understanding as a teacher. Some people visit a synagogue, mosque, a Buddhist service, or visit people in Amish country. If you are traveling around, consider visiting an Indian reservation. Attend a church or other place of worship highly different from your own. A festival taking place during the course will qualify IF it also includes opportunities to talk with people and ask them questions about their culture (as in the case with the Greek festival in Ohio in summers). When in doubt, check it out with your instructor. This cannot be a virtual experience. Your reflection on your experience needs to communicate your learning, especially from the perspective of a teacher who does or may someday serve students from varied backgrounds.

5 points – Make a friend – virtually, or in real life. You can request a teacher pen pal in another country from the instructor; you may know of someone you would like to get to know better; you might ask the Read Center on in White Hall 215 for a conversation partner (someone who is from another country needing to practice their English). Your experience should include at least three points of contact. This can be a virtual experience. You can make friends with a teacher from another country through facebook or other means. Write a reflection on what happened and some things you learned.

Modules = 70 points

Cultural Considerations = 30 points

Total course points = 100 points

**What is Browsing?**

Browsing is the heart of this course. You cannot take a literature course without learning how to select good titles, read titles, evaluate titles, and explore their use in classrooms. You need access to a library regularly during this course. Keep in mind in the State of Ohio, you can open a library card in ANY public library, no matter your residence. So if your closest library is not adequate, use the library in another location. Also, check out the KSU main library, 3<sup>rd</sup> floor Marantz Collection of over 25,000 multicultural titles. Check the library hours for when this special collection room is available. This collection does not circulate, so go with the intent of staying and reading for a while.

Modules 2-7 include a 5 point browsing assignment. The specifics of what you are looking for in each module are listed online inside our course. Typically you will be asked to browse and select a mixture of novels, picture books, nonfiction, poetry collections, and sometimes traditional literature.

In all cases, you must read and evaluate the titles you select to use. You must also apply the rubric found in Module 1 to the selection to ensure you have chosen wisely. Each title gets one teaching idea for use in the classroom. The more specific, the better. Feel free to gear those ideas to the age group you teach, when possible. When selecting any titles dealing with native peoples, it must also be vetted using the wonderful resource website [oyate.org](http://oyate.org), run by native women.

The book you select and read for literature circles may count for one novel in browsing, if it suits your module needs.

Browsing is submitted as an assignment for evaluation. It is additionally posted on the discussion board in the appropriate place for sharing with your classmates.

### **What are Literature Circles?**

By now you have probably participated in literature circles in other courses. If not, a chapter on this topic is provided in module 1. Literature circles are defined as heterogeneous student led reading of literature trade books. When nonfiction is used, we call them Discovery Circles. Literature circles includes

reading together (could include reading some aloud to each other) in the same place within the novel or other text, responding in writing to what you are reading, discussion of what you are reading, and some sort of presentation which helps to synthesize and deepen the experience (as well as share with others).

Literature circles are the best strategy we as educators know to help turn students on to reading and deepen their engagement with high quality books. You will want to consider if you can implement literature circles in your classroom, or improve them if you have already started.

When you connect with your literature circle group (you will be assigned by the first weekend), exchange contact information right away. These people are also your STUDY BUDDIES. Past students have found it very helpful to learn some things in the online environment together. This also helps you know if problems are in your system, or not.

Either IE or Firefox browsers are supposed to work fine with Blackboard Learn. If you need to download one of these you do not have, tech support will assist you. KSU is site licensed with much software, to which students are entitled.

### **What is reading and response?**

Each module includes one or more readings. It is recommended you do this first in each module. Your response is **one** submitted text file which adheres to the directions given in the module. You are evaluated on your effort and thoughtfulness.

### **What are viewing and listening?**

In this area, you will find possibly podcasts, vodcasts, or powerpoints with or without audio. There are sometimes websites, youtube videos, or other similar things. It is recommended you do this part second in the sequence. After all listening and viewing, you choose some notion to respond to and write about, focusing on what you are learning and how it informs you as a classroom teacher. These responses are evaluated on your effort and thoughtfulness.

### **What are activities?**

Activities vary in each module, to keep things interesting. You may be asked to design a lesson plan, create a powerpoint, or other things. Follow the directions. Inside the activity folder, you will also find “Fun Stuff.” These are optional, but would be opportunities to include friends and family in your learning. Mostly they are videos to view or recipes to try out.

### **What Technology Needs Will I have?**

You need a good broadband connection, whether it is wireless or direct. You need a fairly up-to-date computer. You may need to download certain softwares to ready your system. When you are not sure what to do, you call

# 330-672-help (24/7)

There are many reasons things may not work right away. The two most common reasons are user error and your computer settings. WHEN YOU SUBMIT FILES FOR ASSIGNMENTS, ALL FILE NAMES NEED TO BEGIN WITH YOUR LAST NAME, SUCH AS “SMITH RESPONSE 2” OR “MILLER CULTURAL EXPERIENCE.”

### **Watch Out for Instructor Announcements!**

From time to time, your instructor will send announcements to your email. These may be reminders, clarification of things asked by others, etc. You need to read all announcements.

Course Evaluation:

95-100 = A

91-94 =A-

87-90=B+



83-87=B

80-82=B-

77-79=C+

75-76 =C

70-74=C-

A grade of C or better is required in a graduate level course, so scores under 70 points are failing.

**Registration** – You must be properly registered in this course to take it and earn credit. You are responsible for this. Instructors do not know anything about registration. If you drop the course, be sure to drop the course properly via the registrar. If you do not, you may receive a bill to pay for the course. Your name is dropped from the system if there is an issue of nonpayment. Instructors are not notified of any of these things, so keep on top of your responsibilities with registration. If you already hold a master's degree, you should be registered at the 77395 level. There is no difference between the actual course materials. Expectations vary, however.

**Disabilities** – If you have a documented disability with the KSU Office of Student Disabilities, and it affects your taking this course, you must inform the instructor on the opening date of the course.

**Course Evaluations and Improvement** – Course evaluations in online courses are sent electronically. Please complete and return these forms. You will also be asked for ways to improve this course by your instructor nearer to the end of the course. ALL suggestions from prior students have been incorporated into this edition.

**The Online Environment** – This online environment is still quite new. There are no courses on how to create an online course, and no courses on taking one either. We are all learning about this new milieu together. Feel free to raise questions, to

call your instructor for clarification, to recommend ways to make the online environment more meaningful (330-676-0613 during regular business hours).

**Due Dates** – Due dates are posted on the course calendar in LEARN. Anything needing an extension must be requested in advance. You can print this calendar as a text document. If any due dates are missing, please email me asap.

### **Glossary of Terms Used in this Course-**

*Children's literature* – Although designations are guidelines, generally children's literature refers to literature written for children on the trade book market for students up to grade 8.

*Young Adult Literature* – Although middle school students often read YA literature, it is generally accepted that it begins around grade 8 and extends into late adolescence. Content in YA can deal with more controversial topics, such as pregnancy, sex, romance, drugs, violence, etc.

*Trade Book* – A book you could buy at a regular bookstore, published for general sales, as opposed to those created for curriculum purposes by a company designing instructional materials for sales to schools. ALL selections in this course must be trade books. No leveled books, no books from a curriculum set of something.

*Fiction* – Fiction is human experience in narrative. Fiction does not mean "untrue." It is a literacy term referring to a genre of literature. Human experience contains much truth, even when the story itself did not really take place.

*Contemporary realistic fiction (genre)*– A narrative story or novel set in the present; everything in the story is possible and plausible.

*Historical fiction (genre)* – is a kind of fiction set in the past. For the purposes of children's literature, earlier than the war in Vietnam is considered historical.

*Fantasy (genre)* – A kind of fiction containing anything not real, such as talking animals, magic, or spells, and also books set in not-real worlds, such as

Narnia or Pern. Fantasy grew out of traditional literature, and contains the same themes such as good vs. evil.

*Science Fiction* (genre) – Often grouped with fantasy in children’s literature texts, science fiction has to contain all real or speculated science.

*Nonfiction* (genre) –Most books in the world are nonfiction. These include textbooks, informational books, cookbooks, how-to books, field guides, instructional books, etc. They are expected to be accurate and current with information on the topic. The author or authors need to have credible background and do their homework on the topic.

*Biography and Autobiography* – This is the largest sub-category of nonfiction. These are works that depict all or part of a person’s life, whether living or deceased. Accuracy is important.

*Poetry* (form) –Poetry is tricky to define. Generally it is written in a kind of verse format, instead of a prose format. It may or may not rhyme. Poetry for children or teens is written with this audience in mind. Poetry could also be historical, nonfiction, fantasy, contemporary fiction, etc. in topic.

*Traditional Literature* (genre) – All traditional literature started as oral storytelling somewhere. It has no discernible author. It has quite a few subgenres. The main ones are listed below.

*Myths or Pourquoi Tales* – These stories explain something. They may explain something serious (like how the people came to be and the basis of their religion) or something less serious (like how the kangaroo learned to jump). Serious stories are considered myths, while not serious ones are considered pourquoi. These categories vary depending on who is doing the categorizing and whether or not the stories are serious to the person doing the categorizing. Do not be confused by other definitions of *myth*, meaning something untrue. Here, *myth* is a literary term.

*Legends* – Legends originated somewhere, somehow, with someone who considered what they were telling to be true. So while there may be a grain of

truth, it may be difficult to determine what it is. Ghost stories are good examples of legends.

*Fables* – Fables are teaching stories which have either an implicit or explicit moral or lesson. They may have been constructed by the peoples from whom they originated precisely for this purpose.

*Fairy Tales* – Have generally noble or royal origins, and generally contain lots of royal references, fairies, princes, dragons, damsels in distress, heroes, and emperor.

*Folk Tales* – These are traditional stories that mostly do not fit into the other subgenres and are referred to generally as folk tales.

*Picture Books (form)* – A form, not a genre, picture books are the marriage of text and art, each contributing to the story. Picture book content could be poetry, a contemporary story, fantasy, historical, nonfiction, traditional literature, biography, etc. Picture books are a huge category of children’s literature. Most are 16/32 pages, not including endpapers.

*Endpapers* – The paper which is glued into the front and back cover of a hard cover book, which helps strengthen the binding. Endpapers can be white, colored, or even contain related thematic content.

*Copyright Page*- That page usually in the front of a book in the “front matter” which contains lots of small print. Generally you will find the copyright date, but also the Library of Congress (LOC) number, the Dewey Decimal number, and the designation “juvenile fiction” for works of fiction, and “juvenile literature” for works of nonfiction. Sometimes author birthdate and art medium used are also listed.

