EDUC 519 Syllabus
Literature for Children and Adolescents

Course Description: This course is intended to introduce students to the wealth of children’s literature currently available and to provide ideas for using that literature in the classroom.

Instructor: Dr. Donna Barnes  
Cell Phone: 858 735-6662  
E-mail: donnabme@yahoo.com  
If you send any assignments by e-mail, then send to: donnabme@g-mail.com

Office Hours: Fridays, 1:00-6:00 or by appointment

Course Goals

The first goal of this course is for you to be involved in negotiating your own learning by participating in the creation of the syllabus and identifying what you want to learn, how you want to learn it, and how you want to show that you learned it. So, what would that look like? We’ll discuss this and brainstorm ideas and I will share a smorgasbord of possibilities. This does not mean that the syllabus is totally created by students, but that it will be a combination of your ideas and my ideas. WE’VE DONE THIS.

Other Goals:

For students to...

a. Read widely, from novels, picture and poetry books written for students in grades K -12 and build understanding of diversity through the characters, settings, plots, and themes presented and through our responses to the texts.
b. Become more knowledgeable about the authors, illustrators, and poets who create literature for children and to use print and online reference resources to support work in these areas.
c. Learn about the social, political, and multi-cultural issues related to children’s literature. To understand and utilize a critical literacy framework that reaches beyond comprehension and personal meaning to include a deeper look at the social and political issues raised in the literature/readings and possible ways to take action on these issues.
d. Become aware of the cultural lenses through which all people, including children, view the world and process their experiences.
e. Understand how s/he can make literature a more pleasurable experience for young people.
f. Describe the various genres of children’s literature and the characteristics of each.
g. Evaluate selections of children’s literature in accordance with a set of established criteria.

Course Assignments

1. READ, READ, and READ SOME MORE. Read 50 picture books, half of which should come from the books on reserve in the USD library. Read about 14 novels.

2. Prepare 3 booktalks to share with the class about books that you find that you love, love love.

3. Oral presentation to the class. You may do this individually or with a partner. You may choose from one of the novels we are reading or one of the following genres or topics:
   _______Picture books: up to two presentations on this topic
   _______Contemporary Realistic Fiction
   _______Modern Fantasy
   _______Story Telling
   _______Short Stories

Presentations will last about an hour (maybe a little more) and all students in the class will be prepared for your presentation by reading the appropriate readings and/or the assigned novel. Below are the criteria to consider when evaluating your work.

*Big Ideas: what are the big ideas, interesting, and important points in the book and topic? Focus on these in some way.
*Develop a “learning engagement”, which will involve the class in an experience/a discussion of the issue(s) of the topic and book. Give us a hands-on/minds-on experience.
*Provide visual support for your presentation. This is an invitation to use your imagination.
*Make it interesting and “meaty”.
*Finally, figure out a way to help us, as the readers of the required book or topic to engage in meaningful discussion related to your choice.

4. **Individual Assignment of Choice:** choose one of the following:

*Create a web of learning ideas around a theme using a variety of literature
*Study a specific genre of literature not listed above
*An author study
*An illustrator study
*A study of a poet: Select an author or illustrator or poet of children’s literature and conduct and learn all about him/her. Read as many works by the person as possible. Identify biographical information, read and review a number of his/her works. Include your own critical analysis of the works and draw conclusions and connections regarding the work of your subject. Locate and evaluate Internet websites devoted to your author and/or illustrator. Write a critical evaluation of websites devoted to the subject of your study and share 2 that you consider to be the best. Write a summary paper of the important and interesting things you learned.

*OR OTHER: This could be anything related to Children/Adolescent Literature What do you wonder about or want to know more about? What questions do you have about some specific aspect of children’s literature? Ask your questions, and begin your search for answers and more questions. Use multiple means of collecting information.

This includes any of the assignments you (we) were interested in from the other syllabi.

Books that sing
Create materials to use for 2nd language learners based on literature (wordless books, predictable books, series books).

5. **Three Brainstorm responses to books.** Choose 3 books in the semester and make a list of things the book makes you think about doing.

   **Two In-depth responses to books.** Choose any books that you wrote a brainstorm list about and actually DO one of the things on your list (caveat—you may choose to do an in-depth response about a book that you did not write a brainstorm for)

6. **Read widely in the area of poetry** and collect a NEW selection of poetry that you really like, appreciate, and/or love. These must be poems that you have read for the first time this semester. Citations should include, title, author, and source. You must use at least 5 sources to gather your poetry from and limit your use of sources from websites to 7 poems. I suggest that we either make enough hard copies of our final poems to distribute to each other or send a copy to all via e-mail.

7. **Create a record or log of your readings:** this can be accomplished using different formats. Decide what will be useful to you and create it. At the minimum, I would like you include title, author, illustrator, a sentence or two about the book and rate each book on a scale of 1-10.

8. **TELL A STORY!!** Twice—once in our class and once 3 weeks later. or you can tell your story to us 3 weeks after you’ve told it somewhere else.

11. **Final Reflection and Self-Assessment**
The purpose of this assignment is to give you the opportunity to think on paper and reflect on your learning in this class. It’s important to pause and think about the ways your experiences and learning within this course have (or have not) influenced you in your own beliefs, values, and teaching/learning practices and how these relate to children’s literature.

**IS THIS TOO MUCH?** I try to remember “less can be more”.

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