

## *Children's Literature in Faith and Life*

CE 3203, Spring 2019

T/Th, 10:00-11:20, Schlegel 123

Instructors: Carol J. Cook  
302 Schlegel. Ext. 379  
[carolcook@lpts.edu](mailto:carolcook@lpts.edu)

J. Bradley Wigger  
307 Gardencourt. Ext. 428  
[bwigger@lpts.edu](mailto:bwigger@lpts.edu)

### **Course Description**

This course exposes students to a sampling of books from pre-school age through adolescence that, through illustrations and stories, ask “big questions” related to the meaning of life, death, injustice, suffering, difference, danger, decision-making, relationships, love, wonder, and God.

We will explore the ways children's literature is as an accessible and imaginative resource for ministry, bringing fresh images and enlivening narratives to the arts of ministry such as preaching, teaching, and pastoral care. It also provides a powerful medium for understanding—voicing to adults the kinds of questions, delights, struggles, and concerns at work in the lives of young people, including their lives of faith. We will consider how children's literature offers a rich resource for children and youth to better understand themselves and to better imagine others, especially those of different times, places, and cultures.

*The course is a general elective in either Pastoral Care or Christian Education (cross-listed in catalog), but the course does not fulfill the requirement in either field. Students choose which way to register. Students working towards the Concentration in Educational Ministry should register the course in Christian education.*

### **Hopes and Activities:**

Through reading and discussing children's literature written for various ages, we hope students will:

- Better appreciate the lives, questions, and existential struggles of children and youth
- Recognize general developmental patterns and concerns in child development
- Sharpen their ability to reflect upon and interpret texts
- Learn the art of asking good questions and leading book discussions
- Enjoy reading

Through reflective writing and responses to the reading, we hope students will:

- Explore with others possible uses of children's literature in churches, homes, communities and congregations
- Interpret theologies and themes at work in the reading
- Be able to identify similarities and differences between materials that are explicitly faith oriented from those that are not

By creating an annotated bibliography based upon field trips to book stores, libraries, and resource centers as well as through “virtual trips” to key web sites, we hope students will:

- Discover a great variety of materials, including those showing promise for ministry in church and home situations
- Together create an annotated bibliography of children's literature for the entire class

Through a final project, we hope students will:

- Have a chance to pursue an interest or passion (relevant to the course) in a form they choose (e.g. research paper, curriculum, written stories, psycho-educational workshop)
- Deepen or extend their understanding of ideas and themes critical to the course

### **Evaluation**

1/3 Notebook  
1/3 Annotated bibliography  
1/3 Final Project

***Attendance and active participation are assumed***—grades will be adjusted for unexcused absences, leaving class early, doing email in class, or other forms of non-participation.

### **Electronic Technology Policy**

This is a low-to-no technology course during class time. There will rarely, if ever, be a need for using laptops, tablets, phones, or any other technology that takes attention away from the classroom. A paper notebook will be sufficient. If there is an overwhelming need for use of a laptop, please request permission from the professors. Please stow phones out of view.

### **Core Assignments**

(More detailed guidance for each of the following will be provided once the class meets.)

#### *Notebook*

Students will keep a notebook and bring it to class. For every reading and for many of the class sessions, students will be assigned questions or tasks designed to pursue the hopes of the course. Some entrees will be assigned as homework; some will occur in class. Notebooks can be handwritten and must be turned in during the last day of class, Thursday, May 9.

#### *Annotated Bibliography*

Three times during the semester, students are to spend at least 3-4 hours in a place where they can survey and skim lots of books (e.g. bookstore, library, resource center, special web sites). This will allow students to discover many more resources than is feasible to require/assign for the course. Students will take notes on what they discover for approximately 25-30 books (total). We will compile these notes to create a class annotated bibliography with key terms for each entry (making it easily searchable). We will use Chicago Manual of Style formatting for these entries.

Each class session will open and close with a picture book that students share with the class in our “reading corner.” The reading should be under five minutes. You can use a longer work, but summarize sections to keep the time limit. Include the book in your contribution to the annotated bibliography.

#### *Final Project*

Students will design their own final projects, with various options. The projects must be of obvious relevance to the course. The work involved should be roughly the equivalent of the time and energy involved in a 20-page research paper, but practice-oriented projects are highly valued as well. The time could be spent teaching, writing, interviewing, organizing, creating, or providing

resources for your project. Typically a 20-page paper is calculated at approximately 20 to 30 hours of work. Some possibilities are:

*Writing a curriculum for an educational setting*

(e.g. 6-week study of various books that could be used in a parent-child church book group; a weekend retreat for youth built around a particular book or two; a faith and children's literature course; a parenting workshop employing children's literature)

*Writing a research paper on a relevant subject*

(e.g. literary theory in relation to children; the role of narrative in identity; theodicy in relation to a particular series/author; the role of play and imagination in child development)

*Conducting qualitative research*

(e.g. interview Sunday school teachers, parents, or children; interview children's book author)

*Write or begin a book*

(e.g. write the first three chapters of a children's book of fiction; create a set of biblical devotions for children; write what could be a chapter of a book on a theological theme for youth)

## **School Policies (excerpted from The Faculty Handbook)**

### **Use of Inclusive Language**

In accordance with seminary policy, students are to use inclusive language in class discussions and in written and oral communication by using language representative of the whole human community in respect to gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, age, and physical and intellectual capacities. Direct quotations from theological texts and translations of the Bible do not have to be altered to conform to this policy. In your own writing, however, when referring to God, you are encouraged to use a variety of images and metaphors, reflecting the richness of the Bible's images for God. More discussion about inclusive language can be accessed from the Academic Support Center and from the section of the LPTS web site with information for current students.

### **Academic Honesty**

All work turned in to the instructors is expected to be the work of the student whose name appears on the assignment. Any borrowing of the ideas or the words of others must be acknowledged by quotation marks (where appropriate) and by citation of author and source. Use of another's language or ideas from online resources is included in this policy, and must be attributed to author and source of the work being cited. Failure to do so constitutes plagiarism, and may result in failure of the course. Two occurrences of plagiarism may result in dismissal from the Seminary. Students unfamiliar with issues related to academic honesty can find help from the staff in the Academic Support Center. For more information, see the Policy for Academic Honesty in the Student Handbook.

### **Special Accommodations**

Students requiring accommodations for a documented physical or learning disability should be in contact with the Director of the Academic Support Center during the first two weeks of a semester (or before the semester begins) and should speak with the instructor as soon as possible to arrange appropriate adjustments. Students with environmental or other sensitivities that may affect their learning are also encouraged to speak with the instructor.

## **Citation Policy**

Citations in your papers should follow Seminary standards, which are based on these guides:  
American Psychological Association. *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*. 6th ed. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 2010.  
Turabian, Kate L., Wayne C. Booth, Gregory G. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams. *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations: Chicago Style for Students and Researchers*. 8th ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013.  
*The Chicago Manual of Style*. 17th ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017.  
Copies of these guides are available at the library and in the Academic Support Center.

## **Attendance Policy**

According to the Seminary catalog, students are expected to attend class meetings regularly. In case of illness or emergency, students are asked to notify the instructor of their planned absence from class, either prior to the session or within 24 hours of the class session. Six or more absences (1/4 of the course) may result in a low or failing grade in the course.

## **Resources**

### ***Common Readings:***

#### Required:

Curtis, Christopher Paul. *Bud, Not Buddy*. New York: Random House Children's Books, 1999.  
Haddon, Mark. *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time*. New York: Vintage, 2004.  
House, Silas and Vaswani, Neela. *Same Sun Here*. Berryville, VA: Candlewick Press, 2012.  
Kadohata, Cynthia. *Kira-Kira*. New York: Aladdin Paperbacks, 2006, 2004.  
Lewis, C.S. *The Magician's Nephew*. Any edition.  
McCall, Guadalupe Garcia. *Under the Mesquite*. New York: Lee & Low Books, 2011.  
Sanchez, Alex. *The God Box*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2007.  
Sasso, Sandy. "The Role of Narrative in the Spiritual Formation of Children." *Family Ministry* 19, no. 2 (Summer 2005): 13-26.  
Wigger, J. Bradley. "The Religious Imagination of Children" (Report to Association of Theological Schools/Henry Luce III Foundation), 2018.  
Woodson, Jacqueline. *Brown Girl Dreaming*, New York: Nancy Paulson Books/Penguin, 2014.

#### Recommended:

Lewis, C.S. *The Lion, Witch and the Wardrobe*. Any edition.

### ***Short, picture books that will be presented and discussed in class (copies provided by professors and/or on reserve in library):***

Boles, Elaine. *Speaking Without Sound*. Wooster, OH: Ten O'clock Press, a division of Greater Midwest Publishing, LLC, 2008.  
Bridges, Ruby. *Through My Eyes*. New York: Scholastic Press, 1999.  
Coles, Robert. *The Story of Ruby Bridges*. New York: Scholastic Press, 1995.  
Durell, Ann and Marilyn Sachs, eds. *The Big Book for Peace*. New York: Dutton Children's Books, 1990.  
Hughes, Langston. *Poetry for Young People*. New York: Sterling Publishing Co., Inc., 1994.

- Ladwig, Tim, illustrator. *The Lord's Prayer*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Books for Young Readers, 2000.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Psalm Twenty-Three*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Books for Young Readers, 1993.
- Lawrence, Jacob. *Harriet and the Promised Land*. New York: Aladdin Paperbacks, 1997 edition.
- Lawrence, Jacob. *The Great Migration: An American Story*. New York: HarperCollins, 1992.
- Ramshaw, Gail. *Every Day and Sunday, Too*. Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1996.
- Rappaport, Doreen. *Martin's Big Words: The Life of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.* New York: Jump at the Sun, Hyperion Paperbacks for Children, 2001.
- Sasso, Sandy Eisenberg. *Adam & Eve's First Sunset: God's New Day*. Woodstock, VT: Jewish Light Publishing, 2003.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Cain & Abel: Finding the Fruits of Peace*. Woodstock, VT: Jewish Light Publishing, 2001.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *In God's Name*. Woodstock, VT: Jewish Light Publishing, 1994.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Noah's Wife: The Story of Naamah*. Woodstock, VT: Jewish Light Publishing, 2002.
- Tyler, Anne. *Tumble Tower*. New York: Orchard Books, 1993.
- Williams, Mary. *Brothers in Hope: The Story of the Lost Boys of Sudan*. New York: Lee & Low Books, 2005.

**Secondary sources:**

- L'Engle, Madeleine. *Trailing Clouds of Glory: Spiritual Values in Children's Literature*. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1985.
- Lewis, C.S. *On Stories and other Essays on Literature*. New York: Harcourt, Inc., 1966.
- Mills, David, ed. *The Pilgrim's Guide: C.S. Lewis and the Art of Witness*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998.
- Nesbett, Peter. *Jacob Lawrence: The Complete Prints (1963-2000)*. Seattle: Francine Seders Gallery in association with University of Washington Press, 2005 (Paperback edition).
- Paterson, Katherine. *Gates of Excellence: On Reading and Writing Books for Children*. New York: Lodestar Books, 1981, 1988.
- Paterson, Katherine. *The Invisible Child: On Reading and Writing Books for Children*. New York: Dutton Children's Books, 1981, 1989, 2001.
- Sasso, Sandy. "The Role of Narrative in the Spiritual Formation of Children." *Family Ministry* 19, no. 2 (Summer 2005): 13-26.
- Schakel, Peter S. *The Way into Narnia: A Reader's Guide*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2005.
- Shadowlands*. DVD. Directed by Richard Attenborough. New York: HBO Video, 1994.
- Travers, Barbara E. and John F. Travers. *Children's Literature: A Developmental Perspective*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2008.

## Class Schedule

Th 2/7 Introductions

**WEEK 1** **For each Tuesday (unless otherwise noted), read the text for discussion and prepare the Notebook assignment.**

T 2/12 *Bud, Not Buddy*

Th 2/14 cont.

### **WEEK 2**

T 2/19 *The Magician's Nephew*

Th 2/21 Start "Shadowlands"

### **WEEK 3** **(Field trip assignment 1 + start reading *The God Box*)**

T 2/26 Finish "Shadowlands"  
Read Wigger, (Religious Imagination)



Religious Imagination  
Project report.pdf

Th 2/28 Read Sasso (Religious Narrative)  
Library field trip (on your own)  
Bring/turn in field trip annotations.  
Discuss all of the above

### **WEEK 4**

T 3/5 *The God Box*

Th 3/7 cont.

### **WEEK 5**

T 3/12 *Kira-Kira*

Th 3/14 cont.

3/18-3/22 **Research and Study Week**

## WEEK 6

T 3/26 *The Curious Incident...*  
Th 3/28 cont.

## WEEK 7

T 4/2 *Brown Girl Dreaming*  
Th 4/4 cont.

## WEEK 8

T 4/9 *Same Sun Here*  
Th 4/11 cont.  
paragraph for final project due

## WEEK 9

T 4/16 no class: library field trip  
Th 4/18 **Easter Break – no class**

## WEEK 10

T 4/23 *Under the Mesquite*  
Th 4/25 cont. annotations due

## WEEK 11

T 4/30 Picture book fest  
Th 5/2 No class: Library field trip

## WEEK 12

T 5/7 Annotated bibliographies (all three sets)  
Th 5/9 Wrap up on final projects

**Final Project due for graduating seniors on Tuesday, May 14; for everyone else Thursday, May 16.**