**Engaging Children with Literature the Represents Diversity**

**EDRE 3600-016 (9169)**

Spring 2024, 3 credit hours (undergraduate)

**Instructor**: Doricka Menefee, Ph.D. **Email**: doricka.menefee@unt.edu

**Tuesdays| 1:00M-3:50PM | Matthews Hall RM 114** **Office Hours:** M-T-W by appointment only

University of North Texas Education Program Commitments

While teaching has always been a relational and intellectual endeavor, we acknowledge that teaching is also both an ethical and a political act. We recognize that many of the practices and traditions in schools today perpetuate long-seated historical and social oppressions. These social inequities are structural and socially constructed along dimensions of intersecting identities, including, but not limited to, race, color, ethnicity, national origin and identity, dis/ability, gender identity and expression, sex, sexual orientation, religion, immigration status, language, social class, age, and genetic orientation.

It is through our radical imaginations that we can create spaces for critical inquiry and engagement in schools at multiple levels: intellectual, ethical, physical, social, emotional, ecological, and aesthetic. We envision classrooms to be inclusive places that serve as complex and just ecosystems that allow for multiple identities, modes of expression, and ways of engagement to thrive together. We do this because we are committed to dismantling oppression. Teachers play an important role in this movement. Our teacher education program supports the development of core values related to:

* **Identity:** Preparing teachers who have agency and critically reflect on their lived experiences and identities as a way of informing their professional knowledge and humanizing pedagogies.
* **Inquiry:** Preparing teachers who value and inquire into the complex identities, as well as intellectual and transformational capacities, of children and youth.
* **Activism:** Preparing teachers who create curriculum that responds to children’s and youth’s inquiries and identities, as well as the sociopolitical and socioeconomic conditions of the world outside of schools—in neighborhoods, communities, and society at large.
* **Community:** Preparing teachers who recognize and honor the unique sociocultural experiences and communities of children and youth with whom they work.

We commit to teaching and teacher preparation that takes a transformative stance toward school change. We believe—acting in solidarity with teachers, children, youth, school leaders, and communities—we can radically reimagine and reconstruct schools and, thus, our society.

Course Description

This course will be taken during the Block A Specialization semester. In this course, the students will engage with the content of children’s and adolescent literature (in both narrative and expository modes) and the importance and application of children’s literature in teaching. The primary focus will be on the critical examination of contemporary children’s literature and the various representations of the diversity that constitutes our society.

Course Prerequisites

There are no prerequisites for this course.

Course Goals

## Gain an overview of children’s literature and its genres (Chapter 110 TEKS, ELA, 4.J.;STR, Competency 11, C);

## Understand the difference between children’s and adolescent/young adult literature (STR, Competency 11, S);

## Engage personally as a critical reader of literature through analysis and response (ELA, 4.F);

## Demonstrate selection of high-quality current, multicultural literature in a wide variety of genres to share with a diverse student population (ELA, 4.I.);

## Develop a critical awareness for selecting and analyzing books and materials for readers that encourages personal response and reflects racial, ethnic, class, and gender diversity in the classroom (SRT, Competency 10,K);

## Engage in evaluation of children’s literature for anti-racist/anti-bias content, text complexity, and other criteria (TSR, Competency 11, G.);

## Develop an awareness of the cultural lenses through which all people, including children, view the world and process their experiences--interpretive stances (TSR, Competency 11, G.);

## 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 (STR, Competency 11, G);

## Identify multiple perspectives in children’s and adolescent literature while observing the ways in which texts interact, enlighten, and interrogate one another (ELA, 4.D.);

## Evidence instructional approaches to eliciting meaningful, thoughtful, and creative multimodal responses to children’s literature (ELA, 4.D; ELA, 9.G.);

## Demonstrate knowledge of and strategies for teaching about the integral role of illustration/art in conveying meaning in picture books (ELA, 9.A; ELA, 9.D; ELA, 9.E.);

## Become knowledgeable about using a wide variety of print, Internet, and technological resources to find out information about children's books, authors, illustrators, and curriculum applications (ELA, 6.D).

**Communication Practices**

Connect with me through email, through the message feature on Canvas, or by scheduling office hours. During peak times, my inbox stays full, so if you contact me and do not receive a response in one or two business days, please send me a follow up email. A gentle nudge is always appreciated 😊.

## Instructor feedback and response time

* **Grading and feedback:** For minor weekly assignments, you can (generally) expect feedback within **7 days**. For major assignments, you can (generally) expect feedback within **10-14 days (about 2 weeks).**
* **Email:** I will reply to emails within **24 hours on days when class is in session at the university**.

**How this course works:**

**Mode of delivery:** This course meets in-person on Tuesdays from 1:00PM-3:50PM. We will meet in Matthews Hall 114.

**UNT Canvas:** This course has digital components. To fully participate in this class, students will need internet access to reference content on the Canvas Learning Management System. If circumstances change, you will be informed of other technical needs to access course content.  Information on how to be successful in a digital learning environment can be found at [Learn Anywhere](https://online.unt.edu/learn) (<https://online.unt.edu/learn>).

You will be expected to log into the course on Canvas every week. During most weeks you will (probably) log in many times. This is where you will submit most of your assignments and receive feedback, as well as find supplementary course readings.

## Required/Recommended Materials

## Required Textbook

* Short, K. G., & Cueto, D. W. (Eds.). (2022). *Essentials of Children’s Literature* (10th ed.). Pearson. **(Either Edition 9 or 10 will work)**

## Articles and other supplemental materials

* Professional articles provided by instructor relating to contemporary use and issues around children’s and adolescent literature on Canvas Learning Management System

## Required Children’s Books and Young Adult Novels

Novel/s to be identified by the instructor as class shared readings (literature circles). These may be purchased or found in libraries.

**Requirement: All students must have a public library card that enables them to find necessary resources that align with each week’s assignment. Instructors will require evidence of this at the beginning of the semester. Since you are a UNT student, you should have permission to use local libraries without a fee.**

**Attendance**

I have great respect for students who are balancing the demands of their coursework with the responsibilities of caring for family members. If you run into challenges that require you to miss a class, please contact me. There may be some flexibility we can offer to support your academic success. Although, because this course involves collaboration, participation is essential to learning. Our project-based activities require you to be actively engaged in discussions and group work. I understand tardiness and absences may occur. If you are late to class, please drop me an email to let me know the circumstances. If you must miss class, please let me know prior to your absence.

**Grading Scale**

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| --- | --- |
| A | 100-90% |
| B | 89-80% |
| C | 79-70% |
| D | 69-60% |
| F | under 50% |

**Participation**

We should all expect active participation in all components of this course for all participants--students, and professor alike. It is expected that you will come to class having read the materials and ready to engage in a lively class discussion. This will be essential to the quality of your responses to the readings and discussion around the issues.

Full credit for class participation includes:

1) being prepared for class

2) completing assignments on time

3) demonstrating engagement with course readings,

4) being engaged in and participating in class activities and discussions

5) synthesizing and critiquing the impact of teaching for social justice in course discussions

Assignments (Turning in and Late Work)

* **Turning in Assignments**: All written work that is turned into Canvas for evaluation or grading should be typewritten and should employ 1-inch margins on all sides, 12-point font, either Arial or Times New Roman, and double spacing.
  + When submitting electronic copies, be sure to format your file so that it can be opened in Word or Adobe (.doc, .docx, or .pdf) and that **the file is titled with your name and assignment name**.
  + Use APA or MLA format for all papers and carefully proofread and edit. Look at the “References” tab in MS which automates the citing process.
* **Late Assignments**: All assignments must be turned in on the due date and by the time indicated.
  + Assignments turned in late will have a 10% deduction of points after the date and time indicated and for each calendar day after that. **After 5 days, late assignments will not be accepted.**
  + Flexibility is possible but only when advance arrangements are made, and only when there is a good reason (e.g., documented illness or emergency).

## Assignment Breakdown

Your Reading History

Create an 8 x 11 poster with the important information you remember, have learned about yourself, and want to share. Reading identity on one side, and Cultural identity on the other. Be creative in making your poster. You can use pictures, words, and any other artifact to represent yourself. You can create an electronic version but bring a hard copy to share in class.

Author/Illustrator Study

Explore an author or illustrator who reflects classroom diversity and share: Their body of work; their personal philosophy and approaches to writing/illustrating; how these books can support instruction through various strategies, etc.

Book Awards Presentation

Explore and share/present the various children’s and young adult book awards to help preservice and in-service teachers, for example Pura Belpre, Americas Award for Children and Young Adult Literature, Coretta Scott King Award, Orbis Pictus, Tomás Rivera Mexican American Book Award, IBBY’s Outstanding International Books, We Need Diverse Books, and others.

Reading, Critically Responding & Evaluating Books

Engage in reading and critically responding to and evaluating children’s and YA literature selected from recommended categories that reflect diversity, genre, themes, etc. This includes two small group literature discussions around selected picturebooks/novels.

TEA Time Reflections

You will attend at least two TEA Times that occur on Mondays at noon and write a 300-word reflection for each session attended (2)

Inquiry Multimodal Text Project and Presentation

This inquiry project and presentation will be an understanding of what you have learned in relation to children’s books, young adult novels, and criticality. As a project, it should explore a topic of your choice from within the different genres, or awards etc. You will detail and demonstrate an understanding of major concepts covered in class. It must include (in some way) an analysis and interpretation of a small collection of children’s literature. Moreover, it must exhibit your understanding and evaluation of personal and social values of your own and other cultures in relation to critical, and equitable literacy education. Therefore, topics focusing on aspects of social justice, equity, cultural sustainability, and diversity are important to this assignment*.* The text set will include annotations, strategies, and personal response considering the goals and anticipated outcomes from using the text set in a classroom.

This will be explained more in class. In all, I want to see what you have learned and what you are capable of in terms of your knowledge of critical literacy education book awards, and children’s and young adult literature.

**DUE: TUESDAY, MAY 16TH BY 11:59PM**

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| --- | --- |
| **Course Assignment Breakdown** | |
| Professionalism and Engagement | 200 pts |
| In-Class Activities and Reading, Critically Responding & Evaluating Books | 300 pts |
| Your Reading History | 100 pts |
| Author/Illustrator Study | 100 pts |
| Book Award Presentation | 200 pts |
| TEA Time Reflection (75 pts per reflection) | 150 pts |
| Multimodal Text Project & Presentation | 400 pts |
| **TOTAL** | 1,050 pts |

**NOTE**: This Syllabus is provided for informational purposes regarding the anticipated course content and schedule of this course. It is based upon the most up-to-date information available on the date of its issuance; it is as accurate and complete as possible. I reserve the right to make any changes I deem necessary and/or appropriate.

**Accommodations**

The University of North Texas makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking reasonable accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Access (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide you with a reasonable accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding your specific needs in a course. You may request reasonable accommodation at any time; however, ODA notices of reasonable accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of reasonable accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. Students are strongly encouraged to deliver letters of reasonable accommodation during faculty office hours or by appointment. Faculty members can ask students to discuss such letters during their office hours to protect the student's privacy. For additional information, refer to the [Office of Disability Access](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/office-disability-access) website (<http://www.unt.edu/oda>). You may also contact ODA by phone at (940) 565-4323.

Academic Success Resources

UNT strives to offer you a high-quality education and a supportive environment, so you learn and grow. As a faculty member, I am committed to helping you be successful as a student. To learn more about campus resources and information on how you can be successful at UNT, go to [unt.edu/success](https://www.unt.edu/success/) and explore [unt.edu/wellness](https://wellness.unt.edu/). To get all your enrollment and student financial-related questions answered, go to [scrappysays.unt.edu](http://scrappysays.unt.edu/).

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is essential to maintaining an environment that fosters excellence in teaching, research, and other educational and scholarly activities. Therefore, any acts of plagiarism, use of AI technology to complete course work, or the use of any other materials/ methods/means not one’s own, is prohibited. These types of offenses will be judged by the instructor, who will determine the best course of action to rectify these issues. Course of actions include:

1. **Admonition:** The student may be issued a verbal or written warning.
2. **Educational Assignment:** The student may be required to perform additional coursework not required of other students in the specific course.
3. **Partial or No Credit for an Assignment or Assessment:** The instructor may award partial or no credit for the assignment or assessment on which the student engaged in academic misconduct.
4. **Course Failure:** The instructor may assign a failing grade for the course.
5. **Lower Grade:** The instructor may lower the student’s final grade by one letter grade.
6. **Probation:** A student may be placed on probation for up to two (2) long semesters. Students on probation may remain at the University but may be required to satisfy specific conditions or requirements, such as, report regularly to the AIO, or be barred from holding any office or participating in any activity in which the student represents the University or University-recognized student organizations, either within or outside the University community. The sanction of probation prohibits graduation until the probation period ends, and the student has complied with all AIO requirements.
7. **Suspension:** A student may be suspended from the University for up to one year, during which time the student is ineligible for the privileges associated with registration, including living in university housing. Suspension anticipates that the student may return once applicable conditions are satisfied.
8. **Expulsion from the University:** The student is removed from good standing with the Office of Academic Integrity and must leave the University permanently without an expectation of return to the University.
9. **Revocation of Degree:** The student’s official and unofficial transcript may reflect that revocation of degree assessed as an academic misconduct penalty.

## Supporting Your Success and Creating an Inclusive Learning Environment

I value the many perspectives students bring to our campus. Please work with me to create a classroom culture of open communication, mutual respect, and belonging. All discussions should be respectful and civil. Although disagreements and debates are encouraged, personal attacks are unacceptable. Together, we can ensure a safe and welcoming classroom for all. If you ever feel like this is not the case, please stop by my office and let me know. We are all learning together. I also encourage you to review UNT’s student code of conduct so that we can all start with the same baseline civility understanding ([Code of Student Conduct](https://policy.unt.edu/policy/07-012)) (<https://policy.unt.edu/policy/07-012).>