INFO 5421 Section 401 Literature for Youth in Public Libraries Syllabus

Fall 2025

Welcome to Literature for Youth!

In this course, you can expect an introduction to a variety of literary genres for children and young adults. Look forward to creating thoughtful book reviews, using handy readers' advisory tools, and discussing current trends in youth librarianship. You should not be surprised to learn that there will be a lot of reading, but I hope that you will find joy in the variety of formats and stories required.

As a reminder, we are all members of the UNT community and have made a commitment to respecting the values and identities of the students and employees with whom we interact. UNT does not tolerate identity-based discrimination, harassment, and retaliation. After all, **libraries are for everyone!**

Instructor Information

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Pronouns: she/her/hers
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UNT strives to offer a high-quality education in a supportive environment where you can learn, grow, and thrive. As a faculty member, I am committed to supporting you, and I want to remind you that UNT offers a range of mental health and wellness services to help maintain balance and well-being. Utilizing these resources is a proactive way to support your academic and personal success. To explore campus resources designed to support you, check out mental health services (https://clear.unt.edu/student-support-services-policies), visit unt.edu/success, and explore unt.edu/wellness. To get all your enrollment and student financial-related questions answered, go to scrappysays.unt.edu.

Communication Expectations:

Use the *General Questions* discussion board to ask and answer questions that may be of interest to other classmates. You can send personal concerns or questions directly to me at Kristy.Smrcka@unt.edu or through the Inbox button in the left-side course menu. Because I work full time in addition to teaching for UNT, expect to receive a response within 1-2 working days, excluding weekends and holidays. Please don't hesitate to ask questions. Communication can be tricky online, and I am here to help.

Teaching Philosophy

Through educating with a student-centered mindset and encouraging the development of practical skills, theoretical knowledge, and a personal desire to continuously improve, this course prepares students for success as they move toward becoming youth-oriented professionals.

Course Description

Survey of children's and young adult literature, focusing on awards, genre, multi-cultural and multi-ethnic literature. Involves a wide range of reading, evaluation, and development of program skills for public library settings.

Course Structure

This course is taught exclusively online and is structured around 7 scheduled and asynchronous modules. Each module can be accessed through the *Modules* tab on the left-hand navigation menu in Canvas and will open according to the course calendar. Assignments will be identified in the appropriate module with due dates and instructions provided. Expect to devote at least nine hours per week to this course.

Course Prerequisites or Other Restrictions

This course does not have any prerequisites.

Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, students will:

- Be able to analyze materials to determine age appropriateness and literary merit through an electronic blog site in which they compose written critiques of 15 children's and young adult books across a variety of genres. Blog posts should demonstrate proficiency in analyzing, assessing, and evaluating books with regard to literary excellence, reader response, and visual literacy.
- Know the historical overview of literature for children and young adults.
- Understand the types of literary awards given for youth literature.
- Understand how the literature needs of youth change, based on developmental stages and needs.
- Incorporate materials from a wide variety of cultures into their readers' advisory activities.
- Be able to create literature-based children's and young adult programming.
- Understand literary censorship and how it can impact an organization.
- Use reader's advisory tools to select children's and young adult materials.

Rules of Engagement

Rules of engagement refer to the way students are expected to interact with each other and with their instructors. Here are some general guidelines:

- While the freedom to express yourself is a fundamental human right, any communication that utilizes cruel and derogatory language on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, or any other characteristic protected under applicable federal or state law will not be tolerated.
- Treat your instructor and classmates with respect in any communication online or face-to-face, even when their opinion differs from your own.

- Ask for and use the correct name and pronouns for your instructor and classmates.
- Speak from personal experiences. Use "I" statements to share thoughts and feelings. Try not to speak on behalf of groups or other individual's experiences.
- Avoid using all caps while communicating digitally. This may be interpreted as "YELLING!"
- Be cautious when using humor or sarcasm in emails or discussion posts as tone can be difficult to interpret digitally.
- Avoid using "text-talk" unless explicitly permitted by your instructor.
- Proofread and fact-check your sources.
- Keep in mind that online posts can be permanent, so think first before you type.

See these Engagement Guidelines for more information.

Materials

There are two required textbooks:

- Brock, R. (2019). *Young adult literature in action: A librarian's guide* (3rd ed.). Libraries Unlimited. ISBN: 978-1440866937
- Young, T., Bryan, G., Jacobs, J. S., & Tunnell, M. O. (2019). *Children's literature, briefly* (7th ed.). Pearson Education, Inc. ISBN: 978-0135185872

You will also be required to read at least 15 books for children and young adults as described in the course modules. There are options to pick from so pay attention to the individual assignment book lists.

Course Technology & Skills

Minimum Technology Requirements
In this course you will need access to a computer with the Canvas platform, reliable internet, virtual library materials, and technology applications suitable for maintaining a book blog and creating other visual aids.

- For more info: Canvas Technical Requirements

- Information on how to be successful in a digital learning environment can be found at Learn Anywhere (https://online.unt.edu/learn).

Computer Skills & Digital Literacy
Course-specific technical skills learners must have to succeed in the course:

- Using Canvas
- Using email with attachments
- Downloading and installing software
- Using a blog platform such as Wix.com, Blogger.com, Tumblr, WordPress.com, or Weebly.com
- Using presentation and graphics design programs

Technical Assistance

Part of working in the online environment involves dealing with the inconveniences and frustration that can arise when technology breaks down or does not perform as expected. Here at UNT, we have a Student Help Desk that you can contact for help with Canvas or other technology issues.

UNT Help Desk: UNT Student Help Desk site
Email: helpdesk@unt.edu
Phone: 940-565-2324
In Person: Sage Hall, Room 330
Walk-In Availability: Monday-Friday 8am-5pm
Telephone Availability:
- Monday-Thursday: 8am-9pm
- Friday: 8am-5pm
- Saturday-Sunday: 11am-3pm

For additional support, visit Canvas Technical Help

Course Requirements

Assignments and Dates		
Assignments	Due Date	Points Possible
Module 1 August 18-August 24		
Week 1: Introductions/ Children's Literature, Briefly – Part One Reading: Read, Read, Read; What is a Good Book? Assignment: Discussion board post and two responses	Discussion + Responses 08/24/25 Sunday	25
Module 2 August 25-September 7		
Week 2: Children's Literature, Briefly - Part One (Cont.) Reading: How to Recognize a Well-Written Book; How to Recognize a Well-Illustrated Book Assignment: Discussion board post and two responses	Discussion 08/29/25 Friday Responses 08/31/25 Sunday	25
Week 3: Children's Literature, Briefly - Part One (Cont.) Reading: Children's Books: History and Trends; Multicultural and International Books Assignment: Quiz #1	Quiz 09/07/25 Sunday	50

Module 3 September 8-October 12		
Week 4: Children's Literature, Briefly – Part Two Reading: Organizing Children's Literature by Genre; Picture Books; Poetry; Folk Literature: Stories from the Oral Tradition Assignment: **Blog Check #1** (5 Book Reviews)	Blog Check 09/14/25 Sunday	100
Week 5: Children's Literature, Briefly – Part Two (Cont.) Reading: Same as previous week Assignment: Discussion board post and two responses	Discussion 09/19/25 Friday Responses 09/21/25 Sunday	25
Week 6: Children's Literature, Briefly – Part Two (Cont.) Reading: Modern Fantasy; Contemporary Realistic Fiction; Historical Fiction Assignment: Quiz #2	Quiz 09/28/25 Sunday	50
Week 7: Children's Literature, Briefly – Part Two (Cont.) Reading: Same as previous week Assignment: Discussion board post and two responses	Discussion 10/03/25 Friday Responses 10/05/25 Sunday	25
Week 8: Children's Literature, Briefly – Part Two (Cont.) Reading: Biography; Informational Books Assignment: *Midterm Due!*	Midterm 10/12/25 Sunday	300
Module 4 October 13-October 19		
Week 9: Children's Literature, Briefly – Part Three Reading: Controversial Books; Teaching with Children's Books Assignment: Discussion board post and two responses	Discussion 10/17/25 Friday Responses 10/19/25 Sunday	25
Module 5 October 20-October 26		
Week 10: Young Adult Literature in Action – Part One Reading: An Introduction to Young Adults and Their Literature; Book Access Through Quick Reads and Audiobooks Assignment: Quiz #3	Quiz 10/26/25 Sunday	50
Module 6 October 27-November 9		

Week 11: Young Adult Literature in Action – Part Two Reading: Contemporary Realistic Fiction Assignment: **Blog Check #2** (5 More Reviews)	Blog Check 11/02/25 Sunday	100
Week 12: Young Adult Literature in Action – Part Two (Cont.) Reading: Historical Fiction; Fantastic Fiction Assignment: Discussion board post and two responses	Discussion 11/07/25 Friday Responses 11/09/25 Sunday	25
<center>**Module 7** November 10-December 12</center>		
Week 13: Young Adult Literature in Action – Part Three Reading: Informational Books; The Freedom to Read Assignment: Quiz #4	Quiz 11/16/25 Sunday	50
Week 14: Course Wrap-Up Reading: None Assignment: **Blog Check # 3** (Last 5 reviews / there should be 15 total)	Blog Check 11/23/25 Sunday	100
Week 15: Final Class Thoughts & Well Wishes Reading: None Assignment: Discussion board post and two responses	Discussion 12/05/25 Friday Responses 12/07/25 Sunday	25

Grading

Grading Formula: Total Points = 1000

Grading scale

You will be graded according to the following grading scale: *

- 900-1000 points = A (90% to 100%)
- 800-899 points = B (80% to 89%)
- 700-799 points = C (70% to 79%)
- 600-699 points = D (60% to 69%)

*Students must complete all course requirements. Students will not be exempted from assignments. Completion of all assignments is necessary for a passing grade.

When working with technology, it is never a good idea to wait until the last minute! You are encouraged to start your assignments early and submit them well before the deadline.

Assignments

Students are responsible for completing assignments on time and the assignments should reflect graduate level attention to detail and professionalism.

Most discussion boards will be graded after the response due date has passed and within one week after that due date. For the midterm project and blog checks, please allow 1-2 weeks to see comments and grades in Canvas.

Quiz results will be seen immediately after taking a quiz.

Maximum Assignment Points		
Assignment	**Point Breakdown**	**Max Total**
4 Quizzes	50 points each	200
1 Midterm Project	300 points	300
3 Book Review Blog Checks (15 reviews total)	100 points Blog Checks 1 & 2 125 points Blog Check 3	325
7 Discussion Posts (with responses)	15 points for original post + 5 points for each response (x2) 25 points each	175

APA Format

Written assignments require including citations to relevant readings from course materials or other sources in support of the paper's topics and themes. Use APA formatting for in-text citations and reference lists as required. You do not need to include a cover page or footnotes / endnotes.

APA 7th citation resources: For citation style, please refer to The Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, 7th ed., published October 2019 or 2020 [Available from APA Online].

The following online sources are also helpful for providing examples of APA style with clear directions for its use.

- Free APA info from Purdue Online Writing Lab
    - In-Text Citations: https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/apa_style/apa_formatting_and_style_guide/in_text_citations_the_basics.html
    - Reference List: https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/apa_style/apa_formatting_and_style_guide/reference_list_basic_rules.html
- How to APA cite children's books with illustrators: https://apastyle.apa.org/style-grammar-guidelines/references/examples/childrens-book-references
- DOI finder: http://www.crossref.org/guestquery/ - use this to identify the DOI (Digital Object Identifier)

Each written assignment is expected to follow the APA 7th format, double-spaced and all references should be properly cited. All papers should be submitted in MS Word (.doc) format or as a PDF document.

For blog posts, including the blog URL in the written comments for an assignment submission is fine. *Please also include a list of the books reviewed for that particular Blog Check.*

All writing is expected to be of graduate level quality in both content and written expression. Poor writing, grammar, spelling, or other mechanical deficiencies will detract from the score.

Course Policies

Instructor Responsibilities and Feedback
As your instructor, I will
- Provide clear and thorough instructions for all course assignments
- Respond to emails, Canvas inbox messages, and discussion board questions within 1-2 business days
- Grade all assignments within 1-2 weeks of their due dates
- Incorporate feedback provided to continually update and improve course content

Attendance Policy

Students are expected to log into the course through Canvas multiple times a week to view class announcements, check grades, and complete assignments. For more information about the UNT attendance policy, please visit: University of North Texas' Attendance Policy.

Class Participation

Participation is vital to online classes. The more you engage, the more you engage, the more you will get out of the class. The following is expected of each student enrolled in this course:

- Completion of course readings
- Full participation in online discussions
- Original creation and timely submission of graduate level work
- Proper netiquette: The Center for Learning, Experimentation, Application, and Research provides Online Communication Tips to facilitate communication.

Late Work

If there are extenuating circumstances, please contact me as soon as possible so we can reevaluate your assignment deadlines. Otherwise, late work will lose 10% per day late until a full week has passed, after which it will not be accepted.

Examination Policy

All quizzes are open book. Students will have access to the quizzes from the date the module opens until 11:59pm CST on the day the quiz is due. The quizzes are not timed and students will be allowed multiple tries. Although quizzes are open book, students are still expected to complete them independently.

Assignment Policy

Use the Syllabus to find out when each module will become available, along with the due dates for related assignments and discussion posts. You are encouraged to work on tasks ahead of the scheduled times and submit them before the deadlines. All tasks are designed to highlight the module content.

All postings and submissions are due at 11:59 p.m. Central Time on the due date.

The University is committed to providing a reliable online course system to all users. However, in the event of any unexpected server outages or any unusual technical difficulty which prevents students from completing a time sensitive assessment activity, the instructor will extend the time windows and provide an appropriate accommodation based on the situation. Students should immediately report any problems to the instructor and contact the UNT Student Help Desk: helpdesk@unt.edu or 940.565.2324 and obtain a ticket number.

Syllabus Change Policy

There are instances when the instructor may need to change the assignments, grading criteria, and/or assignment due dates listed in this syllabus. If this becomes necessary, the instructor will immediately notify students of the changes via the *Announcements* section in Canvas as well as through Canvas email.

GenAI Use Policy

In this course, I want you to engage deeply with the materials and develop your own critical thinking and writing skills. For this reason, the use of Generative AI (GenAI) tools like Claude, ChatGPT, and Gemini is not permitted. While these tools can be helpful in some contexts, they do not align with our goal of fostering the development of your independent thinking. Using GenAI to complete any part of an assignment, exam, or coursework will be considered a violation of academic integrity, as it prevents the development of your own skills, and will be addressed according to the Student Academic Integrity policy (https://policy.unt.edu/policy/06-003).

Course Evaluation

Student Perceptions of Teaching (SPOT) is the student evaluation system for UNT and allows students the ability to confidentially provide constructive feedback to their instructor and department to improve the quality of student experiences in the course. The survey will be made available during the last three weeks of the semester.

UNT Policies

Important Notice for F-1 Students taking Distance Education Courses
Federal Regulation

Federal regulations state that students may apply only 3 fully-online semester credit hours (SCH) to the hours required for full-time status for F-1 Visa (PDF) holders. Full-time status for F-1 Visa students is 12 hours for undergraduates and 9 hours for graduate students.

ADA Policy
The University of North Texas makes reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. To request accommodations, you must first register with the Office of Disability Access (ODA) by completing an application for services and providing documentation to verify your eligibility each semester. Once your eligibility is confirmed, you may request your letter of accommodation. ODA will then email your faculty a letter of reasonable accommodation, initiating a private discussion about your specific needs in the course.
You can request accommodations at any time, but it's important to provide ODA notice to your faculty as early as possible in the semester to avoid delays in implementation. Keep in mind that you must obtain a new letter of accommodation for each semester and meet with each faculty member before accommodations can be implemented in each class. You are strongly encouraged to meet with faculty regarding your accommodations during office hours or by appointment. Faculty have the authority to ask you to discuss your letter during their designated office hours to protect your privacy. For more information and to access resources that can support your needs, refer to the Office of Disability Access website (https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/office-disability-access).

Academic Integrity Policy
Academic Integrity Standards and Consequences. According to UNT Policy 06.003, Student Academic Integrity, academic dishonesty occurs when students engage in behaviors including, but not limited to cheating, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, forgery, plagiarism, and sabotage. A finding of academic dishonesty may result in a range of academic penalties or sanctions ranging from admonition to expulsion from the University. View the full policy here.

Prohibition of Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation (Policy 16.004)
The University of North Texas (UNT) prohibits discrimination and harassment because of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, or any other characteristic protected under applicable federal or state law in its application and admission processes; educational programs and activities; employment policies, procedures, and processes; and university facilities. The University takes active measures to prevent such conduct and investigates and takes remedial action when appropriate.

Emergency Notification & Procedures
UNT uses a system called Eagle Alert to quickly notify students with critical information in the event of an emergency (i.e., severe weather, campus closing, and health and public safety emergencies like chemical spills, fires, or violence). In the event of a university closure, please refer to Canvas for contingency plans for covering course materials.

Retention of Student Records

Student records pertaining to this course are maintained in a secure location by the instructor of record. All records such as exams, answer sheets (with keys), and written papers submitted during the duration of the course are kept for at least one calendar year after course completion. Course work completed via the Canvas online system, including grading information and comments, is also stored in a safe electronic environment for one year. Students have the right to view their individual record; however, information about student's records will not be divulged to other individuals without proper written consent. Students are encouraged to review the Public Information Policy and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) laws and the University's policy. See UNT Policy 10.10, Records Management and Retention for additional information.

Acceptable Student Behavior

Student behavior that interferes with an instructor's ability to conduct a class or other students' opportunity to learn is unacceptable and disruptive and will not be tolerated in any instructional forum at UNT. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior will be directed to leave the classroom and the instructor may refer the student to the Dean of Students to consider whether the student's conduct violated the Code of Student Conduct. The University's expectations for student conduct apply to all instructional forums, including University and electronic classrooms, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. Visit UNT's Code of Student Conduct to learn more.

Access to Information - Eagle Connect

Students' access point for business and academic services at UNT is located at: my.unt.edu. All official communication from the University will be delivered to a student's Eagle Connect account. For more information, please visit the website that explains Eagle Connect and how to forward e-mail Eagle Connect.

Student Evaluation Administration Dates

Student feedback is important and an essential part of participation in this course. The student evaluation of instruction is a requirement for all organized classes at UNT. Students will receive an email from "UNT SPOT Course Evaluations via IASystem Notification" with the survey link. Students should look for the email in their UNT email inbox. Simply click on the link and complete the survey. Once students complete the survey, they will receive a confirmation email that the survey has been submitted. For additional information, please visit the SPOT website or email spot@unt.edu.

Survivor Advocacy

UNT is committed to providing a safe learning environment free of all forms of sexual misconduct. Federal laws and UNT policies prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex as well as sexual misconduct. If you or someone you know is experiencing sexual harassment, relationship violence, stalking and/or sexual assault, there are campus resources available to provide support and assistance. The Survivor Advocates can be reached at SurvivorAdvocate@unt.edu or by calling the Dean of Students Office at 940-565-2648.

Student Verification

UNT takes measures to protect the integrity of educational credentials awarded to students enrolled in distance education courses by verifying student identity, protecting student privacy, and notifying

students of any special meeting times/locations or additional charges associated with student identity verification in distance education courses.

See UNT Policy 07-002 Student Identity Verification, Privacy, and Notification and Distance Education Courses.

Use of Student Work
A student owns the copyright for all work (e.g. software, photographs, reports, presentations, and email postings) he or she creates within a class and the University is not entitled to use any student work without the student's permission unless all of the following criteria are met:

- The work is used only once.
- The work is not used in its entirety.
- Use of the work does not affect any potential profits from the work.
- The student is not identified.
- The work is identified as student work.

If the use of the work does not meet all of the above criteria, then the University office or department using the work must obtain the student's written permission.

Download the UNT System Permission, Waiver and Release Form

Transmission and Recording of Student Images in Electronically-Delivered Courses

1. No permission is needed from a student for his or her image or voice to be transmitted live via videoconference or streaming media, but all students should be informed when courses are to be conducted using either method of delivery.

2. In the event an instructor records student presentations, he or she must obtain permission from the student using a signed release in order to use the recording for future classes in accordance with the Use of Student-Created Work guidelines above.

3. Instructors who video-record their class lectures with the intention of re-using some or all of recordings for future class offerings must notify students on the course syllabus if students' images may appear on video. Instructors are also advised to provide accommodation for students who do not wish to appear in class recordings.

   Example: This course employs lecture capture technology to record class sessions. Students may occasionally appear on video. The lecture recordings will be available to you for study purposes and may also be reused in future course offerings.

No notification is needed if only audio and slide capture is used or if the video only records the instructor's image. However, the instructor is encouraged to let students know the recordings will be available to them for study purposes.

Academic Support & Student Services

Student Support Services

Mental Health

UNT provides mental health resources to students to help ensure there are numerous outlets to turn to that wholeheartedly care for and are there for students in need, regardless of the nature of an issue or its severity. Listed below are several resources on campus that can support your academic success and mental well-being:

- Student Health and Wellness Center
- Counseling and Testing Services
- UNT Care Team
- UNT Psychiatric Services

Chosen Names

A chosen name is a name that a person goes by that may or may not match their legal name. If you have a chosen name that is different from your legal name and would like that to be used in class, please let the instructor know. Below is a list of resources for updating your chosen name at UNT.

- UNT Records
- UNT ID Card
- Legal Name

*UNT euIDs cannot be changed at this time. The collaborating offices are working on a process to make this option accessible to UNT community members.

Additional Student Support Services
- Registrar
- Financial Aid
- Student Legal Services
- Career Center
- UNT Food Pantry

Academic Support Services
- Academic Resource Center
- Academic Success Center
- UNT Libraries
- Writing Lab