George Mason University  
Advanced Studies In Teaching and Learning  
College of Education and Human Development  
EDCI 597 Special Topics in Literacy: Integrating Children’s Literature into Early Childhood Classrooms  
3 Credits

**Location:** Thursdays, 4:30-7:10  
Robinson A 251

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**Prerequisite:**  
Admission to the Early Childhood specialization or permission of the program coordinator

**Course Description:**  
This course provides a research-based foundation for integrating children’s literature into the early childhood curriculum.

**Course Outcomes:**  
Students will:

1. Review the history of children’s literature.  
2. Appreciate and utilize both the aesthetic and efferent aspects of literature.  
3. Apply their understanding of the developmental stages of children’s growth and note how appropriate book selection/experiences relate to that growth.  
4. Develop criteria for selecting bias-free, diversity-respectful books for presentation to young children.
5. Gain a more precise understanding of themselves as readers as they read and respond to genres of children’s literature most appropriate for children in the early childhood years.
6. Demonstrate familiarity with selected and noteworthy authors/illustrators of children’s books.
7. Suggest learning activities and strategies that encourage children’s responses to literature.
8. Become familiar with internet resources devoted to children’s literature and related topics.
9. Investigate the uses of technology to enhance assignments and course work.
10. Model reading and writing enthusiastically as valued life-long activities.

Readings:

**Required Text:**


**Recommended Text:**


**Required Articles:** (These will be provided to you)


Optional, Related Reading:


Booklinks: Connecting books, libraries, and classrooms. [Monthly publication by American Library Association based on topics and themes].


**Electronic Requirements:**

Students must have access to email and the internet, either at home, work or GMU campus. GMU provides students with free email accounts which must be accessed for information sent from the university or the Graduate School of Education. Go to [Http://mason.gmu.edu/](http://mason.gmu.edu/) for information on accessing email.

**George Mason University Honor Code:**

To promote a stronger sense of mutual responsibility, respect, trust, and fairness among all members of George Mason University and with the desire for greater academic and personal achievement, we, the members of George Mason University, have set forth the following code of honor. Any individual who is caught in the act of cheating, attempting to cheat, plagiarizing, or stealing will be brought forth before a council of their peers. In the event that the individual is found guilty, he or she will be punished accordingly. For further information, please refer to the University Catalog or Website at [www.gmu.edu](http://www.gmu.edu). Code in the University catalog can be found online at [http://www.gmu.edu/facstaff/handbook/aD.html](http://www.gmu.edu/facstaff/handbook/aD.html).

**George Mason University Policy on Disabilities:**

This syllabus is subject to change based on the needs of the class. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities in the series, programs, or activities of all State and local Governments. Under ADA a disability is defined as a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a major life activity such as: learning, working, walking, speaking, hearing, breathing, and/or taking care of oneself. If a student has a disability and needs course adaptations or accommodations because of that disability, it must be established with the faculty, in writing, at the beginning of the semester so arrangements can be made. Please call the Disability Resource Center for required documentation (703-993-2474). The Disability Resource Center website is at [http://www.gmu.edu/student/drc/](http://www.gmu.edu/student/drc/).

**Nature of Course Delivery**

The class will be structured around discussion and small group activities; it is critical for you to keep up with the readings and to participate in class. Instructor and student generated questions related to course readings and assignments/projects will often be the focus of group discussions. Be prepared to discuss the content of the text and its relation to your teaching experiences, course assignments, and projects and to ask questions for clarification, exploration, or to promote discussion. The instructor will use a lecture methodology periodically for brief periods of time. Students will also be engaged in
activities designed to encourage application of materials from the readings and discussions to the early childhood classroom. An electronic discussion that students participate in outside of class is an additional course delivery mechanism.

**General Requirements**

1. Class attendance is both important and required. If, due to an emergency, you will not be in class, you must contact the instructor via phone or email. Students with more than two absences may drop a letter grade or lose course credit.
2. It is expected that assignments will be turned in on time (the beginning of the class in which they are due). However, it is recognized that students occasionally have serious problems that prevent work completion. If such a dilemma arises, please speak to the instructor in a timely fashion.
3. The completion of all readings assigned for the course is assumed. Because the class will be structured around discussion and small group activities, it is critical for you to keep up with the readings and to participate in class.
4. According to university policy, all beepers and cell phones should be turned off before class begins.

**Specific Course Requirements:**

1. **Participation in class discussions and activities.** The completion of all readings assigned for the course is assumed. Because the class will be structured around discussion and small group activities pertaining to incorporating children’s literature into early childhood classrooms, it is imperative that you keep up with the readings and participate in class. **Class participation is worth 10% of the final grade.**

2. **Providing examples of children’s literature.** Each week, students will be expected to bring examples of children’s literature that relate to the topic(s) of discussion. Students will share their selections in small and large group discussions. Students will be expected to provide an annotated bibliography for the books they share each week. **Children’s literature examples are worth 10% of the final grade.**

3. **Response Journal/Log.** Students are expected to maintain a journal/log, in which you are to respond to selected course readings (your choice). This includes both the required text and article readings AND various genres of children’s literature.

In the case of literary works, your response may include comments about the work’s characters, plot, illustrations, style, theme(s), perspective on life and living, the memories and feelings the work evokes, etc. In responding to the books, keep in mind that we are interested in your responses. What was it about the work that led you to react the way you did? Once you have personally responded to the literature, please spend some time trying to anticipate or predict the responses of children and/or discussing ways the book can be used to teach a particular subject or content area. Suggested template is provided at the end of the syllabus.
In responding to the chapters and articles, please record your reactions to a few of the ideas you find interesting and/or provocative. You may wish to discuss how the ideas in the chapters/articles correspond or conflict with previous reading, with your experiences with children, or in the classroom, etc. Simply record the idea and then detail your reaction to it. Responses to chapters and articles may also include questions that the chapters/articles raise for you. Suggested template is provided at the end of the syllabus.

You will be expected to bring your response journal to each class session and share passages of your choice during small and large group discussions. Weekly entries in the Response Journal/Log are worth 10% of the final grade.

3. Students will participate in electronic postings via our class Wiki. Participation in the wiki is worth 10% of the final grade.

4. Exploring Multiple Literacies. Students will develop a WebQuest or an “Author Website Scavenger Hunt” for an author of their choice. Examples will be provided in class. The Multiple Literacies Project is worth 10% of the final grade.

5. Group Project. Students will sign up to work in groups of 3. Each group will choose a noteworthy author/illustrator and develop curricular ties for his/her body of work. Specific criteria for this project will be co-constructed by the instructor and course participants based on student populations (ages, grades, required curriculum) with whom the course participants currently work. The Group Project is worth 20% of the final grade.

6. Integrated Project. Each student will work individually to create and present an integrated conceptual unit of study. Students will design a social studies or science unit of study that incorporates quality children’s literature that will help students acquire the curricular concepts in a meaningful, relevant way. The Integrated Project is worth 30% of the final grade.

Evaluation:

Class Participation Assessment 10%

Class participation will be evaluated using the following rating scale:
A (9-10) Excellent – Regularly asks questions or makes observations that indicate reflection and analysis appropriate to the topic. Participates actively in small group activities. Shares reflections on readings and class discussions.
B (7-8) Competent—Occasionally asks questions or makes observations that indicate reflection and analysis appropriate to the topic. Participates in small group activities. Shares some reflections on readings and class discussions.
C (5-6) *Minimal* – Rarely asks questions or makes comments that indicate familiarity with the topic. Does not participate in small groups. Does not share reflections on readings and class discussions.

**Due: Weekly**

**Children’s Literature Examples** 10%

Children’s literature examples will be evaluated using the following rating scale:

A (9-10) *Excellent*—Regularly provides examples of children’s literature related to class topics. Participates actively in group discussions of children’s literature.

B (7-8) *Competent*—Occasionally provides examples of children’s literature. Participates in group discussions of children’s literature.

C (5-6) *Minimal*—Rarely provides examples of children’s literature. Rarely participates in group discussions of children’s literature.

**Due: Weekly**

**Response Journal/Log** 10%

Criteria for the Response Journal/Log will include: 1) whether or not students made relevant entries in their log (prior to class meeting); and 2) the depth and quality of their reflections related to assigned readings, personal experiences, and class discussions.

**Due: Weekly**

**Wiki Participation** 10%

Criteria for the Wiki postings will include: 1) whether or not students post their annotated bibliographies in a timely manner (before the next class meeting); and 2) the connection of the annotations to class discussions, personal experiences and assigned readings. It is expected that students will post 3-5 annotated bibliographies for each genre of literature we discuss.

**Due: Each week during genre studies**

**Multiple Literacies** 10%

Criteria for the Multiple Literacies project will include: 1) whether or not the WebQuest or Scavenger Hunt integrates a noted author/genre with curricular content; and 2) whether or not the WebQuest or Scavenger Hunt can be easily negotiated.

**Due: 13th Session; April 29**

**Group Project** 20%

Along with 3 of your classmates, you will study an author, author/illustrator, or author team of your choice within the field of children’s literature. Using all resources available,
including the web, published interviews, etc., you are to research the chosen author(s),
collect and display his/her books, and highlight curricular ties for these books. Classroom
presentation should include biographical information (about the author(s)), bibliographic
information (about the books), learning strategies and activities derived from the books,
attractive and meaningful display of books/related objects, and a handout outlining
curricular ties. This will be a static display; you will not be required to give an oral
presentation of this project.
Due: 9th Session; March 25

Integrated Project 30%

Using all resources available, including the web, published interviews, etc. you are to
design an integrated conceptual unit of study for either a science or social studies topic.
You will provide a written synopsis of your integrated unit to the course instructor (length
will vary), which includes specific responses to literature and learning experiences in
which the students will engage. In addition, you will have 10 minutes to present your
work to the class using a presentation mode of your choice (powerpoint, overheads,
drama, graphic organizer, etc.). Your presentation should highlight the literature and
curricular connections so that your classmates and instructor see the “big picture,” the
cohesive whole, of the conceptual unit. [This project builds on the knowledge gained
from participation in the group project].
Due: 15th Session; May 13

Grading Scale:

A+ = 98-100;  A = 94-97;  A- = 90-93;  B+ = 85-89; B = 80-84; C = 70-79
F = Did not meet course requirements

TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date/Session</th>
<th>Class Topic</th>
<th>Assignments For Class</th>
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</table>
| 1 1/21/10    | • Getting to know each other  
               • Introduction and overview of the course  
               • Goal-setting  
               • Discuss Living Literature Curriculum Model | Bring your favorite children’s book and be prepared to explain why it’s your favorite |
| 2 1/28/10    | • Overview of Early Childhood (PreK-2) classrooms and Children’s Literature  
               *Quality EC Classrooms  
               *Historical Overview of children’s lit  
               *Aesthetic and efferent aspects of children’s literature | Read K & T, Ch. 1  
Quality Early Childhood Classrooms- FCPS (handout)  
Galda & Cullinan, Ch. 1 (handout) |
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Read Source</th>
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<tr>
<td>2/4/10</td>
<td>No Class</td>
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<tr>
<td>3/2/11/10</td>
<td>• Schema Theory</td>
<td>Read</td>
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<td></td>
<td>*Connections to Self</td>
<td>Anderson chapter (handout)</td>
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<td>*Connections to Students</td>
<td>K &amp; T, Ch. 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>2/21/10</td>
<td>• Motivating Students to Read</td>
<td>Kiefer chapter 3 (handout)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• The Changing World of Children’s Books</td>
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<td>4/2/18/10</td>
<td>• The purpose and value of Play</td>
<td>Read</td>
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<td></td>
<td>*Role of play in EC Classrooms</td>
<td>Stone article</td>
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<td></td>
<td>*Literature-play connections</td>
<td>Isenberg &amp; Quisenberry article</td>
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<td></td>
<td>*Play as a schema builder and schema Activator</td>
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<td>1/25/10</td>
<td>• Teaching Reading with Children’s Literature</td>
<td>Read</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>*Comprehension Strategies</td>
<td>K &amp; T, Ch. 10</td>
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<td>*Guided Reading/Shared Reading</td>
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<td>• Connecting Children’s Literature to Curricular Content</td>
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<td>6/3/4/10</td>
<td>• Books to Begin On</td>
<td>Read</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Picture Books</td>
<td>K &amp; T, Ch. 3</td>
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<td>Kiefer chapter 4 (handout)</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>GMU Spring Break: No Class</td>
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<td>3/3/11/10</td>
<td>Independent Work on Group Projects</td>
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<td>8/3/18/10</td>
<td>• Traditional Literature</td>
<td>Read</td>
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<td>K &amp; T, Ch. 4</td>
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<td>9/3/25/10</td>
<td>• Sharing Group Projects</td>
<td>Read</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Mid-term Course Evaluations</td>
<td>K &amp; T, Ch. 5</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Fantasy</td>
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<td>4/1/10</td>
<td>FCPS Spring Break: No Class</td>
<td>Review</td>
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<td>All chapters read thus far</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>• Poetry</td>
<td>Read</td>
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<tr>
<td>3/8/10</td>
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<td>K &amp; T, Ch. 6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Topics</td>
<td>Read</td>
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<tr>
<td>4/15/10</td>
<td>Twin Texts, Biography</td>
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<td>Read Camp article</td>
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<td>Kiefer chapter 12 (handout)</td>
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<td>4/22/10</td>
<td>Realistic and Historical Fiction</td>
<td>Read</td>
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<td>K &amp; T, Ch. 7-8</td>
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<td>Due (at Session 13)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Multiple Literacies project</td>
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<td>4/29/10</td>
<td>Non-fiction, Sharing of Multiple Literacies Projects</td>
<td>Read</td>
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<td></td>
<td>K &amp; T, Ch. 9</td>
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<td>Yopp &amp; Yopp article</td>
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<tr>
<td>5/6/10</td>
<td>Independent Work on Integrated Project</td>
<td>No new readings assigned</td>
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<tr>
<td>5/13/10</td>
<td>Sharing of Individual Projects</td>
<td>No new readings assigned</td>
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<td>Course Evaluations</td>
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Suggested Templates for Responses

Suggested Template for Response to Literature

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Book Title and Author</th>
<th>My Reaction/ How Might I Use This?</th>
<th>How Do I Think Students Would Respond?</th>
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Suggested Template for Articles and Chapters

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title and Author</th>
<th>Here’s What:</th>
<th>So What?</th>
<th>Now What?</th>
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