Queens College
Writing about Literature

Prof Nicolosi
(CRN 45573)
Spring 2025 / Kiely 248
Classes held: M/W 1:40 - 2:55
English 130–02

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Office Hours: Mon 4:30-5:30p
Prof Nicolosi

Office Hours Zoom Link: **https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89673699948**

COURSE DESCRIPTION: This course will be devoted to helping students develop the skills required to think and write critically about a variety of texts. Students will learn techniques for performing close reading and critical analysis for texts, and they will illustrate these techniques by composing thoroughly revised essays. The majority of this course will be devoted to research methods, information literacy, revision strategies, conventional MLA formatting, and the development of longer research papers. Students will learn to support their ideas and arguments using textual evidence drawn from appropriate primary and secondary sources. The course will include peer review workshops, one-on-one conferences with the instructor, and supplemental instructions provided by the Center for Reading and Writing.

SECTION DESCRIPTION: We will examine the various components and notions of children's literature, looking at constructions of gender, sexuality, nationalism, empire, British identity, the notion of escape/adventure, and the role of the imagination along with the supernatural. Various additional readings will be provided (as PDFs) from time to time, as appropriate to the course's focus in any given week. We will consider a few ways that literature "constructs" the Child: What is a child and what is its attributes? What is the relationship between the Child and society? What are the cultural politics of childhood and how might we measure the Child's agency & self-determination? Does fantasy, play, adventure, playacting at roles, etc., constitute ways that children gain more agency—even if temporary and confined only to the fantastical world? Does adventuring in fantastical spaces mean that "life lessons" are to be learned there and then applied upon return to the normative world of real life? How do these texts grapple with puberty & growing up, emergent sexuality, and the notion of what counts as maturation into adulthood?

COURSE STRUCTURE
This class meets in-person Mondays and Wednesdays. Should we need to have an online, synchronous class for any reason, you will use the Zoom link at the top of the syllabus.

REQUIRED TEXTS All readings will be supplied as PDFs through Brightspace, therefore there are no books to buy unless you choose to do so for your own benefit. Various additional readings

will be provided (as PDFs) from time to time, as appropriate to the course's focus in any given week.

GRADE DETERMINATION

10% Class Participation, Attendance:The extent to which this class is productive, educational, and interesting to you and your classmates depends upon the insights, questions, and responses of all of you; thus, your presence and active participation are key to your grade. Arriving late to class impedes the flow of class and will impair your grade. Missing more than 2 classes is missing too much, and 2 unexcused absences will result half a letter grade deducted from the final grade. If a student has more than 5 unexcused absences, the student will automatically fail the course and I will notify the Dean's office of the multiple absences.

> Class Lecture Videos: Note that there will be lecture videos that are part of the course and mandatory. Be sure you watch them all and this is part of your participation grade assessment.

10% Journals

You will write 5 journal entries over the course of the semester, each at 150-200 words, allowing you "to think through" various questions pertaining to the readings assigned for that week. All journals are due by the end of the week, within each unit.

80% Formal Papers

Each of these four papers must be a sustained, close reading of the text that underscores main ideas, key terms, or theoretical concepts (e.g. themes, motifs, tensions, etc.) with which the text engages. You must buttress your argument with solid textual evidence (quotes!) to support your claims while making smart observations about the text's various nuances. Yours should be a coherent, cogent, and novel argument that opens up new possibilities for thinking about the text. Each paper should provoke more questions than it answers or present new ideas that necessitate further intellectual inquiry—that is an "A" paper.

Paper 1		(2 pages)		10%
Paper 2		(3 pages)		20%
Paper 3		(3 pages)		20%
Paper 4		(4.5 Pages)		30%

GRADING SCALE

Grading Scale: 100-94 = A, 93-90 = A-, 89-87 = B+, 86-84 = B, 83-80 = B-, 79-77 = C+, 76-74 = C, 73-70 = C-, 69-67 = D+, 66-60 = D, 59 and below = F

COURSE POLICIES

Electronic Communication: In accordance with College policy, I will use the email address registered with Queens College email address (@qc.cuny.edu) to communicate with you about all course-related matters.

Missed class time: If you miss class or part of class, it is your responsibility to find out what you have missed. I strongly suggest that you exchange contact information with someone else in the class for this reason; if you need to obtain handouts, see me during office hours as soon as possible.

Religious Observances: College policy states that students must notify faculty within the first three weeks of the semester if they anticipate missing any classes due to religious observances.

Due dates: A formal paper is due at the beginning of the class period. For each day a formal paper is late, a half letter grade is deducted. Only once during the semester may you turn in a paper one day late without penalty. This policy is non-negotiable.

Paper formats: All formal papers and writing done outside of class must be typed, double-spaced, with one-inch margins, in a 12-point type, rendered in Times New Roman font.

Plagiarism & AI: The Queens College student handbook defines plagiarism as the attempt: "to pass off ideas or words of another as one's own," "to use material without crediting the source" and/or "to present as new and original an idea, phrase or statement derived from an existing source." In other words, if you submit an essay that you did not write, or an essay containing a passage – even one sentence – or a substantial idea that you have copied from an internet or print source without using quotation marks, footnotes, parenthetical citations, a bibliography and/or a works cited page to document that source, *you have plagiarized*. Because the University considers plagiarism a flagrant violation of academic integrity, plagiarism in this or any other course will result in an automatic dismissal from the course, a grade of F for the course, and a report of the incident to the Dean of Students. Note: For all assignments in this course, you will be best off limiting the texts you engage to the primary materials assigned. In other words, a typical Google search on any of the works on the syllabus will be more likely to confuse the issue and lead you astray from the concerns of the course than to provide clarification or insight.

NOTE: Using AI to produce an "essay" is, in fact, plagiarism. You will be failed for this as much as for obtaining essays from the internet.

Students with disabilities: To obtain disability-related accommodations and/or auxiliary aids, it is your responsibility to contact the Office of Specialized Services for Students with Disabilities as soon as possible.

The Writing Center: You are encouraged to take advantage of services offered by the Writing Center. I recommend making regular appointments, but drop-in hours are also available.

Email Correspondence: I am available via email M-F from 8am-6pm. For any emails sent during those hours, and I will aim to get back to you by the end of day. For any emails sent after 6pm, to these I will reply at 8 am the next morning. I am not available via email from Friday 6pm until Tuesday 8am, however, I will prioritize emails sent over the weekend as the emails to which I first respond to, on Monday morning

COURSE CALENDAR:

******Please note that the syllabus is subject to change at instructor's discretion.***

Beginnings

Week of 1/27
- Welcome on Course's Structure, Syllabus
- Basics of Children's Literature
- Excerpts from *Aesop's Fables*
- Bunn's "How to Read Like A Writer" + Lecture Video on **Bunn**; Prose's "Close Reading"; Lamott's "Shitty First Drafts" (asynchronous work)

Children and Gender

Week of 2/2
- Excerpts from *Aesop's Fables*
- Carroll, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (Wed)
- Lecture Video #1**: The Structure of Children's Lit**

Week of 2/9
- Carroll, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*
- **No Class Wed the 12th**
- **Journal #1**

Week of 2/16
- Carroll, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*

****Mon the 17th: No Class // Tues the 18th: Follows Mon schedule**

Week of 2/23
- Greene, *The Wind in the Willows*
- **Journal #2**
- Lecture Video #2: **Anatomy of an Argumentative Paper** + Notes

Week of 3/2
- Greene, *The Wind in the Willows* (Mon)
- Potter, *The Tale of Peter Rabbit* (Wed)
- **Consultations: Paper 1 (Thurs 3/6 // Follows a Wed schedule)**

Children & Agency

Week of 3/9
- Kipling, *The Jungle Books*
- **Journal #3**

****Paper 1 (Children & Anthropomorphism): Due Saturday 3/15**

Week of 3/16
- Kipling, *The Jungle Books*

Week of 3/23
- Dahl, *James and the Giant Peach*
- **Journal #4**

Week of 3/30
- Dahl, *James and the Giant Peach*

****No Class Monday**

Children and the Politics of Home

Week of 4/6
- Barrie, *Peter Pan*

****Paper 2 (Children & Agency): Due Saturday 4/5**

Week of 4/13 - SPRING BREAK

Week of 4/20 - Barrie, *Peter Pan*
- **Journal #5**

Week of 4/27 - Disney's *Peter Pan*
****Paper 3 (Children & the Home): Due Saturday 5/3**

Week of 5/4 - New Line Cinema, *The Golden Compass*

Week of 5/11 - Disney, *The Many Adventures of Winnie-the-Pooh*

Week of 5/18 Final Paper (Children in Film) due Tuesday 5/20