The Literature of Children and Adolescents  
Spring 2018 CAMS-UA 191; 4 points  
194 Mercer Street, Rm. 306, Thursdays, 12:30pm – 3:15pm

Instructors:  
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Course Description:  
Children’s and teen literature constitutes a vibrant, many-faceted literary genre that presents students of psychology, child development, and related disciplines with opportunities for insight-harvesting thought and reflection. The field’s most gifted writers (and the illustrators with whom they often collaborate) share with the social scientists who study childhood and adolescence a dedication to understanding the basic dilemmas and conflicts of growing up. The unusually high degree of clarity and distillation required to connect effectively with a young readership impels these authors to create works that can be fairly described as paradigmatic statements of childhood and teenage experience. W. H. Auden once said, “There are no good children’s books which are only for children.” This course seizes upon the largely untapped potential of this literature as a resource for getting at the crux of child and adolescent development issues.

This course is unique in its presentation of children’s and teen literature from the dual perspective of a literary genre and representation of the pivotal issues of child and adolescent development. Following introductory lectures aimed at putting the literature in a historical/cultural context and providing an overview of the surprising range of work encompassed by the term children’s and teen literature, lectures and discussions explore six developmental/literary themes:

1. Learning to Trust – Making a Home in the World
2. Family Feelings and Family Relationships
3. Anger, Fear, and Confronting the Forbidden
4. Beyond Home – The Call to Adventure
5. Embracing the World of One’s Peers

Each of these six themes is considered twice – the first half of the semester in relation to books for children and the second half of semester, and in the same sequence, in relation to books for preteens and teens. The goal of this separation is to allow for an exploration of the same developmental themes while emphasizing the separate biological, psychological, and social factors unique to both childhood and adolescence. Furthermore, this arrangement is intended to highlight the salient differences and similarities between books published for different age groups and to give students the opportunity to think about developmental issues as ongoing concerns that we revisit at different stages of life, each time from a new perspective. The dynamic interplay between developmental issues of temperament, early parent-child relationships, attachment, learning, cognition and language have profound implications for how we study and understand children and how children understand and interact in the world. By repeating these themes for adolescents, the topics of brain development and the development of executive functions is reviewed in light of metacognitive skills, social skills, identity formation and moral development.

Required Texts:  
Paley, Vivian. The Girl with the Brown Crayon  
Students are encouraged to purchase those children books that are of particular interest to them for their personal libraries. All required children’s books are also available on reserve at the Bobst Undergraduate
Library (2 copies of each book). Students can go to the Reserve desk in LL2 of Bobst library and fill out a request card to check out any of the books. You will fill in the course ID # (CAMS-UA191) and the name of the book. You can find an entire list of the books for the class in the course catalog under the “Course Reserves” tab on the Bobst library site.

Course Syllabus: Spring Semester

1/25  Introductory Lecture: The first session provides a historical overview of the development of children’s literature; its intellectual underpinnings in the educational theories of Enlightenment philosopher John Locke; its twentieth-century development and refinement into age-graded subgenres; and the impact of the theoretical writings of Freud, Erikson, Jean Piaget and others on modern writers for young people.

Class Volunteer Reader: Press Here

Part I: Children’s Literature

2/1  FIELD TRIP to the JEFFERSON MARKET LIBRARY.

GUEST SPEAKER: Rebecca Schosha

NOTE: We will meet at 12:45 p.m. on the ground-floor children’s room at the Jefferson Market branch of the NY Public Library (Sixth Avenue and West 10th Street). Following Rebecca’s presentation, we will return to the NYU campus for a lecture. Rebecca is the children’s librarian at the Jefferson Market Branch of the NY Public Library (NYPL). She will demonstrate techniques of reading to children in different age groups; discuss factors involved in determining age-appropriateness of books for younger children; describe the children’s book-related resources available to you at the NYPL; and answer your questions.

Assigned Readings Due:

Berk Chapters
- Pgs. 282-283, 402-403 (Milestones)
- Chapter 5- Physical Development in Infancy and Toddlerhood
- Chapter 8- Physical Development in Early Childhood

Carle, Eric. From Head to Toe
Carle, Eric. The Very Hungry Caterpillar

Developmental Milestone Checklist (Study Guides and Tools found on NYU Classes)

2/8  Learning to Trust (Making a Home in the World)

These sessions explore the literature of preschool children from the perspective of Erik Erikson’s first of eight developmental stages (Trust vs. Mistrust). In Erikson’s view, if we pass successfully through this first stage (roughly birth to 18 months), we will learn to trust that life is essentially a safe endeavor, and we will have basic confidence in the future. If we fail to experience trust and are constantly frustrated because our needs are not met, we may end up with a deep-seated feeling of worthlessness and a mistrust in the world in general. The books selected for this week explore this theme and focus, not surprisingly, on children’s most significant early relationships and the notion of temperament and goodness of fit.

Assigned Readings Due (continued on next page):

Berk Chapter 7- Emotional & Social Development in Infancy & Toddlerhood (pgs. 244-260 only)
Brown, Margaret Wise. Goodnight Moon
Brown, Margaret Wise. The Runaway Bunny
Eastman, P. D. Are You My Mother?
Family Feelings and Family Relationships
These sessions provide an examination of separation, individuation, sibling rivalry, and other classic dilemmas faced by children in their first experiences as social beings.

GUEST SPEAKER: Caron Levis – an award winning children's author, short-story writer, and playwright living in New York City. *Stuck with the Blooz* and *Ida, Always* are her two picture books. Caron is the program advisor and an adjunct professor in the New School’s MFA Creative Writing for Children program.

**Assigned Readings Due:**
Grimm, J. and W., *The Juniper Tree and Other Tales from Grimm* (selected stories)
Henkes, Kevin. *Julius the Baby of the World*
Lesser, Rika. *Hansel and Gretel* (ill. by Paul O. Zelinsky)
Marshall, James. *Cinderella*
McCloskey, Robert. *Make Way for Ducklings*
Williams, Vera B. *A Chair for My Mother*
**Optional:**
Harris, Robie H., *Don’t Forget to Come Back*
McCloskey, Robert. *One Morning in Maine*

**Written Observation #1 Due (Topic: Physical/motor development)**

**Anger, Fear, and Confronting the Forbidden**
During these sessions, we consider the role that books can play in helping children come to terms with the more difficult, disturbing aspects of their lives. Fear of loss, abandonment, and envelopment frequently lead to anger, even in the earliest years of life, and much of children’s literature is devoted to helping children learn to identify these emotions and subsequently “live” with them. In addition, developmental issues of effortful control, motivation and emotion are considered. We will also discuss Ainsworth’s theory on attachment and the implications attachment styles have on the formation of relationships.

**Assigned Readings (continued on next page):**
Berk Chapter 7- Emotional and Social Development cont. (p. 261-281 only)
Berk Chapter 10- Emotional and Social Development in Early Childhood
Bang, Molly. *When Sophie Gets Angry— Really, Really Angry*
Frame, Jeron Ashford. *Yesterday I Had the Blues*
Sendak, Maurice. *In the Night Kitchen*
Sendak, Maurice. *Outside Over There*
Sendak, Maurice. *Where the Wild Things Are*
Viorst, Judith. *Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day*
**Optional:**
Rosen, Michael. *Michael Rosen’s Sad Book*
Embracing the World of One’s Peers
Friendship, sharing, cooperation, jealousy, ostracism and other aspects of the child’s first forays into the larger social world are explored.

Note: The Lionni books are referenced in The Girl with the Brown Crayon, and you will need to have read them in preparation for this discussion.

Assigned Readings Due:
Berk Chapter 6- Cognitive Development in Infancy & Toddlerhood (pg. 231-241 only)
Berk Chapter 9- Cognitive Development in Early Childhood (pg. 348-353 only)
Lionni, Leo. Frederick
Lionni, Leo. Pezzettino
Lionni, Leo. Swimmy
Lionni, Leo. Tico and the Golden Wings
Marshall, James. George and Martha
Paley, Vivian. The Girl with the Brown Crayon
Willems, Mo. Knuffle Bunny Too

Optional:
Henkes, Kevin. A Weekend with Wendell
Keats, Ezra Jack. A Letter for Amy
Raschka, Chris. Yo? Yes!

Beyond Home: The Call to Adventure
These classes focus upon the awakening of curiosity with the first recognition of interests and needs that cannot be fully satisfied within the world of the home and family.

Assigned Readings Due:
Berk Chapter 6- Cognitive Development in Infancy and Toddlerhood
Berk Chapter 9- Cognitive Development in Early Childhood
Johnson, Crockett. Harold and the Purple Crayon
Myers, Christopher. Black Cat
Rosen, Michael. We’re Going on a Bear Hunt
Dr. Seuss, The Cat in the Hat
Sis, Peter. Madlenka
Steig, William. Doctor De Soto
Van Allsburg, Chris. The Mysteries of Harris Burdick

Optional:
Henkes, Kevin. Kitten’s First Full Moon
Keats, Ezra Jack. The Trip
Schwartz, Amy. Bea and Mr. Jones
Steig, William. Brave Irene
Williams, Vera B. Cherries and Cherry Pits
Williams, Vera B. Three Days on a River in a Red Canoe

SPRING BREAK! NO CLASS

MIDTERM EXAMINATION, followed by lecture
Note: Students who miss an exam without notifying the instructors in writing in advance will automatically be penalized one letter grade on the relevant makeup exam.

BOOKS REFERENCED ON THE EXAM SHOULD BE FROM THE ASSIGNED READING LIST. DO NOT REFERENCE BOOKS READ BY GUEST SPEAKERS OR OPTIONAL BOOKS.
**Questioning Reality: Asking “What if?”**

During these sessions we will study the developmental changes heralded as children begin to reckon with the real world and to think abstractly – How does life change when a child gains a deepening sense of self? What changes in a child’s world with the growing ability to contemplate multiple views of a given situation, and does their moral treatment of others alter? As children become able to appreciate irony and paradox, how does their world view change?

**Part II: Adolescent Literature**

Recent developmental brain research shows for the first time that there is a wave of growth and change in the adolescent brain. What teens do during their adolescent years affects how their brains develop and how they understand relationships. Teens’ brains actually work differently than adults’ when processing emotional information from external stimuli. During this second half of the course, we explore these same literary themes but now in the context of adolescent physical and emotional development. As we revisit Erikson, Bettelheim, Mahler, and Piaget, we ask ourselves what is different this time around – how is the adolescent developing? Why is children’s literature much less relevant to teens, and what are the unique aspects of teen literature that speak so clearly to adolescents? We also reflect back upon the “critical periods of development” hypothesis and view the literature we are studying itself along a developmental trajectory, now looking ahead toward adulthood.

3/29  
**WRITTEN OBSERVATION #2 DUE (Topic: Language development)**
Learning to Trust (Making a Home in the World)  
**Assigned Readings Due:**
Berk Chapter 13 – Emotional & Social Development in Middle Childhood (p. 483-487) only)  
Berk Chapter 16 - Emotional & Social Development in Adolescence (p. 595-602 only)  
White, E.B. Charlotte’s Web

4/5  
**Family Feelings and Family Relationships**  
**Assigned Readings Due:**
Berk Chapter 11- Physical Development in Middle Childhood  
Berk Chapter 14- Physical Development in Adolescence  
Berk Chapter 16- The Family (p. 606-609)  
Blume, Judy. Tales of a Fourth-Grade Nothing

4/12  
**Anger, Fear, and Confronting the Forbidden**  
**Assigned Readings Due:**
Berk Chapter 12- Cognitive Development in Middle Childhood  
Berk Chapter 15- Cognitive Development in Adolescence  
Juster, Norton. The Phantom Tollbooth

4/19  
**Beyond Home: The Call to Adventure**  
**Assigned Readings Due:**
Berk Chapter 13- Emotional and Social Development in Middle Childhood  
Berk Chapter 16- Emotional and Social Development in Adolescence  
O’Dell, Scott. Island of Blue Dolphins

**GUEST SPEAKER: Carrie Spindel, Psy.D.**– Clinical Assistant Professor at the NYU Child Study Center’s Institute for Anxiety and Mood Disorders. Dr. Spindel has advanced level training in Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) for anxiety and depression, and has special interests in the treatment of Generalized Anxiety Disorder, childhood maltreatment, and Panic Disorder. She is also intensively trained in
Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) for suicidal and self-injurious behavior, and has worked specifically as a DBT therapist with multi-problem adolescents. She is co-author of Child Maltreatment: Advances in Psychotherapy—Evidenced Based Practice and of the book chapter “Disaster Trauma” in Cognitive Behavior Strategies for Crisis Intervention.

4/26 WRITTEN OBSERVATION #3 DUE (Topic: Cognitive development)
Questioning Reality: Asking “What if?”

Assigned Readings Due:
Haddon, Mark. The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time

GUEST SPEAKER: Melissa Nishawala, M.D. – Medical Director of the Autism Spectrum Disorders Clinical and Research Program at the NYU Child Study Center, Dr. Melissa Nishawala is a nationally recognized authority in the assessment and treatment of autism spectrum disorders. She also specializes in the diagnosis of psychiatric disorders and psychopharmacology.

5/3 Embracing the World of One’s (Last Class)

Assigned Readings Due:
Berk Chapter 17- Emerging Adulthood
You Tube video interview with author, Gene Luen Yang (link on NYU Classes)
Yang, Gene Luen. American Born

5/10 FINAL EXAMINATION (TBD)

Note: Students who miss an exam without notifying the instructors in writing in advance will automatically be penalized one letter grade on the relevant makeup exam.

BOOKS REFERENCED ON THE EXAM SHOULD BE FROM THE ASSIGNED READING LIST. DO NOT REFERENCE BOOKS READ BY GUEST SPEAKERS OR OPTIONAL BOOKS.

Note: Readings from the textbook are in bold. Assignments and exams are in BOLD, CAPITALIZED, AND IN RED. Optional books are listed in hopes of exposing you to a variety of children’s literature, and will not be tested on the midterm or the final.

REVIEW OF ASSIGNMENTS

I. Volunteer Read-A-Loud/Discussion:
A fun way to start the class and earn extra credit in the process! The first 15-minutes of each class will begin with a pair of volunteers reading aloud from one of the books on the course reading list and leading a brief class discussion. For the first half of the semester, books will be selected from the readings indicated on the syllabus for that week. For the second half of the semester, students will be assigned an excerpt from the chapter book assigned for that week.

After selecting only a SHORT excerpt of your book to highlight your questions (e.g. an animated and engaging reading of short picture books or a few sentences and no more than 1 paragraph from a longer book), our volunteers will generate class discussion about the reading that bridges children’s literature and
developmental psychology. (Instructors will provide the volunteers with discussion questions with advanced notice.)

- Readers should be creative in their presentation of the material and use a visual and/or an auditory aid (e.g. costume, video, poster, Power Point slide).
- Responses and visuals should be submitted to the Teaching Assistant at the latest one week prior to the scheduled reading. Feedback and edits will be provided shortly thereafter.
- A final version must be submitted by 11 AM on the Tuesday before the scheduled read-a-loud for final feedback.

You must provide your own copy of the book and be prepared to use a specific reading strategy (discussed at the library visit on 2/1)! A sign-up sheet for these readings will be sent out via NYU Classes.

II. ONE PAGE Observations

As noted in the syllabus, three read-a-loud observations are required during this semester. You will be required to attend three reading times at the public library or another venue that you have approved with Professors Marcus and Dr. Montalto.

In Observation #1 carefully document physical/motor development of babies/toddlers.
In Observation #2 carefully document language development of preschoolers/elementary school age children.
In Observation #3 carefully document cognitive development of a developmental age of your choice.

Become familiar with the developmental milestones PRIOR to attending the observation. Remember to bring a copy of the checklist with you. Developmental checklists can be found under NYU Classes’ Course Documents and in the textbook (refer to ‘Milestones’ in the subject index (pg. SI-22) for pages by topic).

During your observation: (Remember to bring your developmental checklist!)

1. IDENTIFY ONE CHILD!
2. Note details about the environment in which the read-a-loud is taking place (e.g. setting, attendee demographics, total number of attendees, concurrent activities/distractors).
3. Watch the librarian read to the children and observe the interactions.
4. Spend 5-10 minutes watching ONE CHILD - take notes and use your developmental checklists. Make sure you focus on one child and not the group as a whole, because the developmental milestones and theories you describe must be specific to a single child to receive credit.

Type a one page double-spaced formal observation that includes the following four elements:

1. LOCATION – SPECIFIC REMARKS about the location, physical setting (especially where listeners are in relation to the reader), and the activities that were occurring.
2. FACTS – What did you see the child do or say? Focusing exclusively on the assigned topic matter, which MILESTONES did the child exhibit?
   Example of relevant factual observations (re: physical/motor development):
   Sara’s torso was in proportion to her lower body. She tiptoed around the room by herself and used a pincher grasp to pick up a crayon. When trying to hop on one foot, she lost her balance and stumbled.
3. ASSUMPTIONS – Integrate your behavioral observations, the developmental milestones, textbook information and course lectures to develop hypotheses about the child’s CURRENT development (again, specific to the assigned topic). Is the child on track developmentally? You’ll want to reference theories covered within the text and lectures.
   Example of assumptions (re: physical/motor development):
Based on Sara’s current physical and motor development, she appears to be a typically developing 3-year-old. Attending a reading event is probably contributing to her experience-expectant brain growth. Her difficulty hopping reflects unrefined and developmentally immature gross motor coordination.

4. PREDICTIONS – Referencing the developmental theories you’ve learned, what signs of developmental do you predict will occur in the near future (i.e., in her proximal zone of development)?

Example of predictions (focusing on physical motor/development):
Sarah may have difficulty with upcoming expectations in preschool including catching a ball, running and kicking, and sitting upright in circle time. She might also have some fine motor struggles including cutting, zippering a coat, or tying her shoes.

NOTE: Write-ups are to be ONE PAGE DOUBLE SPACED (with 1” margins and 12-point font).

III. Midterm and Final Examination
Multiple choice, short answer questions, and choice of essays based upon material covered in the first half (midterm) or last half (final) of the course. Missing the examination date without a preapproved absence will result in a deduction of your overall grade by one full grade on that exam.

IV. Breakout Sessions:
In most weeks students will break up into small groups of no more than 5 students for a breakout session to discuss amongst themselves a children’s book that is directly related to the week’s assigned readings. During these breakouts, specific discussion questions will be provided for students to respond to in writing. The questions will be based on the books that are passed around for use by each group. Students should hand in their responses and be prepared to discuss them as a larger class. The written responses will be graded. Only students with preapproved excused absences can make up the break out questions given in class.

Examinations and Grades:
10% - Class participation
   Participation in class discussions
   Attendance
   Volunteer reading/discussion (Extra credit for volunteers only)

20% - ONE PAGE written observations (20% broken down as detailed below)
   #1: Physical/Motor Development (4% of final grade)
   #2: Language Development (6% of final grade)
   #3: Cognitive Development (10% of final grade)

25% - Midterm examination
30% - Final examination
15% - Breakout sessions

To minimize distractions to professors & fellow students, NO SCREENS (e.g., LAPTOPS, CELL PHONES, iPads) are permitted in class. Exceptions made only with those with documented accommodations through the Moses Center.
Guide To the New York Public Library Branches:
Children’s books are available at several local public libraries. In addition, several of the libraries have reading time for babies, toddlers and preschoolers so that you can make some observations of young children. Below are a few options for you to consider, other options are also acceptable upon approval.

**Jefferson Market Library (425 Avenue of the Americas at 10th St.)** - Toddler Time is on Mondays at 11:00 a.m. and Pre-School Time is on Wednesdays at 3:45 p.m.  (212) 243-4334

**Mulberry Street Library (10 Jersey Street)** – Baby Storytime (0-3 years) is on Tuesdays at 10:30 a.m. and 11:30 a.m. Toddler Time is on Thursdays at 10:30 a.m. and 11:30 a.m. Preschool Storytime is on Wednesdays at 4:00 p.m. (212) 966-3424

**Kips Bay Library (446 Third Avenue at E. 31st St.)** - Baby Lapsit (0-18 months) is on Mondays at 11:30 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. Toddler Time is on Tuesdays at 11:30 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. Read Alouds (3-8 years) are on Thursdays at 3:30 p.m. (212) 683-2520

**Ottendorfer Library (135 Second Avenue near E. 8th St. - St. Marks Place)** – Baby Storytime: Pre-walkers is on Mondays at 10:30 a.m. and 11:30 a.m. Toddler Storytime: Walkers is on Wednesdays at 10:30 a.m. and 11:30 a.m.  (212) 674-0947

**Tompkins Square Library (331 East 10th Street near Ave B)** – Baby Storytime is on Wednesdays at 2:00 p.m. Toddler Time is on Tuesdays at 11:30 a.m. (212) 228-4747

**NYPL on 42nd and 5th Ave** – Baby Laptime is on Mondays at 10:15 and 11:15 a.m. Preschool Time is on Tuesdays at 4:00 p.m. Toddler Time is on Thursdays at 10:15 a.m. and 11:15 a.m. Family Story Time is on Saturdays at 11:00 a.m. or Sundays at 3:00 p.m. This branch also has the original Winnie the Pooh toys on display, so that alone is worth the trip. (212) 621-0208

**The Epiphany Library (228 E. 23rd)** – Bitty Book Buddies (0-36 months) is on Mondays and Wednesdays at 10:45 a.m. They also have a new program called Kids Storytime (4+ years) every two weeks on Thursdays at 4:00 p.m. Check the event calendar online for more information! (212) 679-2645

**The Strand (12th Street and Broadway)** – Check their website for different events!

**Books of Wonder (18 West 18th Street)** – Story Time is on Saturdays at 11am and Sundays at 11:30am. Check their website for additional events!