ENG 508-01W Reality in Children's Literature

COURSE SYLLABUS: Fall 2024

TL; dr Version

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Instructor: Rebecca Rowe | Office Location: DTH 314
In-Person Office Hours: T, 2pm-4pm | Virtual Office Hours: W, 10am-12pm; and by appt.
Email Address: Rebecca.Rowe@tamuc.edu (preferred form of communication)
Communication Response Time: Within 24 hours (M-F, 8am-5pm)

COURSE INFORMATION

Optional online class time: **Time**: T 5:30-7:30 | **Location**: Zoom

Textbooks Required

- Dunbar-Ortiz, Roxanne, Jean Mendoza, and Debbie Reese. *An Indigenous Peoples' History of the United States for Young People (ReVisioning History for Young People)*. ISBN: 0807049395
- Longoria, Margarita, editor. *Living Beyond Borders: Growing Up Mexican in America*. ISBN: 9780593204986
- Meyer, L. A. *Bloody Jack*. ISBN: 9780152050856
- Myers, Walter Dean. *Monster*. ISBN: 0064407314
- Reynolds, Jason, and Brendan Kiely. *All American Boys*. ISBN: 9781481463355
- Additional materials available on D2L and/or on the course schedule

You will also need access to the following:
- Movies:
  - *American Tail* (1986)
  - *Barbie* (2023)
  - *Black Barbie: A Documentary* (2023)
  - *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies* (2016)
- TV episodes:
  - *Kid Nation* "I'm Trying to Be a Leader Here!" (2007)
  - *MasterChef Junior* "Here Comes the Kids" (2013)
- Video game:
  - *Rise of Cultures* (2021; online and free)

Software Required

- We will be using D2L for all assignment submissions and course materials.
- https://archive.org/—you need to make a free account on here because this is how we will be engaging with a few books.

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- You will need to read pdfs during the course of the semester. You are not required to print them off, but you are required to be able to look at them during class. Make sure you have something with Adobe Acrobat or another pdf reader.

Optional Materials
- [Purdue OWL MLA](#) is a great resource to check out for citation information.
- www.tinyurl.com/otmarchive is a website I've created with previous students' teaching materials plus additional helpful online resources from me, for those of you interested in the pedagogical elements of this course.
- https://www.tamuc.edu/library/—the university library website.

Course Description

It is said that history is written by the victors, and there is some truth to the saying. At the very least, history and our current reality are constantly being constructed and reconstructed as the media we engage with rewrite it before our very eyes. Currently, nowhere is that battle more intensely fought than for what reality we show our young people. This course explores the constructedness of reality within realistic and historical fiction to ask who is defining that reality, what version of reality are they trying to establish, and why do they want to show that version of reality. In pursuing these questions, we will explore various genres of literature, including some texts that do not seem real at all.

Student Learning Outcomes: Students will be able to:

1. Differentiate between constructed reality, historical accuracy, and truth, however the student ultimately defines those terms, in regards to how they are represented in literature.
2. Analyze who is shaping reality within a text, how they are shaping that reality, and their purpose for doing so for young audiences.
3. Critically and respectfully approach scholarly inquiries and develop inquiries of their own.
4. Contextualize the work of the course and their own work with realistic and historical texts for young audiences.
5. Develop and implement their own project plans.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Minimal Technical Skills Needed

The most important technical skill you need is the ability to use a word processor, such as Microsoft Word or Google Docs. Unless otherwise noted in the assignment prompt, **all projects and essays must be submitted as a Word Doc, a Google Doc, or a pdf**. You will also need to be familiar with D2L and websites such as *YouTube*. If you choose to do the Creative Tract, you will also need to know how to use the editor appropriate for the medium you've chosen (e.g., iMovie if you're making a video, Audacity if you're making a podcast, Canva if you're making a visual project, etc.).

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Instructional Methods

This course is online and can be experienced either synchronously or asynchronously. Each week, we will have an *optional* online Zoom meeting on Tuesday, 5:30-7:30pm. If you attend, you will get the attendance credit for that week. If you do not attend, you can watch the recording of the session and then fill out the Attendance Discussion Board for that week (which is different from the weekly discussion boards) to get your attendance points. Each discussion board will explain how many posts and responses are needed for that week. You must submit the discussion board for that week by the Sunday after class to receive the attendance credit.

Student Responsibilities

You will need to complete readings (or viewings) for every class, including a mixture of primary and secondary sources, in order to engage fully in the conversations we will have each week. This is a graduate course, so I expect each of you to come to class with thoughts, ideas, and questions about our readings. I will lead questions and activities, but part of the work of this course is to develop your own way for approaching the weekly texts, both on your own and in collaboration with your classmates. You will also need to complete a major project (which will require extra work on your part) and small engagement assignments to fully engage with our topic and our community.

GRADING

In this course, **you have complete control over your grade.** This course uses what's called Gameful or Gameified learning, designed around concepts of gaming. Basically, there are many assignments you can complete in this course. You choose which assignments you want to complete based on what interests you and what you think will benefit your learning journey most. So, for example, if you're a current teacher wanting to refine your pedagogical skills, you can work on developing ready-to-use class materials. Likewise, if you want to develop something that could become a journal article, you can do that. You choose which assignments work best for you.

As you complete assignments, you will rack up points. While I will assign points to each project, your grade rests mostly on completion. If you do all that is asked of you in the manner and spirit it is asked, you will earn all of the points that assignment is worth. I may disagree or misunderstand your ideas, but if you put in the labor, you are guaranteed all the points on each assignment you submit. Assignments will *not* earn full points if they are shorter than the assigned prompt, late, or do not complete the work of the assignment prompt (see policies below).

Your semester grade will be determined by how many points you have at the end:
- A = 90+ points
- B = 80-89 points
- C = 70-79 points
- D = 60-69 points
- F = less than 60 points

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You can turn in as many or as few assignments as you like to get the score you want. In other words, your grade does not depend on the quality of your work; my comments will be geared towards quality to help you strengthen your analysis and writing skills. Instead, your grade depends completely on what you turn in and how much you're engaging in the work of the course. This is intended to give you more room to experiment and fail, to alleviate stress since you will have control over all that you do, and to allow you to chart your own educational path within this course. If you'd like to learn more about gameful learning, you can do so here.

Assessments

There are six required assignments:
- **Contextualization Presentation** (10 points) in which you will develop a 10-15-minute presentation on the subject of one of our classes to be presented in the weekly Zoom meeting or submitted as a video to be uploaded to our D2L for your classmates to watch.
- **Tract declaration** (10 points) in which you will explain which of the Major-Project tracts you will work through for the rest of the semester.
- **Annotated Bibliography** (10 points) in which you will review pieces like your own proposed project.
- **Formal Proposal** (10 points) in which you will write a formal proposal appropriate for your chosen track after doing the research for your Annotated Bibliography.
- **Workshop Draft** (10 points) which you will submit then get feedback on before the Major Project is due.
- **Major Project** (30 points) in which you will engage with the work of this course in a sustained way through one of five options:
  - Scholarly Tract: write an article-length scholarly essay
  - Pedagogical: develop a unit plan/syllabus and other materials to teach children's literature to a level of your choice
  - Creative: create a children's text of your own
  - Digital: plan and possibly implement a digital project about children's literature
  - Writer's choice: in consultation with me, develop a different project in relation to children's literature

Alongside these projects, you can also earn Community Engagement points that allow you to engage in our course community in a variety of ways:
- Class notes (3 points each)
- Office hours (3 points each)
- Discussion boards (3 points each week completed)
- Reading the World (5 points)
- Social media essay (5 points)
- Text/Event Review (5 points)

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

LMS

All course sections offered by Texas A&M University-Commerce have a corresponding course shell in the myLeo Online Learning Management System (LMS). Below are technical requirements

LMS Requirements:
https://community.brightspace.com/s/article/Brightspace-Platform-Requirements

LMS Browser Support:
https://documentation.brightspace.com/EN/brightspace/requirements/all/browser_support.htm

YouSeeU Virtual Classroom Requirements:
https://support.youseeu.com/hc/en-us/articles/115007031107-Basic-System-Requirements

ACCESS AND NAVIGATION

You will need your campus-wide ID (CWID) and password to log into the course. If you do not know your CWID or have forgotten your password, contact the Center for IT Excellence (CITE) at 903.468.6000 or helpdesk@tamuc.edu**.**

Note: Personal computer and internet connection problems do not excuse the requirement to complete all course work in a timely and satisfactory manner. Each student needs to have a backup method to deal with these inevitable problems. These methods might include the availability of a backup PC at home or work, the temporary use of a computer at a friend's home, the local library, office service companies, Starbucks, a TAMUC campus open computer lab, etc.

COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT

If you have any questions or are having difficulties with the course material, please contact your Instructor.

Technical Support

If you are having technical difficulty with any part of Brightspace, please contact Brightspace Technical Support at 1-877-325-7778. Other support options can be found here:

https://community.brightspace.com/support/s/contactsupport

Interaction with Instructor Statement

As an instructor, communication is key with me. I am happy to be flexible with most things in this course if it will help you succeed, but I'm not a mind reader. You have to tell me what you need so that I can help you. If you need to contact me, send me an **email**. Generally, I will

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respond to emails sent between 8am and 5pm, Monday-Friday, within 24 hours of receiving them. If you have an urgent question about an assignment that's due on Sunday, you might want to start working on it by Friday so you have a chance to ask me before the weekend. If you forget and get started late, just let me know you need more time in the Extension Request Form. If I plan to be away from my computer for more than a couple of days, I will let you know in advance. I will also update the online grades as quickly as I can. I aim for no more than a week, but it may take me longer, especially with longer projects. You will receive written feedback for every project, so make sure you check for it. I often use rubrics, so if it looks like I didn't leave any comments, look for the rubric.

COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES

Course Specific Procedures/Policies

Policy on Humanity

My courses and teaching are designed around two core concepts: adaptability and empathy:
- I recognize that you have considerable knowledge about many things coming into this class. I start by exploring what you already know so that I can help you take your skills and refine and strengthen them. I also want you to be able to take what you learn in my class forward with you. So, I design my courses around skills that I can teach you that you can then apply elsewhere as you move through your education and life.
- I know that you do not begin and end with this class, and I approach each student first and foremost as a human being who, if we're being honest, may have more important things going on in their lives than this class. **Your health—physical, mental, emotional, spiritual, financial—is more important than anything we will do or discuss, and I want you to prioritize them.** That means a few things:
  - If you need help, accommodation, an extension, or anything else to perform as well as you can while also maintaining your health, please let me know. That also means that you can eat and drink in class if you need to, that you can use technology as it best serves you, and that if you need to leave the room at any point for your health (including mental and emotional), please do so.
  - This class will be full of human bodies, so please be considerate. If you are sick, stay home. There are plenty of ways to make up any day of class.
  - As a fellow human being, I respect you. By respect, I mean that I will always do my best to see you as a whole human being whose life experiences have created a person who acts in certain ways and who deserves to be treated like a human being. All I ask is that just as I respect you as a human being, you treat me and your peers with that kind of respect. We may at times cover new or difficult material and we all may have different opinions about it. I ask that you keep an open mind and be respectful with me, your classmates, and our material.

Ultimately, my goal is to discover where you are on your personal learning journey and help you move along that journey in whatever way I can. Most importantly, **I am here to help you, not harm you**. If there is ever anything I can do to help you with that, please let me know!

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Absence Policy

While your presence in the course will help both you and your classmates learn and process the material, life often finds a way to get in the way. So, **every student is allowed three missed days within the semester without a penalty**. You do not have to tell me why you're absent (unless you believe that your absence would count as one of [TAMUC's attendance policy's](#) reasons for excused absence, at which point, you should definitely tell me); you may be sick or need to work an extra shift or look after a child or simply need a mental health day to be the best you that you can be. You do not owe me an explanation for organizing your time as well as you can. When you have missed three days, I will let you know that you have used your free absence days. **At this point, you will lose five grade points for every day you miss**.

Do remember: you can get attendance credit by either attending the weekly Zoom meeting OR completing the weekly Attendance Discussion Board by the Sunday following the meeting. You will only be counted absent if you do not complete either of those methods by the end of the week. If you cannot complete either option by that Sunday and have already missed three classes, contact me about the possibility of makeup work.

Grading Policies:

- **Late projects**: Because there are so many different projects due at different times, it is helpful if you turn assignments in on time. All formal and informal assignments should be ready to turn in at the beginning of the class they are due and/or submitted to D2L no later than the stated deadline. If you need an extension, fill out the Extension Request Form before the due date; if you need more time to do your best work, I'm absolutely happy to give up to a week extra (for real, I give out extensions like free candy, except at the very end of the semester, when I need to turn in grades). If, and only if, you don't communicate with me, late projects will lose two points each calendar day they are late.
- **Short projects**: Each of the assigned projects has been designed to fit a certain length, the word requirement given on the assignment prompt. I do give you wiggle room: as long as you're within 50 words for shorter assignments and 100 words for longer assignments, you'll be fine. Any project not meeting this standard will lose points according to how much of the project is missing. For example, if the assignment is for 1,000 words, and you submit 500, you can only make half the number of points on the assignment.
- **Missed-the-point projects:** Even though I'm fairly flexible with how students interpret the prompt, if you do not complete the project asked of you, you cannot receive full points. For example, if you submit a project that requires research but offer no research to support your ideas, the assignment would be incomplete and will receive no more than half of the possible points. Likewise, if you write an essay when a podcast is required, you cannot receive full points because you have not engaged with the public aspect of the project.

Syllabus Change Policy

The syllabus is a guide. Circumstances and events, such as student progress, may make it necessary for the instructor to modify the syllabus during the semester. Any changes made to the syllabus will be announced in advance.

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University Specific Procedures

Student Conduct

All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. The Code of Student Conduct is described in detail in the Student Guidebook.
http://www.tamuc.edu/Admissions/oneStopShop/undergraduateAdmissions/studentGuidebook.aspx

Students should also consult the Rules of Netiquette for more information regarding how to interact with students in an online forum: https://www.britannica.com/topic/netiquette

TAMUC Attendance

For more information about the attendance policy please visit the Attendance webpage and Procedure 13.99.99.R0.01.
http://www.tamuc.edu/admissions/registrar/generalInformation/attendance.aspx

http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/academic/13.99.99.R0.01.pdf

Academic Integrity

Students at Texas A&M University-Commerce are expected to maintain high standards of integrity and honesty in all of their scholastic work. For more details and the definition of academic dishonesty see the following procedures:

Undergraduate Academic Dishonesty 13.99.99.R0.03
Undergraduate Student Academic Dishonesty Form

http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/documents/13.99.99.R0.03UndergraduateStudentAcademicDishonestyForm.pdf

Graduate Student Academic Dishonesty Form

http://www.tamuc.edu/academics/graduateschool/faculty/GraduateStudentAcademicDishonestyFormold.pdf

http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/undergraduates/13.99.99.R0.03UndergraduateAcademicDishonesty.pdf

AI Use in Courses

Texas A&M University-Commerce acknowledges that there are legitimate uses of Artificial Intelligence, ChatBots, or other software that has the capacity to generate text, or suggest replacements for text beyond individual words.

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However, since this course is intended to teach you how to generate your own content, **no use of AI will be permitted**. Any undocumented use of such software constitutes an instance of academic dishonesty (plagiarism).

In any case, students are fully responsible for the content of any assignment they submit, regardless of whether they used an AI, in any way. This specifically includes cases in which the AI plagiarized another text or misrepresented sources.

13.99.99.R0.03 Undergraduate Academic Dishonesty
13.99.99.R0.10 Graduate Student Academic Dishonesty

Students with Disabilities-- ADA Statement

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

Office of Student Disability Resources and Services
Texas A&M University-Commerce
Velma K. Waters Library Rm 162
Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835
Fax (903) 468-8148
Email: studentdisabilityservices@tamuc.edu
Website: Office of Student Disability Resources and Services

http://www.tamuc.edu/campusLife/campusServices/studentDisabilityResourcesAndServices/

Nondiscrimination Notice

Texas A&M University-Commerce will comply in the classroom, and in online courses, with all federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination and related retaliation on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, age, genetic information or veteran status. Further, an environment free from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression will be maintained.

Campus Concealed Carry Statement

Texas Senate Bill - 11 (Government Code 411.2031, et al.) authorizes the carrying of a concealed handgun in Texas A&M University-Commerce buildings only by persons who have been issued and are in possession of a Texas License to Carry a Handgun. Qualified law enforcement officers or those who are otherwise authorized to carry a concealed handgun in the State of Texas are also permitted to do so. Pursuant to Penal Code (PC) 46.035 and A&M-Commerce Rule 34.06.02.R1, license holders may not carry a concealed handgun in restricted locations.

For a list of locations, please refer to the Carrying Concealed Handguns On Campus document and/or consult your event organizer.

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Web url:
Pursuant to PC 46.035, the open carrying of handguns is prohibited on all A&M-Commerce campuses. Report violations to the University Police Department at 903-886-5868 or 9-1-1.

A&M-Commerce Supports Students' Mental Health

The Counseling Center at A&M-Commerce, located in the Halladay Building, Room 203, offers counseling services, educational programming, and connection to community resources for students. Students have 24/7 access to the Counseling Center's crisis assessment services by calling 903-886-5145. For more information regarding Counseling Center events and confidential services, please visit **www.tamuc.edu/counsel**

CLASS SCHEDULE

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