

ANG 1320: Children's Literature

Hiver 2022

Lundi, 13h à 16h

Prof. Heather Meek

Description:

Through the study of a selection of literary texts written by or about children and young adults, this course explores how suffering and loss are often integral to coming-of-age narratives. We work from the premise that, as Lillian H. Smith observes, children's literature does "not exist in a vacuum, unrelated to literature as a whole," and we think through Roxanne Gay's related claim that reality should not necessarily be "sanitized" for young readers. At the same time, we consider how, as Eric Tribunella suggests, some children's literature "relies on the contrived traumatization of children." Our readings encompass a range of cultural and historical genres, perspectives, and contexts; we study, among other works, late eighteenth- and mid twentieth-century political poetry, nineteenth-century oral storytelling, contemporary indigenous speculative fiction, and fictional and autobiographical narratives of trauma. Although the works on this course will be studied with an adult-like critical rigour, we will discuss the value of the young person's perspective and experience, and we will consider how the recurring concerns addressed within our corpus shape language, form, theme, and political perspective.

Provisional Reading List:

William Blake, *Songs of Innocence and of Experience*
Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm, *Selected Tales*
Harriet Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*
Anne Frank, *The Diary of a Young Girl: The Definitive Edition*
Langston Hughes, *Poetry for Young People*
Joy Kogawa, *Naomi's Road*
Joshua Whitehead (ed.), *Love After the End*

Evaluation:

2 in-class assignments (55%)
Take-home essay (35%)
Participation (10%)