

# Children's Literature

## ENGL 112A

Fall 2025 Section 80 Fully Online 3 Unit(s) 08/20/2025 to 12/08/2025 Modified 08/21/2025

### Contact Information

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Office: Canvas/Zoom

OFFICE HOURS BY APPOINTMENT.

### Course Information

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#### LECTURE

Asynchronous

Canvas

- REQUIRED: LOG IN TO THE COURSE ON A WEEKLY BASIS
- REQUIRED: CHECK WEEKLY ANNOUNCEMENTS FOR DETAILS REGARDING LECTURES & ASSIGNMENTS
- Announcements will post on Wednesdays, Fridays, and Mondays
- Course weeks will run Wednesdays through Tuesdays

**ANNOUNCEMENTS ARE REQUIRED READING!**

#### COURSE DESCRIPTION

English 112A is an upper division course designed to introduce the literature of childhood experience to adult readers. Although children are the central characters and the targeted readers, writers of this genre still structure their works using the same complex literary devices and themes found in adult literature. We will therefore apply standard literary techniques in analyzing the readings for this class.

# COURSE THEME

Crossing Borders: Contemporary Children's Literature from the Periphery

"Touch the sea and at once you are joined to its farthest shore." – Salmon Rushdie

During this course students acquire an understanding of how children's literature functions in an international context and how cultural diversity may be reflected in children's books. This course will focus on a range of contemporary transnational literatures, either originating from or set in various locales around the world. In the study of these texts, students will gain insight into diverse human experiences, helping to broaden their perspectives by offering windows into other cultures. Thematically, we will focus on borders and how by crossing borders or through the journey itself protagonists strengthen or redefine individual, cultural, and national identities.

Furthermore, students will be introduced to concepts and contexts that define borders as physical spaces (such as mountains, seas, outer space), ideological spaces (such as national borders), conceptual spaces (such as the past, the future), and imaginary spaces (such as myth, fantasy). With these concepts in mind, texts will be evaluated as literature with the goal of building greater cross-cultural understanding. Additional themes of genre, gender, LGBTQ+, climate change, and diverse voices will also be explored.

The course is designed to meet the subject matter requirement for those considering a teaching credential. The information and curriculum approaches we will explore should be helpful for elementary, middle, and/or secondary levels of instruction. Nevertheless, this is a literature, not an educational methodology course.



## Course Description and Requisites

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Study of literature for elementary and intermediate grades, representing a variety of cultures. Evaluation and selection of texts.

Prerequisite: Upper division standing.

Letter Graded

## \* Classroom Protocols

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### ATTENDANCE

Although this course is online and asynchronous, students must maintain a regular and active presence in the course. This includes responding to emails and messages, as well as completing module assignments in a timely manner. There are three virtual check-ins during the course of the

semester—that is, a response to a required “Citizen” assignment. Also, there is one required Zoom meeting with the instructor for midterm progress assessment.

IMPORTANT: If there is no response to Canvas message or email and no activity in the Canvas course by the end of the second week of the course, a student may be dropped.

## EMAIL & ONLINE COMMUNICATION ETIQUETTE

For this online course, we will do all of our writing in digital spaces—some formal, some informal. An important part of learning to be a successful student and writer is knowing what is appropriate in a given situation. An email to me, to any other faculty or staff member on campus, or to anyone in any position of authority must be respectful and professional in tone, should come from your official SJSU email account or Canvas message board, and should follow this sample format:

Subject: Request to schedule an appointment

*\*A subject line is always required and should clearly and briefly represent your purpose for emailing. Emails with no subject line may be mistaken as “junk mail” and may not be read.*

Dear Dr. Nathanael,

*\*Always use a formal address, such as Professor, Dr., Ms., Mr. Never use the person’s first name unless you have been given explicit permission to do so. Never use informal address like “Hey, Prof!”*

Body:

I am a student in your ENGL 112A class, and I would like to schedule an appointment with you to discuss my essay draft. I am having trouble with my thesis statement and hope to get your help in clarifying it. Are you available to meet this Wednesday afternoon?

*\*State your question, concern, or request briefly and clearly, using standardized English. Maintain a polite, respectful tone and avoid using exclamation points, emoticons, texting abbreviations, or coarse language. Avoid asking questions that are answered on the syllabus or assignment sheet, such as “When is our paper due?” or “What is our homework for tomorrow?” Emails that are not professional in style or tone, or that ask questions that are clearly answered on the syllabus or assignment sheets, may be ignored.*

Thank you,

*\*Use a formal closing, such as “Sincerely,” “Respectfully,” “Thank you,” or “Best regards.”*

Martha Jones

ID: xxxxxxxx

*\*Always sign your full name at the end of your email. Include your student ID and course number as a courtesy. Occasionally, there are students with the same name and this will avoid confusion*

## Program Information

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The following statement has been adopted by the Department of English for inclusion in all syllabi: In English Department Courses, instructors will comment on and grade the quality of student writing as well as the quality of ideas being conveyed. All student writing should be distinguished by correct grammar and punctuation, appropriate diction and syntax, and well-organized paragraphs. The Department of English reaffirms its commitment to the differential grading scale as defined in the SJSU Catalog ("The Grading System").

Grades issued must represent a full range of student performance:

- A = excellent;
- B = above average;
- C = average;
- D = below average;
- F = failure.

Within any of the letter grade ranges (e.g. B+/B/B-), the assignment of a +(plus) or -(minus) grade will reflect stronger (+) or weaker (-) completion of the goals of the assignment.

### **Program Learning Outcomes (PLO)**

Upon successful completion of an undergraduate degree program in the Department of English and Comparative Literature, students will be able to:

1. Read closely in a variety of forms, styles, structures, and modes, and articulate the value of close reading in the study of literature, creative writing, or rhetoric.
2. Show familiarity with major literary works, genres, periods, and critical approaches to British, American, and World Literature.
3. Write clearly, effectively, and creatively, and adjust writing style appropriately to the content, the context, and nature of the subject.
4. Develop and carry out research projects, and locate, evaluate, organize, and incorporate information effectively.
5. Articulate the relations among culture, history, and texts, including structures of power.

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### **Department Information:**

**Department Name:** English and Comparative Literature

**Department Office:** FO 102

Department Website: [www.sjsu.edu/english](http://www.sjsu.edu/english) (<https://www.sjsu.edu/english>)

Department email: [english@sjsu.edu](mailto:english@sjsu.edu) (<mailto:english@sjsu.edu>)

Department phone number: 408-924-4425

## Course Goals

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The specific ways the above PLOs are assessed in ENGL 112A are through

1. the LITERARY ANALYSIS, or SHORT RESEARCH ESSAY, requirement requires students to demonstrate their ability to read closely in a variety of forms, styles, structures, and modes, and articulate the value of close reading in the study of literature, creative writing, or rhetoric (PLO 1); and write clearly, effectively, and creatively, and adjust writing style appropriately to the content, the context, and nature of the subject (PLO 3). Student grades from the Literary Analysis paper will be used for assessment of PLOs 1, 3, 4, and 5
2. the TEAM PROJECT demonstrates PLOs 1, 2, 4, and 5. This assignment requires students to work in small groups of 2-4 and research specific details from a selected country to create a literary history of children's literature. Additional research will be needed to clarify historic events and details. Students will present their findings to the class in a recorded presentation and make connections to the assigned readings from the course as well as make suggestions for future reading.
3. the ILLUSTRATED MAP project demonstrates students' abilities to read closely in a variety of forms, styles, structures, and modes, and articulate the value of close reading in the study of literature, creative writing, or rhetoric (PLO 1). They must also articulate the relations among culture, history, and texts, including structures of power (PLO 5). Students will select one character/text and illustrate a map of that character's journey in the style of Laurel Croza's I Know Here.

## Course Materials

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### REQUIRED TEXTS FOR THIS COURSE

Seven novels plus selected short stories, picture books, and articles. Some readings (short stories, picture books, or articles) will be available via .PDF documents on Canvas or via the links available on Canvas. All of the novels listed below are available in e-book and paperback editions through the campus bookstore or other online venues.

NOTE: ALL COURSE ANNOUNCEMENTS ARE REQUIRED READING!

### NOVELS & STORIES

Bodil Bredsdorff. *The Crow-girl: The Children of Crow Cove* (Denmark; 1993)  
ISBN-13: 978-0374400033

Paul Fleischman. *Seedfolks* (U.S.A.; 1997)

ISBN-13: 978-0064472074

Witi Ihimaera. Whale Rider (New Zealand; 1987)

Online link provided.

ISBN-13: 978-0435131081

Hisae Iwaoka. Saturn Apartments, Vol. 1 (Japan; 2005)

ISBN-13: 978-1421533643

Andri Snær Magnason. The Story of the Blue Planet (Iceland; 2000)

ISBN-13: 978-1609805067

Nnedi Okorafor. "The Baboon War." (Nigeria; 2016)

LISTEN: You can listen to this story read by the fabulous Le Var Burton on his podcast:

Le Var Burton Reads (About 44 minutes):

"The Baboon War: (<https://radiopublic.com/LeVarBurtonReads/s1!ebfd6>)" by Nnedi Okorafor

Print version of this story available in Nnedi Okorafor's collection KABU KABU (2013)

ISBN-13: 978-1607014058

Gudrun Pausewang. Traitor (Germany; 1995)

ISBN-13: 978-0761365716

E-copies of this text will be available through the university library.

Anthony Silverston, Raffaella Delle Donne, and Willem Samuel. Pearl of the Sea (South Africa; 2022)

ISBN-13: 978-1946395740

## PICTURE BOOKS

A selection from the following picture books will be provided in .PDF format or online links.

No purchase required. Translations will be provided where needed.

My Little Round House. Written and Illustrated by Bolormaa Baasansuren (Mongolia; 2009).

I Know Here by Laurel Croza. Illustrated by Matt James (Canada; 2010).

The Promise by Nicola Davies. Illustrated by Laura Carlin (U.K.; 2013)

The Blue Sky. Written and Illustrated by Andrea Petrlik Huseinović (Croatia; 2001).

Nei! sagði litla skrímslið (No! Said Little Monster) by Áslaug Jónsdóttir, Rakel Helmsdal & Kalle Güettler (Faroe-Iceland; 2004).

Memories of Survival. Written by Esther Nisenthal Krinitz and Bernice Steinhardt. Illustrated by Esther Nisenthal Krinitz (Poland-U.S.; 2005).

Ziba Came on a Boat. Written by Liz Lofthouse. Illustrated by Robert Ingpen (Afghanistan-Australia; 2007).

Herr Meier und Herr Müller. Written and Illustrated by Birte Müller (Germany; 2001).

Mohammed's Journey: A Refugee Diary. Written by Anthony Robinson and Anne-Marie Young. Illustrated by June Allan (Iraq-U.K.; 2009).

Balam and Lluvia's House. Written by Julio Serrano Echeverría. Illustrated by Yolanda Mosquera. Translated by Lawrence Schimel (Guatemala; 2023).

Migrant. Written by Maxine Trottier. Illustrated by Isabelle Arsenault (Mexico-Canada; 2011).

The Park in the Dark. Written by Martin Waddell. Illustrated by Barbara Firth (U.K.; 1989).

NOTE: Additional readings such as articles, blogs, essays, and videos will be assigned along with the above main readings. See weekly assignments in Canvas for details.

## Course Requirements and Assignments

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NOTE: "Success in this course is based on the expectation that students will spend, for each unit of credit, a minimum of **45 hours** over the length of the course (normally three hours per unit per week) for instruction, preparation/studying, or course related activities, including but not limited to internships, labs, and clinical practica. Other course structures will have equivalent workload expectations as described in the syllabus."

In other words, expect to dedicate about **10-15 hours per week** to this 15-week course. See breakdown of grading and assignment descriptions below.

Course assignments (described in detail below) will consist of orientation activities, module quizzes, one essay, one team project, one mapping project, module activities (Side Trips), participation credit (Citizen), A.i. training, and one final exam.

All assignments must be submitted in a format that can be seen and graded by the instructor. Due to high volume of error, Google Docs is not acceptable. See individual assignments for specific format requirements.

## DESCRIPTION OF ASSIGNMENTS

## SHORT ESSAY (10 points total; 4 pages, or approx. 1000 words minimum required)

Students will demonstrate their ability to critically evaluate literature and defend a position in a four-page critical essay. Some additional research will be required and essays must quote from credible academic sources with citations. Successful essays will have a clear thesis, present ideas in an organized, logical, and coherent form, and use Standard English grammar, punctuation, spelling, and usage. Formal assignment prompts and grading rubrics will be distributed at the time the essays are assigned. The essay will be due at the conclusion of Module 1. (PLO 1-5)

## TEAM PROJECT: LITERARY HISTORY & BOOK TALK (10 points total)

Working in teams of 2-4, students are required to research the literary history of children's literature in one country not explored in class. Student teams will be expected to set up a regular meeting schedule to discuss a project plan, assigned roles, and expected outcomes. Student teams may utilize email, phone calls, and Zoom to conduct their meetings, depending on individual schedules. Students will be graded individually on their roles as a team member and their contribution to the overall project. Grading criteria will include: 1) analysis of overall project and team process; 2) analysis of individual contribution to project; 3) analysis of another group project.

Students will present a 10- to 15-minute Literary History & Book Talk to their peers via a recorded slide presentation. In their presentations, students will engage with themes of "crossing borders" and "disrupting the single story." Students will also provide suggestions for future reading and provide brief biographical information about the author and artist, some cultural background about the country/culture in which the book is published, any interesting textual history about the publication of the book, a summary of the book's contents and plot, an evaluation of the text, and a recommendation about pairing that text with others we have read for use in teaching a course along with a connection to course themes. A sample Book Talk, prompt, and a rubric will be distributed on Canvas upon assignment. Book Talk books do not need to be purchased, but may be ordered from the library. Book Talk books must be approved by the instructor. Presentations will be due at the conclusion of Module 2. (PLO 1, 2, 4, 5)

## CREATIVE PROJECT: Mapping a Literary Text (10 points total; length may vary)

Students will complete a creative illustrated mapping project using texts assigned in Module 3. Students will select one character/text from the module and map an illustrated journey in the style of Laurel Croza's *I Know Here*. Formal assignment prompts and grading rubrics will be distributed at the time the project is assigned. Students will confirm their project plan with the instructor. The Project will be submitted in audio/visual format and due at the conclusion of Module 3. (PLO 3-5)



## Module Quizzes (15 points; 5 points per module)

Module quizzes will be taken online in Canvas and will be available during a seven day window (see schedule for details). Once the window is closed, no one may take the exam except with a university approved excuse (illness, etc.) Module quizzes will contain a selection of matching, multiple choice, short answer questions based on weekly readings and lectures. Practice quizzes will be available within the lectures. (PLO 2)

## SIDE TRIPS (15 points; 5 activities required per module)

Side Trips consist of a selection of small activities in which the student may demonstrate additional knowledge or skills based on the current module's assignments. The completion of one Side Trip = one point. Over the 15 week semester, students are required to achieve a total of 15 points. Activities include: illustrating a text, watching and responding to a TED Talk, responding to a scholarly article, and more. See Side Trips in Canvas for more details. (PLO 1-4)

## CITIZEN (Participation credit; 20 points)

In addition to the Side Trips listed above, students must complete a selection of required assignments marked "Citizen." These assignments are necessary for the successful completion of the course. Such assignments include workshops, opening and closing reflections, and a student conference appointment with the instructor held on Zoom. (PLO 1-5)

## Final Examination (20 points)

The Final Exam will be taken online in Canvas and will be available during a seven-day window during Finals Week. Once the window is closed, no one may take the exam except with a university approved excuse (illness, etc.) The Final will consist of 40 questions at one half (0.5) point each. The Final will contain a selection of matching, multiple choice, short answer questions. (PLO 2, 3)

## EXTRA CREDIT POLICY: EASTER EGGS

Extra credit may be earned by responding to specially marked assignments called "Easter Eggs." These discussion board posts are available on a weekly basis but for a limited time. Easter Egg credit must be collected as a group to earn tiered rewards. See Canvas page for list of rewards.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** Extra credit may NOT be used to replace the credit of main assignments. Failure to turn in required assignments or receiving a 0 on a main module assignment may nullify extra credit.

## LATE WORK POLICY: By Arrangement

At any time, and for reasonable circumstances, a student may request an extension on a main module assignment like a project or quiz. Message the instructor to make arrangements.

**TIME SENSITIVE:** Late work will receive a 10% or (-1) point reduction for each week beyond the original due date of the assignment.

Extensions are not granted for one-point assignments like Citizen or Side Trips.

## A.i. TOOLS USE POLICY

A.i. Tools, such as ChatGPT, are now a part of our reality, but their usefulness in education is still under debate. Throughout this course, we will engage with and analyze the efficacy of such tools.

**IF YOU CHOOSE TO USE A.i. TOOLS AS A WRITING AID, an A.i. Use Statement must be included in completed assignments that explicitly states what the student used A.i. tools for. Furthermore, any use of A.i. must be formally cited in the assignment's Works Cited page and an Appendix that includes the original question submitted and response received from A.i.**

Appropriate AI uses:

- To think about key terms for research
- To organize or outline ideas
- For review and editing

Do NOT use AI tools to:

- Generate original work

**USING AI TOOLS TO GENERATE ORIGINAL WORK IS A FORM OF CHEATING AND WILL NOT BE TOLERATED**

## ✓ Grading Information

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### Criteria

Student progress will be assessed by means of essays and exams, along with a team project and some shorter assignments (Side Trips). Students will receive prompts and rubrics—posted to Canvas and discussed in lectures—that will outline the specific expectations of the assignments. Students will receive written feedback on assignments along with a letter grade based on a 10-point scale per assignment. As this is an online class, students are encouraged to stay in regular contact with the instructor with regard to any questions about assignments or class expectations.

Specific grading criteria for assignments are indicated in the descriptions. Late papers and make-up exams must be arranged with the instructor. By department policy, in all English Department Courses, instructors will comment on and grade the quality of student writing as well as the quality of ideas being conveyed. All student writing should be distinguished by correct grammar and punctuation, appropriate diction and syntax, and well-organized paragraphs. The Department of English reaffirms its commitment to the differential grading scale as defined in the SJSU Catalog ("The Grading System"). Grades issued must represent a full range of student performance:

A = excellent; B = above average; C = average; D = below average; F = failure.

# Breakdown

## DETERMINATION OF GRADES

Grades are determined on a 100-point scale, as follows:

10 points = Team Project (to be completed after Module 1)  
10 points = Short Essay (to be completed after Module 2)  
10 points = Book Talk (to be completed after Module 3)  
15 points = 3 Module Quizzes at 5 points each  
15 points = Side Trips (Module activities; 15 minimum required)  
20 points = Citizen (Participation credit)  
20 points = Final  
100 points total

Grading Scale:

A 90-100  
B 80-89  
C 70-79  
D 60-69  
F 0-59

This course must be passed with a C or better as a CSU graduation requirement.

Students who do not submit all three required module projects will not receive an A in the course.

## University Policies

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Per [University Policy S16-9 \(PDF\)](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf) (<http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf>), relevant university policy concerning all courses, such as student responsibilities, academic integrity, accommodations, dropping and adding, consent for recording of class, etc. and available student services (e.g. learning assistance, counseling, and other resources) are listed on the [Syllabus Information](https://www.sjsu.edu/curriculum/courses/syllabus-info.php) (<https://www.sjsu.edu/curriculum/courses/syllabus-info.php>) web page. Make sure to visit this page to review and be aware of these university policies and resources.

## Course Schedule

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Please log into Canvas to view the updated course schedule.

Schedule is subject to change at instructor's discretion.

Schedule adjustments will be announced via Canvas Announcements and email.

COURSE ANNOUNCEMENTS ARE REQUIRED READING!!

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## MODULE 0

GETTING STARTED ORIENTATION

AUG 20 - AUG 26

WEEK 0

DUE: MODULE 0 QUIZ

DUE: CITIZEN: INTRODUCE YOURSELF

DUE: CITIZEN: DISRUPTING THE SINGLE STORY

## MODULE 1

CLIMATE LITERACY & ECO-CITIZENSHIP

AUG 27 - SEPT 2

WEEK 1: INTRODUCTION TO COURSE

READ: THE STORY OF THE BLUE PLANET / THE PROMISE

SEPT 3 - SEPT 9

WEEK 2

READ: PEARL OF THE SEA / WHALE RIDER

SEPT 10 - SEPT 16

WEEK 3

READ: SATURN APARTMENTS / SEEDFOLKS

SEPT 17 - SEPT 23

WEEK 4

ESSAY PREP: ESSAY WORKSHOPS

BEGIN WRITING ESSAY DRAFTS

SEPT 24 - SEPT 30

WEEK 5: END MODULE 1

DUE: ESSAYS

DUE: MODULE 1 QUIZ (7-day submission window)

DUE: FIVE SIDE TRIPS DUE AT END OF MODULE 1

MODULE 2

THE POWER OF PICTURE BOOKS:

CROSSING BORDERS & DISRUPTING THE SINGLE STORY

OCT 1 - OCT 7

WEEK 6: CROSSING BORDERS

READ: MEMORIES OF SURVIVAL, MIGRANT, MOHAMMED'S JOURNEY, ZIBA CAME ON A BOAT

OCT 8 - OCT 14

WEEK 7: REPRESENTATIONS OF HOME

READ: BALAM & LLUVIA'S HOUSE, MY LITTLE ROUND HOUSE, THE PARK IN THE DARK

OCT 15 - OCT 21

WEEK 8: IMAGES & FEELINGS

READ: THE BLUE SKY, NO SAID LITTLE MONSTER, HERR MEIER & HERR MUELLER

OCT 22 - OCT 28

WEEK 9

TEAM PROJECT PREP: TEAM MEETINGS & BRAINSTORMING

OCT 29 - NOV 4

WEEK 10: END MODULE 2

DUE: TEAM PROJECT

DUE: TEAM PROJECT: TEAM ANALYSIS

DUE: MODULE 2 QUIZ (7-day submission window)

DUE: FIVE SIDE TRIPS DUE AT END OF MODULE 2

MODULE 3

SPACE/PLACE: I KNOW HERE

NOV 5 - NOV 11

WEEK 11

READ: THE BABOON WAR, I KNOW HERE

NOV 12 - NOV 18

WEEK 12

READ: THE CROW-GIRL

NOV 19 - NOV 25

WEEK 13

READ: TRAITOR

[THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY: NOV 27-28]

NOV 29 - DEC 2

WEEK 14

BEGIN MAPPING PROJECT

DEC 3 - DEC 8

WEEK 15: END MODULE 3

DUE: MODULE 3 QUIZ

DUE: MODULE 3 PROJECT

DUE: FIVE SIDE TRIPS DUE AT END OF MODULE 3

FINALS WEEK: DEC 10 - DEC 17

FINAL REFLECTION & EXAM