

English 4010WA: Children's Literature and Environmentalism

Course Location: Ryan Building 2037

Class Times: Tues and Thurs 5:30-7:00pm

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Instructor Information

- Instructor: Dr. Chris Parkes
- Office: RB 3035
- Telephone: 343-8375
- Email: cparkes@lakeheadu.ca
- Office Hours: MW 1:00-2:00

Course Description/Overview

This course will examine the ways in which children's literature has imagined both the environment and environmentalism from the early twentieth century to the present. It will focus on the ways in which children are often constructed in popular texts as stewards of the environment. In the process, such texts negotiate the complex relationship of the child to the environment in the modern industrial nation state.

Required Course Text(s)

- Mowat, *Lost in the Barrens*
- Nesbit, *Railway Children*
- Seuss, *Lorax*
- Silverstein, *Giving Tree*
- Sachar, *Holes*
- Hiassen, *Hoot*
- Benjamin, *Thing about Jellyfish*

Course Schedule

Jan	7:	Introduction to Course	
	9:	Laurence, "The Loons" (courselink)	
	14:	"The Loons"	
	16:	Sigler, "Wonderland" (courselink)	
	21:	Essay Writing and Seminar Presentations	
	23:	Byerly, "Uses of Landscape" (courselink)	
	28:	Mowat, <i>Lost in the Barrens</i>	
	30:	<i>Lost in the Barrens</i>	
Feb	4:	<i>Lost in the Barrens</i>	
	6:	Nesbit, <i>Railway Children</i>	
	11:	<i>Railway Children</i>	ESSAY 1 DUE
	13:	<i>Railway Children</i>	

READING WEEK

	25:	Sachar, <i>Holes</i>	
	27:	<i>Holes</i>	
Mar	3:	<i>Holes</i>	
	5:	Seuss, <i>Lorax</i>	
	10:	Silverstein, <i>Giving Tree</i>	
	12:	More Picture Books	
	17:	Hiassen, <i>Hoot</i>	
	19:	<i>Hoot</i>	
	24:	<i>Hoot</i>	
	26:	Benjamin, <i>Thing about Jellyfish</i>	
	31:	<i>Thing about Jellyfish</i>	
Apr	2:	ESSAY 2 DUE	

Assignments and Evaluation

Table of Assignments

Assignment	Due date	Value	Length
Essay 1	Feb 11	30%	1000 words
Essay 2	Apr 2	40%	2000 words
Seminar	See schedule	20%	30 minutes
Attendance		10%	

Assignment Policies

- All assignments are individual assignments and cannot be completed collaboratively.
- Assignments are due by midnight on the dates indicated. If you do not hand in your paper in class, have it date stamped by security and submit it either to the English department office (RB3029), or to the instructor's office.
- If you require an extension, you must ask for one BEFORE the due date.
- Unless you ask for (and receive) an extension, late essays will be penalized by 2% per day (to a maximum of 20%), and will not be accepted after midnight on April 17.
- All assignments must be in MLA format, double spaced, with 1" margins, and in 12 point font.
- Exceptions to these policies are allowed only with a doctor's note or other appropriate documentation.

Details of Assignments

Essay 1 30% MLA DUE: Feb 11

Write a 1000 word essay on one of the following topics. Your essay must utilize 1 secondary source:

1. Discuss the representation of cottage country in "The Loons."
2. Discuss the representation of the Metis family in "The Loons."
3. Discuss the representation of the Canadian wilderness in *Lost in the Barrens*.
4. Discuss the representation of indigenous culture in *Lost in the Barrens*.

Essay 2 40% MLA DUE: Apr 2

Write a 2000 word essay on one of the following topics. Your essay must utilize 1 secondary source:

1. Discuss the relationship of the children to their environment in *The Railway Children*.
2. Discuss the representation of industrialization in *The Railway Children*.
3. Discuss the ways in which the children find agency in *The Railway Children*.
4. Discuss the representation of the environment in *Holes*.
5. Discuss the representation of environmental activism in *Hoot*.
6. Discuss the representation of the outsider figure in *Hoot*.
7. Discuss the representation of jellyfish in *Thing about Jellyfish*.

8. Discuss the representation of environmental leadership in *Thing about Jellyfish*.
9. Come up with your own topic. It must be approved.

Seminar 20% 30 minutes DUE: See schedule below

Present a 30 minute seminar. Your seminar should take a “teach the class” approach by providing an overview of the topic and making sure to develop specific arguments. Your goal should also be to generate class discussion.

Jan 30	<i>Lost in the Barrens</i> : Jamie and the “man vs. nature” narrative
Feb 4	<i>Lost in the Barrens</i> : Viking ruins and other artefacts
Feb 6	<i>Railway Children</i> : Railways and the English countryside
Feb 11	<i>Railway Children</i> : Child’s play as training
Feb 13	<i>Railway Children</i> : Father’s imprisonment
Feb 27	<i>Holes</i> : Environment as punishment
Mar 3	<i>Holes</i> : Fixing the past
Mar 5	<i>Lorax</i>
Mar 10	<i>Giving Tree</i>
Mar 12	Other Picture Books 1
Mar 12	Other Picture Books 2
Mar 19	<i>Hoot</i> : Representation of Florida
Mar 24	<i>Hoot</i> : Animal protection
Mar 26	<i>Thing about Jellyfish</i> : Making young environmentalists
Mar 31	<i>Thing about Jellyfish</i> : Use of sentiment

Attendance 10%

If a student attends every class, they will receive the full 10%. Less than full attendance will receive part of the 10% as determined by the instructor.

Marking Standards

All assignments will be marked in accordance with the English Department Marking Standards¹.

Collaboration/Plagiarism Rules

Plagiarism is the unacknowledged use of someone else's words and/or ideas. Not acknowledging your debt to the ideas of a secondary source, failing to use quotation marks when you are quoting directly, buying essays from essay banks, copying another student's work, or working together on an individual assignment, all constitute plagiarism. Resubmitting material you've submitted to another course is also academic dishonesty. All plagiarized work (in whole or in part) and other forms of academic dishonesty will be reported to the Dean, who is responsible for judging academic misconduct and imposing penalties. The minimum penalty for academic misconduct is a 0 on the assignment in question. It might also be subject to more severe academic penalties. See the Student Code of Conduct - Academic Integrity².

University Policies

- Students in this course are expected to conform to the Student Code of Conduct.
- **Accommodations:** Lakehead University is committed to achieving full accessibility for persons with disabilities in accordance with the terms of the Ontario Human Rights Code³. This occurs through a collaborative process that acknowledges a collective obligation to develop an accessible learning environment that both meets the needs of students and preserves the essential academic requirements of the course. Part of this commitment includes arranging academic accommodations for students with disabilities to ensure they have an equitable opportunity to participate in all of their academic activities. If you think you may need accommodations, you are strongly encouraged to contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS)⁴ and register as early as possible.

¹ <https://www.lakeheadu.ca/students/student-life/student-conduct/academic-integrity/node/51239>

² <https://www.lakeheadu.ca/students/student-life/student-conduct>

³ <http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/ontario-human-rights-code>

⁴ <https://www.lakeheadu.ca/faculty-and-staff/departments/services/sas>