

**IS 575 Valuing Diversity:  
International and Intercultural Resources for Youth  
Full Summer Term 2014  
Thursdays 6:30 – 9:10 p.m. (EDT) Blackboard Collaborate  
Section 001 & 002**

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“Children need literature that serves as a window onto lives and experiences different from their own, and literature that serves as a mirror reflecting themselves and their cultural values, attitudes and behaviors.” Rudine Sims Bishop

This course for information professionals provides an introduction to multicultural literature for children and young adults. “Multicultural” is interpreted broadly and includes characteristics such as race, ethnicity, nationality, religion, gender, socioeconomic status and bodily ability.

As observed by Rudine Sims Bishop in the quote above, children and young adults need to have this literature readily available to them, both to support who they are, and to broaden and deepen their perspectives. Information professionals play a critical role by providing the connection between this literature and these young people.

**Course Description from SIS Graduate Student Manual:**

“Examines texts and materials for youth that reflect the contemporary settings and lives of young people from all over the world. This course will review the scholarship of literature and film to determine how to recognize stereotypes; how to understand publishing worlds; and how to recognize universal themes that transcend ethnicity, religion, gender, class, and nationhood.”

**Prerequisites:** None

**Credit Hours:** 3.0

**Course Objectives**

At the end of this course, you will become familiar with:

- The social context in which multicultural literature for children and young adults is produced and used within the U.S.
- Some of the major issues, concerns and debates with respect to multicultural children’s and young adult’s literature
- Scholarly and professional literature concerning multicultural children’s and young adult’s materials
- A sampling of the major multicultural authors and illustrators
- Major awards of multicultural children's literature
- Strategies to select and use multicultural children’s and young adult’s literature in classrooms, libraries and at home
- How to evaluate multicultural children's and young adult’s literature for school and public library use

### **Instructor's Note**

I want to point out that words like “diversity” and “multicultural” are not single-faceted. Instead, they encompass a large range of life experiences. So even though the topics for this course have been divided into specific cultural groups, this is for expediency and not because life is that simple. We will be talking about this throughout the summer, too.

### **Teaching Philosophy**

My basic teaching philosophy for this class is that you are in the class to learn about international and intercultural resources for youth and it is my job to make it an interesting and thought-provoking journey. Together we will be considering and discussing a range of ideas, some of which may be new to you. I encourage you to take advantage of being in this class by engaging with the materials, with your fellow classmates and with me. I believe learning is a process and that no matter where you start in that process, there is always more to understand.

### **Contacting the Instructor**

The best ways to contact me is through email. My email is [jwinkels@utk.edu](mailto:jwinkels@utk.edu) and I check my email at least once a day, usually more often. I will respond to your email as quickly as possible, most likely within 24 hours. I welcome your questions and if you are ever unsure of an assignment or want clarification, please ask. It's never a bother - I would much rather you ask me than have to wonder about something.

### **Required Text**

*Diversity in Youth Literature: Opening Doors Through Reading*

Eds. Jamie Campbell Naidoo and Sarah Park Dahlen

ISBN 978-0-8389-1143-3

ALA editions Chicago, IL

2013

### **Readings**

In addition to the textbook readings, there will be additional assigned readings. I'll be providing pdfs of some of these and others will be available on the Internet. You will also be reading a range of children's and young adult titles throughout the semester. I encourage you to use Hodges library or the public library for these titles.

If you are unable to access some of the readings or find the books, please let me know so I can help.

### **Method of Instruction**

To take this course, you must have access to a computer with high speed Internet access, and you must use a UTK email account. You may use your own personal computer, or you may use

the computers available in the various campus libraries or computer labs. If you are using your personal computer, be sure you are running the latest version of Java, by going to [java.com](http://java.com) and using the update button; this is free to do and will make sure the applications run effectively for you.

We will be using the Blackboard Collaborate (BBC) software for the class lectures.

To attend class sessions, log into Blackboard (<https://bblearn.utk.edu/>), locate this course in your “My Courses” section, select BBC from the Course Tools, and then pick the current week’s class session. Each weekly session will be labeled with Week 1, Week 2, etc. You are expected to attend all ten (10) of the online class meetings.

Blackboard will be used for many course management tasks. We’ll use interactive tools such as the Discussion Boards. Each week’s materials will be posted in a separate weekly folder, which can be found under the Weekly Folders link. In that folder will be the weekly PowerPoint presentation, the list of readings for that week, and any other links or information.

There are many resources available on Blackboard and it’s worth exploring to see what’s there. There’s a student help section, labeled Resources, which has links to some excellent resources, including information about taking an online course, using Blackboard and BBC. I highly recommend taking a look at this section at the beginning of this course.

The course will consist of lectures, discussion, in-class and written assignments. Please log into Blackboard (BB) **at least once every week** to see if any new information from the course has been posted and to participate in online discussions. I will also be using the BB Announcement feature to let you know when I’ve added information to our course site.

### **Academic Honesty**

The highest standards of academic honesty and integrity are expected; cheating and plagiarism are simply unacceptable. Any student found guilty of cheating or plagiarism on any class assignment or test will be given a grade of F for the course. Definitions and details of the university policy on academic honesty can be found in *Hilltopics* ([http://studentconduct.utk.edu/students\\_current\\_dishonesty.php](http://studentconduct.utk.edu/students_current_dishonesty.php)).

The policy specifically states:

Academic dishonesty can encompass a number of different acts by a student, but most commonly includes plagiarism or cheating. Plagiarism is using the intellectual property or product of someone else without giving proper credit. The undocumented use of someone else’s words or ideas in any medium of communication (unless such information is recognized as common knowledge) is a serious offense, subject to disciplinary action that may include failure in a course and/or dismissal from the university.

In the online environment, it can sometimes be confusing trying to determine what is plagiarism. The best rule to follow is: If you use someone else’s words or if you’re unsure, **cite your source**. It’s much better to cite too much than too little!

### **Adaptations or Accommodations**

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a documented disability, please contact the Office of Disability Services. This will ensure that you are properly registered for services.

Office of Disability Services  
915 Volunteer Boulevard  
2227 Dunford Hall  
865-974-6087  
865-622-6566 VP  
<http://ods.utk.edu/>

### **College of Communication & Information Diversity Statement**

CCI recognizes and values diversity. Exposing students to diverse people, ideas and cultures increases opportunities for intellectual inquiry, encourages critical thinking, and enhances communication and information competence. When all viewpoints are heard, thoughtfully considered, and respectfully responded to, everyone benefits. Diversity and fairness unite us with the wider professional and global community. For a fuller discussion of the CCI Diversity Statement, see [www.cci.utk.edu/diversity-statement](http://www.cci.utk.edu/diversity-statement).

### **Assignments and Grading**

I use a point system for grading. The following grading scale will be used to determine the final course grade:

A	920 – 1000 points
B+	860 – 919 points
B	800 – 859 points
C+	750 – 799 points
C	700 – 749 points
D	520 – 699 points
F	0 – 519 points

The final course grade will be based on the following:

Assignment	Points each	Number Required	Due Date
Responses to scholarly/professional articles (Altogether: 10% of grade)	20	5	Throughout semester. Final date: 8/7/2014
Critical analyses of texts (Altogether: 36% of grade)	45	8	Throughout semester. Final date: 8/7/2014
Responses to classmates' posts (Altogether: 9% of grade)	18	5	Within 2 weeks of each original posting. Final date: 8/7/2014
Term paper (30% of grade)	300	1	8/7/2014
Participation/attendance (15% of grade)	15	10	Weekly class attendance

Each Thursday before class, the following will be uploaded into the appropriate weekly folder on Blackboard:

- PowerPoint slides for current lecture
- Assigned textbook readings and articles to be read for the next week
- (For Weeks 3 – 10) Book lists of recommended children's and young adult's titles from which you select two (2) and read both for that week in addition to the assigned articles

**Postings to Blackboard: These total 55% of final grade (550 points)**

(You will need to make a minimum of 18 posts for the entire course, although of course you may make additional posts.)

**I. Responses to Articles**

Read all the professional/scholarly articles assigned. Write and post a thoughtful response or critique to any **five** of the professional/scholarly articles assigned throughout the entire course. This response should be a minimum of two paragraphs long and should provide an analysis or critique of the author's argument or thesis. This can be a personal, creative or intellectual response to a portion of the article or the entire article. This should **not** be a simple summary of the article. You may want to address how the article made you feel or whether you agree or disagree with the author and why. You may want to compare or contrast what others have said in other professional/scholarly readings.

**5 posts total – 100 points (20 points per post)**

**II. Critical analysis of children's/YA texts. Please read only fiction titles.**

In addition to your responses to the articles, for Weeks 3 – 10, select and read two (2) children's or young adult's texts for *each* cultural grouping. A list of recommended authors and/or titles will be provided for each grouping. You may select a title that does not appear on a list as long as it is related to the grouping for that week and you have reason to believe it's quality literature. Perform a close reading and explication of one of the texts and then write a critical analysis and/or visual interpretation (if the title is illustrated) of **one** text (or a portion of

one text) and post it to Blackboard (if your selection is a children's book with illustrations, provide a visual interpretation of the images as well as an analysis based on a close reading. If your selection is a young adult text, then a close reading of the text is fine). This post should be a minimum of 400 words and a preferred maximum of 800 words (although if you need to write longer, please feel free to do so!). Also post the author and title of the second text you selected and read, along with a one or two sentence comment about the book.

**At least one (1) of the books you analyze must be a picture book with text.**

Analysis of children's or YA text for each of the following cultural groupings:

- 1) Native American/Indian/Indigenous
- 2) African/Afro-Caribbean/African-American
- 3) Latino/Latina American
- 4) Asian/Asian-American
- 5) U.S. Regional/European Ethnic
- 6) Religious Traditions
- 7) Gender Issues/Gender Equity/Sexual Diversity
- 8) The Body: Disability, Appearance and Age; Socioeconomic Status (SES)

**8 posts total - 360 points (45 points per post)**

### **III. Responses to classmates' posts**

Please read the posts of your classmates and post a thoughtful response to five posts of their posts. You should engage in a constructive (and hopefully lively) dialogue with the literature, with criticism of the literature, and with your classmates. You may share an anecdote that confirms their position, expand or contribute to an argument made or politely challenge an assertion or claim. *Each of these responses must be: A minimum of 400 words; made within 2 weeks of your classmate's posting; and, on different topics.*

**5 posts total – 100 points (20 per post)**

### **IV. Research Paper**

The final assignment is a research paper. An original, 7 – 15 page research paper (double-spaced, 12 point, Times New Roman, 1 inch margins) is required. The research paper can be written on any topic generally related to multicultural children's or young adult's literature. A list of possible topics will be provided. A research paper is defined as: "A written composition, usually five or more pages in length, assigned as an exercise in a formal course of study. The writer is expected to state a thesis and advance a logical argument based on supporting information found in a systematic investigation of the topic. The source of quotations, facts, and ideas not those of the author must be documented in footnotes or endnotes and a bibliography." (From "ODLIS: Online Dictionary for Library and Information Science by Joan M. Reitz" [http://www.abc-clio.com/ODLIS/odlis\\_R.aspx#researchpaper](http://www.abc-clio.com/ODLIS/odlis_R.aspx#researchpaper), accessed May 19, 2014). Please use at least five sources which may include any of those read or discussed in class (books, journal articles, web pages) and provide a full citation to all sources used with any appropriate style manual (APA, MLA, Turabian, etc.); the "Works Cited", "References" or "Bibliography" page is included in the final page count. Correct usage of academic English, spelling, grammar and composition is expected.

**300 points**

**Course Calendar**

A calendar of lectures can be found in the following table. Specific reading assignments will be posted each week.

Note: There may be changes to this calendar, but I'll let you know in advance if there are.

<b>Week</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Topics</b>
1	May 29	Welcome Introduction Overview of Course and Syllabus <b>Getting Started</b> What is a close reading? What is visual interpretation?
2	June 5	<b>What is Multicultural Literature?</b> What is culture? What is race? What is ethnicity? What is multicultural children's and young adult literature? Why is this literature important? What are some of the politics of children's literature? What are some general criteria for evaluating multicultural literature?
3	June 12	<b>Native American/Indigenous Literature</b> Who are some important Native American authors/titles? How do you evaluate Native American literature? Cultural appropriation or appreciation?
4	June 19	<b>African/Afro-Caribbean/African American Literature</b> Who are some important African/African American authors/titles? How do you evaluate African/African American literature? What is authenticity in literature?
5	June 26	<b>Latino/a Literature</b> Who are some important Latino/a authors/titles? How do you evaluate Hispanic "American"/Latino/a literature? What is the role of language in literature?
6	July 3	<b>Asian/Asian-American</b> Who are some important Asian/Asian-American authors/titles? How do you evaluate Asian/Asian-American literature? How does literature influence identity (and vice-versa)?
7	July 10	<b>Ethnic Europe/European Ethnic America/            U.S. Regional Literature</b> Who are some important Ethnic Europe/European Ethnic American and U.S. regional authors/titles? Are Europeans "ethnic"? How do we approach U.S. mass culture versus regionalism? Are regional differences in the U.S. important?

8	July 17	<b>Religious Traditions</b> How are religious traditions presented through literature? Who are important authors/titles from various religious traditions? How do you evaluate these titles?
9	July 24	<b>Gender Issues/Gender Equity/Sexual Diversity</b> Who are important authors/titles that deal with gender, gender roles and sexual diversity in children's and young adult's literature? How do you evaluate these titles?
10	July 31	<b>The Body: Disability, Appearance, Age, Socioeconomic Status (SES)</b> How are issues of the body such as age, 'disability'/ability, physical appearance/physical difference, poverty, housing status, and illness handled in children's and young adult's literature?  <b>Conclusion: Bringing it All Together: The Diverse and Multicultural Landscape of Story</b>
11	August 7	Final exam week begins <b>All postings due</b> <b>Research paper due</b>

*Instructor note: I am grateful to Kimberly Black, whose syllabus and approach have greatly informed my teaching of this course.*