

# CHILDREN'S LITERATURE: INSTRUCTION, APPRECIATION AND INTEGRATION

(Syllabus of Dr. Debbra A. Uttero)

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**Summary:** Students develop techniques to help children develop a lifetime appreciation of literature. The course introduces students to the various genres of children's literature, including picture books, fantasy, folktales, fables, myths, legends, poetry, historical fiction, and nonfiction. Students read, analyze, and discuss children's literature; they also learn to select and present books that are appropriate for their students.

**Required reading:** *Elementary Children's Literature* by N.A. Anderson. *Charlotte's Web* by E.B. White.

**In class:** Students work with a variety of books in class—they read and analyze works ranging from Tomie DePaola's *Pancakes for Breakfast* to Dr. Seuss classics, Shel Silverstein's poems, informational books on dinosaurs, *Clifford the Big Red Dog* and the Harry Potter series.

"We take each genre and discuss issues related to each one, as well as strategies for using those types of books in the classroom," says Dr. Uttero. For example, students explore factors they may need to consider if teaching realistic fiction with contemporary dialog or a book that has been banned in other school districts.

In addition to a final project focusing on an author, students choose three projects from eight different options. Dr. Uttero tries to model projects and techniques that her students could use in their own classrooms. "I've offered a variety of projects to appeal to students with different learning styles—they can choose the projects that work best for them." Students may build a diorama depicting an important scene from a story, read and respond critically to 15 children's books, compare different versions of a fairytale or folktale, analyze a multicultural picture book, or create a map showing all the settings in a story. "Overall, we're focusing on different ways students can help children develop a lifetime love of literature," says Dr. Uttero. ■

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\* **JENNIFER LISKOW** works as a Public Relations and Web Writer in the Office of Marketing and Communications and teaches in Rivier's Professional Communications program. Jenn earned her bachelor's in English and communications from Notre Dame College in Manchester, N.H. in 1996. In 2002, she completed her master's in writing and literature at Rivier. She began writing in junior high school; since then, she has had poems, short stories, features, and essays published. In her free time, Jenn enjoys practicing yoga, ten-pin bowling, and listening to live music with her husband, Tim.