



# ST. JEROME'S UNIVERSITY

**St. Jerome's University in the University of Waterloo  
Department of English  
ENGL 208C (LEC 001)  
Studies in Children's Literature  
Fall 2018**

**Mondays and Wednesdays, 11:30 AM–12:50 PM, SJ2 2003**

## **Instructor and T.A. Information**

Instructor: Dr. Benjamin Lefebvre

Office: SH 2113

Office Hours: Mondays, 1:30–2:30 PM

Email: blefebvre@uwaterloo.ca

## **Course Description**

Texts for children consist of some of our earliest interactions with language, numbers, rhymes, and stories. For many adults, texts encountered during childhood remain personally meaningful throughout their lifetimes, whether or not these texts are ever reread. The importance of these texts as literature lies not only in their pedagogical value in terms of literacy and numeracy but also in terms of what perspectives they offer about the world and young people's possible places within it. Through words and images, these texts invite children to learn not only how to read but also how to behave in a given society, either by conforming to dominant values, rebelling against them, considering alternate perspectives, or celebrating individuality. Although children's books frequently are perceived as being "timeless," "innocent," and "fun," they are evidence of a power relationship between those who write, edit, design, market, review, and buy children's books (almost always adults) and those who make up their target audience (children).

In this course, we will consider the assumptions about child lives and child readers embedded in a range of twenty-first-century texts by Indigenous authors, authors of colour, and LGBTQ+ authors, as well as texts that offer alternative (non-mainstream) perspectives on the world. Although the primary focus will be on six novels and one collection of short stories, we will also read in class several picture books and alphabet books from the present day. Through the study of these texts, students will develop skills in critical reading, critical thinking, and critical writing, and they will consider key questions related to censorship, oppression, cultural appropriation, community, ideology, difference, identity, and power.

## **Course Goals and Learning Outcomes**

Upon completion of this course, students who have completed all readings and participated in all classroom activities should be able to:

- Identify and explain key characteristics of texts for children;
- Place primary texts within their historical and cultural contexts;
- Identify literary devices and explain their significance as they pertain to children's literature;

- Integrate critical approaches and terminology relevant to texts for children into the broader set of critical tools that they have learned in past courses;
- Undertake critical evaluations of texts for children with an awareness of their intended audience;
- Apply course concepts and theoretical terms to a range of texts for children, including those not studied in this course;
- Develop their critical voice and apply their knowledge through a range of writing projects.

### Required Texts

- Oh, Ellen, ed. *Flying Lessons and Other Stories*. Crown, 2017.
- Jordan-Fenton, Christy, and Margaret Pokiak-Fenton. *Fatty Legs: A True Story*. Annick Press, 2010.
- Curtis, Christopher Paul. *Elijah of Buxton*. Scholastic, 2007.
- Selvadurai, Shyam. *Swimming in the Monsoon Sea*. 2005. Tundra Books, 2007.
- Tamaki, Mariko. *Skim*. Illustrated by Jillian Tamaki. 2008. Groundwood Books, 2010.
- Ali, S.K. *Saints and Misfits*. Salaam Reads, 2017.
- Reynolds, Jason, and Brendan Kiely. *All American Boys*. 2015. Atheneum, 2017.

All required texts are available to purchase at the University of Waterloo bookstore.

### Course Requirements and Assessment

Assessment	Date of Evaluation	Weighting
Position Paper	October 17, 2018	20%
Argumentative Research Paper	November 21, 2018	35%
Participation Exercises	October 31 and December 3, 2018	2 x 5%
Final Exam	TBA	35%
<b>Total</b>		<b>100%</b>

#### Position Paper

(700–800 words, not including list of works cited): Students will analyze an aspect of *Fatty Legs* or any one or two stories in *Flying Lessons and Other Stories* using terms and approaches covered in the course and defend their judgments based on evidence from the text and sound argumentation. Suggested topics will be circulated in advance, and students will also have the option of developing their own topic in consultation with the instructor.

#### Argumentative Research Paper

(1300–1500 words, not including list of works cited): Students will construct an argument about an aspect of one or two of the required texts in this course that is supported by peer-reviewed secondary sources. Suggested topics will be circulated in advance, and students will have the option of developing their own topic in consultation with the instructor.

#### Participation Exercises

(250–300 words each): As a participation grade, students will be asked to demonstrate their synthesis of the course material by applying what they have learned in the course to an evaluation of two twenty-first-century texts of their choosing; specific instructions will be provided closer to each deadline. These assessments will result in two pass/fail grades: in other words, students who complete each assignment

in a satisfactory way will receive five out of a possible five marks, and students whose assignments do not meet minimal requirements will receive zero marks. The instructor reserves the right to assign partial grades at his discretion.

### Final Exam

The format of the final exam will be announced during the last class meeting. It will encompass material covered throughout the entire course.

### Submission Requirements and Late Work

The Position Paper and the Argumentative Research Paper are due at the beginning of class (at 11:30 a.m.) and must be submitted both electronically through the LEARN course shell and in hard copy by the appropriate deadline. Assignments received within one week of the due date will not be subject to a grade penalty, but they will receive neither marginal nor final comments; late papers can be submitted in electronic form only. Assignments will not be accepted more than one week after the deadline (in other words, by 11:30 a.m.) unless there is a serious and/or unexpected problem, such as illness or a family emergency; whenever possible, arrangements must be worked out with your instructor in advance of that final date. The participation exercises must also be submitted electronically through the course shell and will not be accepted after the two deadlines, again unless there is a serious and/or unexpected problem.

For all assignments, top marks will be awarded for clarity of writing and expression, evidence of independent thinking, and ability to apply relevant concepts and approaches to primary texts. The Position Paper and the Argumentative Research Paper should be typed and formatted according to the conventions of the *MLA Handbook*, **eighth edition** (2016). Follow the *Handbook's* guidelines concerning margins, spacing, headers, and the format of the list of works cited. If you have any concerns or difficulties with writing papers, consult the resources available at UWaterloo's Writing and Communication Centre, either in person or at <https://uwaterloo.ca/writing-and-communication-centre/>, or your instructor during office hours.

### Course Outline / Class Schedule

Every effort will be made to deliver the course according to the following schedule. If circumstances require changes to the schedule, they will be communicated to you in class or through the course shell.

Week	Date	Topic and Assignments
1A	Monday, September 10	Welcome
1B	Wednesday, September 12	Ellen Oh, <i>Flying Lessons and Other Stories</i>
2A	Monday, September 17	<i>Flying Lessons and Other Stories</i> (cont'd)
2B	Wednesday, September 19	<i>Flying Lessons and Other Stories</i> (cont'd)
3A	Monday, September 24	<i>Flying Lessons and Other Stories</i> (cont'd)
3B	Wednesday, September 26	<i>Flying Lessons and Other Stories</i> (cont'd)
4A	Monday, October 1	<i>Flying Lessons and Other Stories</i> (cont'd)
4B	Wednesday, October 3	Christy Jordan-Fenton and Margaret Pokiak-Fenton, <i>Fatty Legs</i>
5A	Friday, October 12	<i>Fatty Legs</i> (cont'd) <b>NOTE DAY OF MAKE-UP CLASS</b>

5B	Monday, October 15	Christopher Paul Curtis, <i>Elijah of Buxton</i>
6A	Wednesday, October 17	<i>Elijah of Buxton</i> (cont'd) <b>POSITION PAPER DUE (20%)</b>
6B	Monday, October 22	<i>Elijah of Buxton</i> (cont'd)
7A	Wednesday, October 24	Mariko Tamaki, <i>Skim</i>
7B	Monday, October 29	<i>Skim</i> (cont'd)
8A	Wednesday, October 31	Shyam Selvadurai, <i>Swimming in the Monsoon Sea</i> <b>PARTICIPATION EXERCISE #1 DUE (5%)</b>
8B	Monday, November 5	<i>Swimming in the Monsoon Sea</i> (cont'd)
9A	Wednesday, November 7	<i>Swimming in the Monsoon Sea</i> (cont'd)
9B	Monday, November 12	S.K. Ali, <i>Saints and Misfits</i>
10A	Wednesday, November 14	<i>Saints and Misfits</i> (cont'd)
10B	Monday, November 19	<i>Saints and Misfits</i> (cont'd)
11A	Wednesday, November 21	Jason Reynolds and Brendan Kiely, <i>All American Boys</i> <b>ARGUMENTATIVE PAPER DUE (35%)</b>
11B	Monday, November 26	<i>All American Boys</i> (cont'd)
12A	Wednesday, November 28	<i>All American Boys</i> (cont'd)
12B	Monday, December 3	Course review <b>PARTICIPATION EXERCISE #2 DUE (5%)</b>

Please note that there are no classes on Monday, October 8 (Thanksgiving), or on Wednesday, October 10 (study day). Make-up days are Friday, October 12, and Monday, December 3.

### **Electronic Device Policy**

Students are reminded that studies have shown that the misuse of technology in the classroom can have a detrimental effect on learning. Text messages, social media, and the Internet in general can be incredibly distracting, not only for a student who misuses technology in the classroom but also for anyone who can see that student's screen. If you decide to use a laptop for note-taking, please deactivate wi-fi prior to the start of class and turn your phones off. If there is a particular situation requiring you to use your phone in class, please speak to your instructor about it first. Depending on your learning style, you may find that taking handwritten notes allows you to be more present in class. If you are easily distracted by the screens of your classmates, consider sitting closer to the front.

Students are reminded that any materials shared in class or posted on the course shell are the instructor's intellectual property. While you may download these materials for your own use, you are not permitted to post those materials or even your own lecture notes to third-party websites without the instructor's permission. Students are reminded that they are not allowed to create a video or audio recording of our class meetings without the instructor's permission.

### **Attendance Policy**

Because each class meeting will consist of a blend of lecture, writing exercises, and class discussion, regular attendance is necessary for the successful completion of this course. Should you miss a class, please consult with some classmates about what you have missed and then see your instructor as needed. If there are extenuating circumstances that lead to repeated absences, please talk to your instructor as needed.

## **Additional Recommendations and Reminders**

Please keep up with the readings as set out in the schedule. Because much of our class time will be spent examining our texts in detail, please bring your texts to the class meetings in which they will be discussed.

You are encouraged to take notes while you read, in terms of marking up your texts in pencil (favourite or troubling moments, details you plan to return to later) and keeping a reading journal in which you jot down plot points, connections to previous texts and to course terms, and questions for class discussion, or ideas that could jumpstart your writing assignments. This kind of active reading is beneficial for the continued development of critical thinking skills.

You are encouraged to consult your instructor about any aspect of the course, including writing assignments in progress. I am available without an appointment during my office hours and am happy to talk to you after class. Please note, however, that I am on campus only on the days of our class meetings.

Students are reminded that email is considered a formal mode of correspondence within a university setting. When communicating with your instructor via email, please begin with a formal salutation ("Dear Dr. Lefebvre" or "Hi Benjamin") and sign your message using your preferred name. As per University of Waterloo policy, only messages originating from a UWaterloo student account will receive a reply.

## **Important Information**

**Academic Integrity:** To maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo and its Affiliated and Federated Institutions of Waterloo (AFIW) are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. See the [UWaterloo Academic Integrity](#) webpage for more information.

**Discipline:** A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing academic offences, and to take responsibility for their actions. A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offence or who needs help in learning how to avoid offences (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about "rules" for group work/collaboration should seek guidance from the course professor, academic advisor, or the Associate Dean. When misconduct has been found to have occurred, disciplinary penalties will be imposed under the [St. Jerome's University Policy on Student Discipline](#). For information on categories of offenses and types of penalties, students should refer to [University of Waterloo Policy 71 - Student Discipline](#). For typical penalties check [Guidelines for the Assessment of Penalties](#).

**Grievance:** A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of their university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Read the [St. Jerome's University Policy on Student Petitions and Grievances](#).

**Appeals:** A decision made or penalty imposed under the St. Jerome's University Policy on Student Petitions and Grievances (other than a petition) or the St. Jerome's University Policy on Student

Discipline may be appealed if there is a ground. A student who believes they have a ground for an appeal should refer to the [St. Jerome's University Policy on Student Appeals](#).

**Note for Students with Disabilities:** The [AccessAbility Services](#) office, located on the first floor of the Needles Hall extension (1401), collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. If you require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability, please register with the AS office at the beginning of each academic term.

**Writing and Communication Centre:** The Writing and Communication Centre (WCC) works with students as they develop their ideas, draft, and revise. Writing and communication specialists offer one-on-one support in planning assignments, synthesizing and citing research, organizing papers and reports, designing presentations and e-portfolios, and revising for clarity and coherence.

You can make multiple appointments throughout the term, or you can drop in at the Library for quick questions or feedback. To book a 25- or 50-minute appointment and to see drop-in hours, visit [uwaterloo.ca/wcc](http://uwaterloo.ca/wcc). Group appointments for team-based projects, presentations, and papers are also available. **Please note** that communication specialists guide you to see your work as readers would. They can teach you revising skills and strategies, but will not change or correct your work for you.

### **Mental Health Support:**

#### **On Campus**

Counselling Services: [counselling.services@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:counselling.services@uwaterloo.ca) / 519-888-4567 ext. 32655

[MATES](#): one-to-one peer support program offered by Federation of Students (FEDS) and Counselling Services

📞 Health Services Emergency service: located across the creek from Student Life Centre

#### **Off campus, 24/7**

📞 [Good2Talk](#): Free confidential help line for post-secondary students. Phone: 1-866-925-5454

📞 Grand River Hospital: 835 King St. West, Kitchener ON N2G 1G3

📞 [Here 24/7](#): Mental Health and Crisis Service Team. Phone: 1-844-437-3247

📞 [OK2BME](#): set of support services for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or questioning teens in Waterloo. Phone: 519-884-0000 ext. 213

Full details can be found online at the Faculty of ARTS [website](#)

Download [UWaterloo and regional mental health resources \(PDF\)](#)

Download the [WatSafe app](#) to your phone to quickly access mental health support information

**Territorial Acknowledgement:** We acknowledge that we are living and working on the traditional territory of the Attawandaron (also known as Neutral), Anishinaabe, and Haudenosaunee peoples. The University of Waterloo is situated on the Haldimand Tract, the land promised to the Six Nations that includes ten kilometres on each side of the Grand River.