

Professor Elizabeth Wheeler (Betsy)
ewheeler@uoregon.edu
541-346-3929
Office: 238 PLC

Office Hours:
Tuesdays 12-1
Fridays 9:45-11:45
and by appointment

Teen and Children's Literature: A Writing-Intensive Seminar

Thursdays 9-11:50 am, 448 PLC, CRN 22299

This course takes an intersectional approach to contemporary young adult and children's literature primarily but not exclusively from the United States. We also focus on the mastery of scholarly writing and the field of disability studies. The reading list includes body theories poised at the intersection of gender, race, class, and ability and applies them to speculative fiction, picture books, coming of age stories, and graphic memoirs. We will take these theories apart to see what we might learn for our own work as we hone the crafts of scholarly writing, especially grant applications and transforming papers into publishable articles. For the term project students have three options: the first draft of an article on the course topics, a grant proposal, or revising a previous essay into an article.

Required Books

Find books at the Literary Duck and on reserve at Knight Library.
Ebooks, sharing, public library, and other sources also work.

Sherri L. Smith, *Orleans* (on library reserve under ENG 104)

Naoki Higashida, *The Reason I Jump*

Francisco X. Stork, *Marcelo in the Real World*

Cece Bell, *El Deafo*

Allie Brosh, *Hyperbole and a Half*

Sherman Alexie, *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* (on reserve under ENG 104)

Learning Goals

1. Gain familiarity with contemporary U.S. young adult and children's literature.
2. Gain familiarity with disability studies and intersectionality theories.
3. Develop expertise at the genres of scholarly writing.

Weekly Schedule

Week 1 Introduction and Picture Book Aesthetics

Week 2 Intersectionality: Disability Studies and Black Feminist Theory

Sherri L. Smith, *Orleans*

Angel Haze, "Cleaning Out My Closet" <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n01IncK-jWE>

"Cleaning Out My Closet" Lyrics (Canvas/Files)

Kimberlé Crenshaw, "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color" to page 1265 (end of section II A) (Canvas/Files)

Therî Pickens, "Octavia Butler and the Aesthetics of the Novel" (Canvas/Files)

Sami Schalk, "Coming to Claim Crip: Disidentification with/in Disability Studies" (Web)
<http://dsq-sds.org/article/view/3705>

Writing discussion: Researching journals.

Week 3 Neurodiversity in First Person

Francisco X. Stork, *Marcelo in the Real World*

Naoki Higashida, *The Reason I Jump*

Sonya Freeman Loftis, excerpts from *Imagining Autism: Fiction and Stereotypes on the Spectrum* (Canvas)

Julia Bascom, "Quiet Hands" <https://juststimming.wordpress.com/2011/10/05/quiet-hands/>

Christine Miserandino, "The Spoon Theory"
<https://butyoudontlooksick.com/articles/written-by-christine/the-spoon-theory/>

Writing discussion: Revising an article.

Week 4 Graphic Memoir and Disability Theory I

Final Project Prospectus Due.

Cece Bell, *El Deafo*

Rosemarie Garland-Thomson, "Misfits: A Feminist Materialist Disability Concept" (Canvas)
Tobin Siebers, "Disability as Masquerade" (Canvas)

Scott McCloud, Three excerpts from *Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art* (Canvas)

Successful grant proposals by Tara Fickle, Matthew Hannah, and Danielle Seid (Canvas)

Writing discussion: Grant proposals.

Week 5 Graphic Memoir and Disability Theory II

Allie Brosh, *Hyperbole and a Half*

Elizabeth Wheeler, "Disservice Animals: *Hyperbole and a Half* and the Bad Subjects of Disability and Animal Studies"

Writing discussion: Taming the review of literature; turning papers into presentations.

Week 6 Disability and Native American Identity

Sherman Alexie, *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*

Tammy Wahpeconiah, "Navigating the River of the World: Collective Trauma in *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*" (Canvas)

Sherman Alexie, "Why the Best Kids Books Are Written in Blood"

<http://blogs.wsj.com/speakeasy/2011/06/09/why-the-best-kids-books-are-written-in-blood/>

Michael Bérubé, Excerpt from *The Secret Life of Stories: From Don Quixote to Harry Potter, How Understanding Intellectual Disability Transforms the Way We Read*

Writing discussion: Revising complex theoretical sentences.

Week 7

Final Project Draft Due.

Practice elevator pitches.

Writing discussion: Abstract workshop.

Week 8 Group A Project Workshop. Read today’s project drafts.

Week 9 Group B Project Workshop Read today’s project drafts.

Week 10 Group C Project Workshop Read today’s project drafts.

Assignments

Final Project Prospectus	Week 4
Final Project Draft	Week 7
Elevator Pitch	Weeks 8-10
Final Project	Wednesday, March 22 by 5 pm

Final Project

The final project has three options:

Option I: Term Paper. A term paper, envisioned as an article draft, based on course topics. Roughly 5000-8000 words.

Option II: Article. An article ready to submit for publication, substantially revised from a previous essay. Roughly 5000-8000 words.

Option III: Grant Proposal. A complete grant proposal ready for submission to a particular funder. Length and format conform to funder’s guidelines. The grant could be for a scholarly project or another type of initiative (a community endeavor, a curriculum enhancement, a public event, a creative writer’s retreat)

Final Project Prospectus

Option I: A description of the essay to be written (2-5 sentences); a list of three journals to which the essay could be submitted; and a bibliography of three readings not included on our course syllabus.

Option II: A copy of the original paper; a description of the revisions to be undertaken (2-5 sentences); a list of three journals to which your article could be submitted; and an

annotated bibliography of three comparator articles (the closest articles to your idea that you can find).

Option III: A description of the grant project; a list of three funders to which the grant proposal could be submitted; and a list of three comparator initiatives OR three successful grant proposals (not those we read in class) to use as models for yours.

Final Project Draft

Options I and II: The first 2500 words of the essay.

Option III: The “project description” and “significance” sections of the grant proposal.

Elevator Pitch

30 seconds-2 minutes, delivered at your workshop before the class discusses your project. It should be as concise as possible, get the important information up front, and feature bold assertions. Questions to answer when composing elevator pitches:

- What excites you most about this project?
- What’s your central claim?
- What’s the provocative question or problem?
- How can you hook in to things the listeners care about?
- What’s the gap in the scholarship?
- How does your project work?
- How does it go about proving its case?

Questions for Analysis of Scholarship

- What’s original here?
- What’s the takeaway?
- What’s the elevator pitch?
- What would you steal?
- What are your favorite moments?
- Are there any neat tricks—intellectually, rhetorically, stylistically?
- Is there an enthymeme?
- What’s the “so what?”
- How do they showcase their own ideas?
- How do they handle the review of literature?
- Are there topic sentences?
- Is the writing clear?
- Is there unnecessary or undefined jargon?
- Are the sentences too long and complicated?
- Are there loose ends, or are all the connections made?

Disability Accommodation

If the instruction or design presents you with barriers, just let me know by email or in person and I'll be glad to accommodate you , even if it's late in the term. Official diagnosis and/or accommodation letter not required. Handy contacts:

Accessible Education Center (formerly Disability Services) in 164 Oregon Hall at 541-346-1155 or uoaec@uoregon.edu.

Counseling Center: 541-346-3230; <http://testing.uoregon.edu>.

How to Read a Picture Book

The first principle: Picture books do not flow. The pictures are a series of isolated episodes. The illustrator picks and chooses which scenes from the story to show.

To analyze the grammar of the pictures themselves, start by “reading” the book without the words, then “read” the pictures again upside down.

1. What story do the pictures tell without the words?
2. What reader's knowledge does the book assume?
3. What do you notice most about the illustration style?
4. What emotional response does the book call forth?
5. What attitude does the book call forth towards the characters?
6. Do the words and pictures flow together or is there tension or contradiction?
7. What do pictures reveal that words don't, and vice versa?
8. More generally, what's the relationship like between words and pictures in this book?