

Fresher/Sophister Module Description Template 2024-25

Full Name: The Child in the Book: Text, Book and Collection

Short Name: The Child in the Book

Lecturer Name(s) and Email Address(es): Dr Maggie Masterson, mmastrsn@tcd.ie

ECTS Weighting: 10

Semester Taught: MT

Year: SS

Module Content:

This module explores children's books through a combination of critical approaches: children's literature scholarship, book history and print culture, and collection studies. Engaging with a diverse range of material, we will interrogate constructions of childhood within and beyond the text, found in the book object and within the collection.

Texts will draw on representation of collecting and collections. The format will be a combination of classroom seminars (S) and hands-on workshops (W) in the Research Collections interim reading room in the Ussher Library, where we will work directly with library collections ranging from eighteenth-century books in the historical Pollard Collection to current eBooks on legal deposit. These books offer more than engaging texts: each book is a collection of textual and paratextual elements that aid in its construction of childhood.

This module introduces you to a range of critical approaches to book history and collecting including Kenneth Kidd's essay on the children's literature archive, Ann Lundin's views on the canon, Susan Stewart's work on souvenirs and memory and Susan Pearce's work on collecting and collections. We will work closely with the collections at Trinity and you will gain practical experience working with early printed children's books.

Learning Outcomes:

- Engage confidently with the archives and collections at TCD.
- Complete close readings and competently apply theories of children's literature, book history, paratextual studies or collection studies to selected children's texts.
- Competently demonstrate your knowledge and understanding of the material on the module through your confident engagement with relevant critical methodologies and theoretical frameworks in both written assignments.
- Identify the aspects of the module which interest you most and undertake independent research as the basis for an essay.

Learning Aims:

- Engage with a range of children's texts and their paratextual elements.
- Develop awareness of the historical, social, and cultural factors that influence culturally constructed concepts of 'childhood' evident in books as objects and as part of collections.
- Reflect upon the ways that collections support and subvert ideas of value, meaning and identity.

- Explore a range of key critical approaches to collections, book history, and children's literature.

Assessment Details:

You will be assessed through two components:

- Annotated bibliography: Create a library of your childhood and annotate why you've included each book through evidence of engagement with secondary material. 1500-2000 words – 20%.
- Module Essay: Write an essay in response to one of the themes of the module. Suggestions will be provided, or the essay topic can be of the student's own choice, reached upon consultation with the module convenor. 4,000 words – 80%.

Preliminary Reading List:

1. Introduction: Kenneth Kidd, "The Child, the Scholar, and the Children's Literature Archive" and Finkelstein & McCleery, "Theorizing the history of the book" (S)
2. The Pollard Collection: Newbery and friends, 17th & 18th C. Early Printed Books (W)
3. Editions: Maria Edgeworth, "The Good French Governess" (W)
4. The Preface: Alcott, Ballantyne, Stevenson, Edgeworth and Carroll (W)
5. Marginalia, catalogues and judging books by their covers (W)
6. Prizing and the canon: E.L. Konigsberg, "From the Mixed-Up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler" (W)
7. Reading week: no taught class
8. The JUV Collection: Carolyn Keene, "The Clue in the Old Album" (W)
9. Collecting Activity: Mary Norton, "The Borrowers" (S)
10. Collecting Identity: Penelope Lively, "The House at Norham Gardens" (S)
11. Story Collections: Chris Van Allsburg, "The Mysteries of Harris Burdick" and "The Chronicles of Harris Burdick." (S)
12. UK legal deposit eBooks: Erica Meza, "To the Other Side" and George Butler, "Drawn Across Borders" (S)

Key Secondary Reading:

Lydia Ferguson, 'Cultivating Childhood: The Pollard Collection of Children's Books' (2013), Anne Lundin, *Constructing the Canon of children's literature* (2004), Finkelstein and McCleery, *An Introduction to Book History* (2005), J. Clifford, "Collecting Ourselves" (1994), Walter Benjamin, "Unpacking my Library" (1968), Carolyn Steedman, *Dust: The Archive and Cultural History* (2002), Susan Stewart, *On Longing* (1984), Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression* (1996), Gerard Genette, *Paratexts* (1987).

Reading list will be finalised before the start of term.

Please note:

- Curricular information is subject to change.
- Information is displayed only for guidance purposes, relates to the current academic year only and is subject to change.