



Given that the title of this course includes the words “children’s literature,” you might understandably think this course is about children.

It isn’t. Not really.

Instead, as an English course invested in literary representations and constructs, we’ll be focusing on **adults** and their assumptions/beliefs about children; in particular, the various ways adults have historically participated in creating sociocultural and literary constructions of childhood. Students will read a wide variety of texts written for and read by young people across more than three centuries. Throughout the semester, we’ll explore these works’ formal structure, narrative content, and historical context, in the process dismantling the common cultural belief that children’s literature is “simple.” From the Grimms’ violent fairy tales to the exploration of sexuality in *This One Summer*, writing for children invites us to reconsider our unchallenged perceptions of childhood, demonstrating a complexity often unacknowledged by adults.

### **Required texts:**

*The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, L. Frank Baum  
*Harriet the Spy*, Louise Fitzhugh  
*The Arrival*, Shaun Tan  
*How I Became a Ghost*, Tim Tingle  
*This One Summer*, Mariko Tamaki and Jillian Tamaki  
*One Crazy Summer*, Rita Williams-Garcia  
*Locomotion*, Jacqueline Woodson