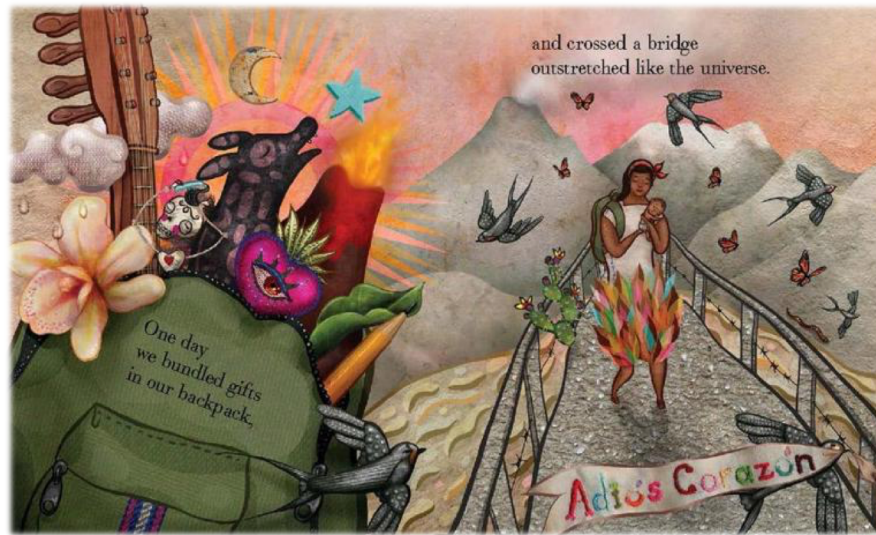


## Children's Literature: Texts and Contexts

Spring 2021 // 02.317.1: MW 11am-12:15pm // 02.317-2: MW 2:00-3:15pm //

Dr. Kate Slater



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

It isn’t. Not really.

Instead, as an English course invested in representations and constructs, we’ll be focusing on adults and their beliefs about children; in particular, we’ll consider the various ways adults have participated in creating sociocultural, literary, and visual constructions of childhood. Students will read a wide variety of texts that foreground images: picture books, early readers, illustrated novels, comics, and graphic novels. In this course, we’ll also push back against a dominant cultural assumption that images are purely supplementary or decorative, learning how pictures work in order to determine what implicit meanings they produce. And since images in children’s literature almost always co-create with words, we’ll also consider how written text interacts with illustrations, often in ways that exceed what language and image do separately. By exploring formal structure, narrative content, and historical context in a wide variety of visually-oriented texts, we’ll dismantle the common assumption that children’s literature and culture are “simple.”

Possible texts may include:

*New Kid*, Jerry Craft

*Moonshot: The Indigenous Comics Collection*, Volume 1, ed. Hope Nicholson

*Dreamers*, Yuyi Morales

*In a Dark, Dark Room and Other Scary Stories*, Alvin Schwartz and Dirk Zimmer

*This One Summer*, Mariko Tamaki and Jillian Tamaki

*The Arrival*, Shaun Tan