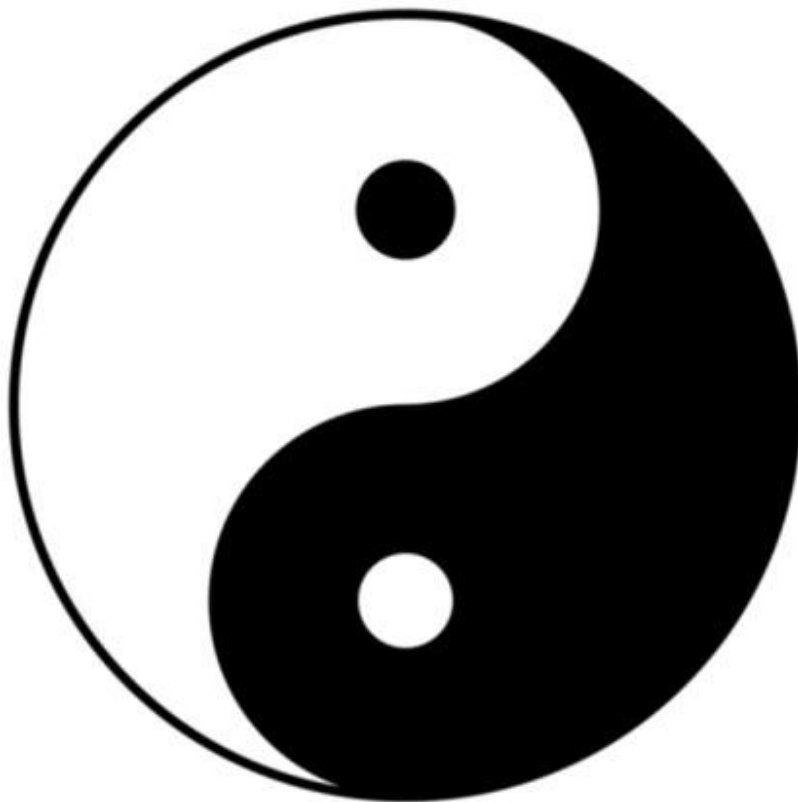


VICTORIA UNIVERSITY OF WELLINGTON
SCHOOL OF ENGLISH, FILM, THEATRE and MEDIA
STUDIES

ENGL 420: MODERN FICTION: NEW ZEALAND
FICTION FOR CHILDREN

2008



TRIMESTER TWO
COURSE OUTLINE

COURSE ORGANISATION

Convenor: Kathryn Walls

Office: VZ 916

Phone numbers: work 463 6898; home 475 9853

E-mail: kathryn.walls@vuw.ac.nz

Class time and place:

Trimester Two

Wednesdays 9.00 -11.50 am

VZ 808

Office Hours

You are quite likely to find me in my office if I am not teaching. To be sure, however, make a time with me after our seminar, or phone in advance.

Further information will be provided during seminars. Spare copies of essential information will be left with Helen O'Sullivan (VZ 809).

AIMS, OBJECTIVES AND CONTENT

Course Aims

The course aims to engage you in the serious study of fiction written for children through the work of two equally acclaimed but very different contemporary New Zealand writers.

Course Objectives

By the end of the course, you should be familiar with all the novels written for adolescents by Margaret Mahy and Maurice Gee. Having worked closely with most of these, you ought to be able to demonstrate a sophisticated appreciation of each author's characteristic forms and themes. You should also be equipped to consider what distinguishes "children's literature" as a genre.

Course Content

The set (or key) texts are listed in the seminar schedule that is attached—as the final page of this handout.

MATERIALS

As above. Secondary reading lists will be distributed during the course.

ASSESSMENT, WORKLOADS AND MANDATORY COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Assessment is on the basis of both in-term work and a final three-hour examination. Each component counts for approximately 50%.

In term work:

1. Due Friday August 1

A close reading exercise (1000-1500 words). Value: 10%

Write a detailed discussion of the opening chapter of any set text (whose opening chapter has not been a significant topic of seminar discussion). Include some consideration of whether (and, if so, how) the writing is adapted to the expected age of readers.

2. Due Friday September 5

An essay on Margaret Mahy (2000-2500 words). Value: 20%

Please choose your own topic in consultation with me. You may, if you wish, incorporate texts by other authors for the purposes of comparison.

3. Due Friday October 10—although students who would like to keep the study break clear for exam preparation might like to hand this essay in earlier.

An essay on Maurice Gee, as for Margaret Mahy above. Value: 20%

You may, if you wish, draw on Gee's fiction for adults, or—for the purposes of comparison—on texts by other authors.

Extensions

These should be discussed with me by—at the latest—the day before the due date. Work submitted without an extension will be counted, as long as it is handed in before the examination. It will, however, incur a penalty—the grade being lowered by one step (so that, for instance, a B would become a B-).

Examination

The three-hour examination will be “limited open book.” That is, set texts (only) will be permitted in the examination room. Further information about the examination will be distributed by September 12.

Examinations will be held between October 17 and November 8, 2008.

Academic integrity and plagiarism

Academic integrity is about honesty – put simply it means *no cheating*. All members of the University community are responsible for upholding academic integrity, which means staff and students are expected to behave honestly, fairly and with respect for others at all times.

Plagiarism is a form of cheating which undermines academic integrity. The University defines plagiarism as follows:

The presentation of the work of another person or other persons as if it were one’s own, whether intended or not. This includes published or unpublished work, material on the Internet and the work of other students or staff.

It is still plagiarism even if you re-structure the material or present it in your own style or words.

Note: It is however, perfectly acceptable to include the work of others as long as that is acknowledged by appropriate referencing.

Plagiarism is prohibited at Victoria and is not worth the risk. Any enrolled student found guilty of plagiarism will be subject to disciplinary procedures under the Statute on Student Conduct and may be penalized severely. Consequences of being found guilty of plagiarism can include:

- an oral or written warning
- cancellation of your mark for an assessment or a fail grade for the course
- suspension from the course or the University.

Find out more about plagiarism, and how to avoid it, on the University’s website:

<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/plagiarism.aspx>

Relationship between assessment and course objectives

All components (with the partial exception of the initial close reading exercise) are designed to test your familiarity with the set texts, and your appreciation of each author’s characteristic forms and themes. The initial close reading exercise is designed to ensure that you begin writing reasonably early in the course, and to encourage you to consider children’s literature as a genre.

RECOMMENDED WORKLOAD

Since this course represents half of a full-time first trimester load, you should spend about approximately 24 hours per week on the reading, seminars, and preparation of written work.

MANDATORY COURSE REQUIREMENTS

- (i) Completion of written work detailed above.
- (ii) Meaningful attendance at a minimum of 70% of seminars. In order for your attendance to be “meaningful” you must have read the relevant set text/s in advance, so that you are in a position to initiate discussion. (If you have not read the relevant text/s, I would ask you not to attend the tutorial in question.)
- (iii) Further preparation may be required of you on one or two occasions.

Note: You are expected to prepare for and attend all seminars, drawing on the 30% “leeway” only when ill, or otherwise prevented from attending. Special circumstances will, however, be treated with special consideration.

GENERAL UNIVERSITY STATUTES AND POLICIES

Students should familiarise themselves with the University’s policies and statutes, particularly the Assessment Statute, the Personal Courses of Study Statute, the Statute on Student Conduct and any statutes relating to the particular qualifications being studied; see the *Victoria University Calendar* available in hardcopy or under “about Victoria” on the Victoria homepage at:

http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about_victoria/calendar_intro.html

Information on the following topics is available electronically under “Course Outline General Information” at:

<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/newspubs/universitypubs.aspx#general>

- Student and Staff Conduct
- Academic Grievances
- Academic Integrity and Plagiarism
- Meeting the Needs of Students with Impairments
- Student Support