

**University of Saskatchewan  
College of Education**

**ECUR 373.3  
Children's Literature in the Primary Grades  
Winter 2008  
Tuesday/Thursday 10:00 – 11:20 am  
Room 2060**

**Extra Specially Special Books**

Instructor: Debbie Pushor, PhD  
Office Hours: By appointment

Office: ED 3038

*Lola loves reading and she really loves books.  
But at the moment there is  
one book that is extra specially special.*

*...[It] is the very best book in the world  
because you learn a lot and  
it is very great and extremely very  
interesting.*

Lauren Child (2006)  
*But excuse me that is my book*

**Course Description**

The story of Lola, her brother Charlie, and their visit to the library to search for Lola's favorite book, gives us a way to think about ourselves as teachers and about the children and families we will live alongside, as we select and use children's literature in our classrooms. Each story we share has the potential to be "extra specially special" – the book that becomes our students' favourite, "the most best book in the whole wide world – because it is so interesting and so lovely and it has the absolutely best pictures of any book ever." Our responsibility is very great and extremely very important!

Within this course, you will become familiar with children's literature that brings a richness to preschool and primary classrooms. Through reading a broad range of literature and commentary on that literature, you will expand your repertoire in relation to children's books, response to literature, and uses of literature within your classroom.

It is intended that at the end of the course you will have acquired:

- an appreciation of literature written for and enjoyed by children;
- a familiarity with a wide range of literature by various authors, illustrators, and mediums;
- an understanding of how literature can be presented to and interpreted by children;



January 29<sup>th</sup> – Picture Books  
February 5<sup>th</sup> – Aboriginal Literature  
February 12<sup>th</sup> – Chapter Books  
February 26<sup>th</sup> – Poetry  
March 4<sup>th</sup> – Traditional Literature  
March 18<sup>th</sup> – Information Books

Criteria for marking:

- \_\_\_\_\_/15      Research into Topic
- evidence of thoughtful research into genre
  - sound knowledge of genre evident
  - critical attributes of genre/points for consideration are foregrounded
  - range of sources utilized; reputable sources utilized
  - knowledge of specific children’s books/authors demonstrated

- \_\_\_\_\_/15      Class Presentation
- objectives of presentation were met
  - effective and creative use of teaching skills and strategies demonstrated
  - strong engagement of colleagues apparent
  - colleagues have enhanced understanding of topic
  - colleagues have ideas for use of children’s literature in classroom
  - colleagues have increased knowledge of specific children’s books

- \_\_\_\_\_/10      Handout
- concise, yet thorough, review of topic
  - critical/essential features of topic delineated
  - sound teacher reference materials cited
  - exemplary children’s literature cited
  - information is communicated clearly and concisely

## **2. Using Literature to Build Classroom Community      30%    Due January 30th**

Select literature which works as a metaphor for building classroom community. Create activities, linked with the literature, which facilitate the sharing and celebration of children’s individuality and which connect them as an integral and interdependent piece of a larger community. Discuss how, with the support of literature, you will keep the metaphor alive in your classroom over time, how you will use it in social problem solving, how you will use it in celebrations of learning.

A process for using literature to build classroom community will be discussed and modelled in class on January 16<sup>th</sup> and class time will be provided on January 18<sup>th</sup> to explore ideas further .

Criteria for marking:



- Match between your beliefs and practices is evident
- Parent choice regarding engagement is provided

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Written Description

- Writing is authentic, personal, and reflects your voice as teacher/writer
- Writing is well-proofed for public dissemination
- Strong sense of teacher knowledge and teacher judgment is evident

## Proposed Class Schedule

Tuesday	Thursday
	<b>January 3 – Introductions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• personal introductions</li> <li>• <i>But excuse me THAT is my book</i> by Lauren Child</li> <li>• course syllabus</li> </ul>
<b>January 8 - Selecting Good Quality Children’s Literature</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• children’s literature you know/value</li> <li>• qualities of good children’s literature – your perceptions</li> <li>• websites/journals/resources</li> </ul>	<b>January 10 – Selecting Good Quality Children’s Literature</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stereotypes</li> <li>• Sexism</li> <li>• Racism</li> <li>• Societal constructs</li> </ul>
<b>January 15 - Using Children’s Literature To Build Classroom Community</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• introduction</li> <li>• examples</li> </ul>	<b>January 17 – Using Children’s Literature To Build Classroom Community</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• sharing community-building literature</li> <li>• read alouds</li> <li>• debriefing</li> </ul>
<b>January 22 – Teaching Curriculum Using Children’s Literature</b> Introduction of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “big ideas”</li> <li>• curriculum connections</li> <li>• literature across the curriculum</li> </ul>	<b>January 24 – Teaching Curriculum Using Children’s Literature</b> In-class work with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “big ideas”</li> <li>• curriculum connections</li> <li>• literature across the curriculum</li> </ul>
<b>January 29 – Picture Books</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• interactive group presentation</li> <li>• handout</li> </ul>	<b>January 31 – Picture Books</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• sharing picture books</li> <li>• read alouds</li> <li>• debriefing</li> </ul>
<b>February 5 – Aboriginal Literature</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• interactive group presentation</li> <li>• handout</li> </ul>	<b>February 7 – Aboriginal Literature</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• sharing Aboriginal literature</li> <li>• read alouds</li> <li>• debriefing</li> </ul>

<p><b>February 12 – Chapter Books</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• interactive group presentation</li> <li>• handout</li> </ul>	<p><b>February 14 – Chapter Books</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• sharing chapter books</li> <li>• read alouds</li> <li>• debriefing</li> </ul>
<p><b>February 26 – Poetry</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• interactive group presentation</li> <li>• handout</li> </ul>	<p><b>February 28 – Poetry</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• sharing poetry</li> <li>• read alouds</li> <li>• debriefing</li> </ul>
<p><b>March 4 – Traditional Literature</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• interactive group presentation</li> <li>• handout</li> </ul>	<p><b>*Friday, March 7 – Authors’ Fair</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• tentative event</li> <li>• concurrent author sessions</li> <li>• keynote session with author David Bouchard</li> <li>• wine and cheese</li> </ul>
<p><b>March 11 – Engaging Parents in Curriculum</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• involvement vs engagement</li> <li>• assumptions and beliefs</li> <li>• trust and relationships</li> <li>• hospitality and invitation</li> </ul>	<p><b>March 13 – Engaging Parents in Curriculum</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• parent knowledge</li> <li>• specific strategies to engage parents</li> </ul>
<p><b>March 18 – Information Books</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• interactive group presentation</li> <li>• handout</li> </ul>	<p><b>March 20 – Information Books</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• sharing information books</li> <li>• strategies for teaching children to read informational text</li> <li>• debriefing</li> </ul>
<p><b>March 25 – Censorship</b> <b>MaryLynn Gagne</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• freedom to read</li> <li>• challenged books</li> <li>• soft censorship</li> </ul>	<p><b>March 27 – Multicultural Literature</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• sharing multicultural literature</li> <li>• exploring representation</li> <li>• points to consider</li> </ul>
<p><b>April 1 – Stuff We Just Didn’t Get To</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• wordless books</li> <li>• concept books</li> <li>• follow up</li> </ul>	<p><b>April 3 – Culminating Class</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• so what is an extra specially special book?</li> <li>• who are you now as a teacher of literature?</li> <li>• how have you grown or changed in regard to your knowledge of children’s literature?</li> </ul>

