

ENGL 479: Victorian & Edwardian Children's Fiction

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Course description:

You are invited to a hands-on encounter with children's fiction during the "Golden Age" of the Victorian and Edwardian eras, a period in which didacticism gave way to imaginative exploration and intelligent playfulness. You will learn how children's fiction enculturates its readers, how to situate Victorian and Edwardian literature in historical context, and how illustration works in children's fiction. The course takes place in the classroom adjacent to Special Collections and emphasizes the actual historical books that Victorian children held in their hands, played with, read, ignored, did their math homework in, painted, coloured in, won as prizes, and/or received as gifts. For your final project, you will adopt and analyze one special book of your choice, published between 1800 and 1910 and gleaned from the library, a local book shop, or—if you have one—a family collection.

Proposed assignments:

Short essay on illustration:	20%
Adopt-a-Book project:	
• Proposal (5%), essay (35%), and poster (10%):	50%
Exam (3 hours):	30%

Proposed reading list:

Fairy tales by the Brothers Grimm and Charles Perrault

Lewis Carroll, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865)

George MacDonald, *The Princess and the Goblin* (1870-71)

Anna Sewell, *Black Beauty* (1877)

Oscar Wilde, selections from *The Happy Prince and Other Tales* (1888)

Rudyard Kipling, *The Jungle Books* (1894; 1895)