



# LIT 855

## Australian Children's Literature

S2 External 2017

*Dept of English*

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#### **Disclaimer**

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## General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff

Unit Convenor

Toby Davidson

[Toby.Davidson@mq.edu.au](mailto:Toby.Davidson@mq.edu.au)

By appointment - please email to arrange

Lecturer

Nerida Wayland

[Nerida.Wayland@mq.edu.au](mailto:Nerida.Wayland@mq.edu.au)

By appointment - please email to arrange

Credit points

4

Prerequisites

Admission to MChildLit or MCrWrit or GradDipChildLit or GradDipCrWrit or MEChild or MA in Children's Literature

Corequisites

Co-badged status

Unit description

This unit considers the development of Australian writing for children, with special emphasis on the last two decades. It examines the ways in which the concerns of Australian children's literature have evolved over the past century – for the purpose of interrogating the relationship between literature and significant social and cultural paradigm shifts, such as the emergence of multiculturalism, the impact of the women's movement, and changing notions of Australian cultural identity and nationhood.

## Important Academic Dates

Information about important academic dates including deadlines for withdrawing from units are available at <https://www.mq.edu.au/study/calendar-of-dates>

## Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this unit, you will be able to:

To develop a broad sense of how the concerns of Australian children's literature have evolved over the past century

To gain a good working knowledge of the principal themes of Australian children's

literature over this period

To theorise concepts of gender representation and examine changing representations of gender in Australian children's literature

To understand theories of genre and examine prominent genres used in a range of texts written for children in Australia

## Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Hurdle	Due
<u>Literature Review</u>	40%	No	31 August, 2017
<u>Final Essay</u>	50%	No	9 November, 2017
<u>Class Participation</u>	10%	No	Evaluated weekly

### Literature Review

Due: **31 August, 2017**

Weighting: **40%**

Write a critical evaluation of two articles (available from the LIT 855 iLearn site):

1. Juliet O'Connor, "From Colonial Superstition to the Hairyman: Aboriginality and the Politics of Race"
2. Debra Dudek, "Desiring Perception: Finding Utopian Impulses in Shaun Tan's The Lost Thing"

This evaluation, of approximately 1500 words, should:

- Provide a brief summary of each article's main arguments,
- Examine the extent to which these articles are informed and/or shaped by concepts employed by their authors to position themselves in relation to the texts they discuss, and
- Whether such concepts/ideological frameworks enhance reading or limit it.

Your work will be assessed according to the following criteria:

1. Ability to provide a brief and accurate summary of the articles' main arguments
2. Ability to evaluate the articles critically (such as identifying flaws or weaknesses in the argument, suggesting new ways in which the research could be developed)
3. Ability to make an effective comparison of the two articles (their methodologies; the relationship of their conceptual frames to their textual analysis, etc)

On successful completion you will be able to:

- To theorise concepts of gender representation and examine changing representations of gender in Australian children's literature

## Final Essay

Due: **9 November, 2017**

Weighting: **50%**

Please select a topic from those listed below and write an essay of approximately 3000 words:

1. 'The usual response to the shocking discovery that human order is vulnerable, contingent and devoid of reliable foundations is an effort to make order solid, obligatory and reliably founded.' Either(a) Compare the ways in which this response is articulated in any two novels set for seminar discussion. Or(b) Compare from this perspective the uses of the city and the country as settings.
2. 'Although all literature, including realistic fiction, needs a sense of a tradition, it is in the creation of fantasy that its lack is most obviously felt.' (Niall) Either (a) Has the lack of an Australian tradition been a problem for Australian fantasy? Or (b) Choose one or two realistic texts and use them to examine the idea of 'a sense of a tradition' in realism.
3. 'It must mean something, surely, that there have been no witches worth mentioning, nor wizards, in Oz, and that our one undeniable classic of fantasy [The Magic Pudding] is about food.' (Niall, 203) What are some of the implications for Australian children's literature of the phrase 'our one undeniable classic of fantasy'?
4. The idea of the 'bush' in Australia is a cultural symbol with a wide variety of diverse, sometimes contradictory, meanings. Examine the constructions of such meanings in any two or three novels set for seminar discussion.
5. 'Suburbs are a good place to grow up.' (Hugh Stretton [more or less]). Has Australian children's literature found convincing ways to represent the essentially suburban life of its audience, or is it stranded in 'other' places (the past, the future, the country, fantasy settings)? What's the problem?
6. 'The assessment of writing by or about Indigenous Australians will inevitably be subjective; the important issue is whether it communicates Indigenous feelings and attitudes so that readers are enabled to see things as Indigenous Australians see them.' Discuss this claim with reference to two or three books and/or films about or by Indigenous Australians.
7. Do the social values informing contemporary Australian children's literature successfully reflect the changes in the 'ethnic mix' of Australian society in the second half of the twentieth century? Examine two or three novels.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- To theorise concepts of gender representation and examine changing representations of gender in Australian children's literature
- To understand theories of genre and examine prominent genres used in a range of texts written for children in Australia

## Class Participation

Due: **Evaluated weekly**

Weighting: **10%**

A threshold requirement for participation marks is **attendance and involvement** in all the seminars. Attendance is mandatory in LIT855—there is no quota of classes you can miss without impact on your participation grade. Absences will be excused only under exceptional (documented—i.e. with a medical certificate and a Professional Authority Form) circumstances.

In addition to attendance and involvement, participation entails **completing all the readings before class and reflecting on those materials** (make notes).

In particular, you should think about the **discussion questions** posed under each week's heading in this Unit Handbook and arrive at your own answers synthesized from what you've read, listened to and thought about. **You will be called upon to answer these questions** in class, and you should prepare to speak to the broader issues they raise

### Notes on Class Participation for External Students:

External students must participate in online discussions via the LIT 855 iLearn site. **One post per week is the minimum participation requirement.** External students should read the weekly texts and prepare the seminar discussion topics in advance, then post responses to the seminar questions and respond to the postings of other students, to facilitate an active discussion such as would occur in a face-to-face seminar. Students are also encouraged to raise other relevant points of interest in their online discussions. Be prepared to question the opinions of others, to have your opinions challenged and to participate actively in discussion. Please also be aware that overly-long posts DO NOT encourage discussion. Keep your posts short and to the point – and encourage others to respond.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- To develop a broad sense of how the concerns of Australian children's literature have evolved over the past century
- To gain a good working knowledge of the principal themes of Australian children's literature over this period
- To theorise concepts of gender representation and examine changing representations of gender in Australian children's literature

## Delivery and Resources

### REQUIRED READING

Mary Grant Bruce, *A Little Bush Maid* (available for free download at: [www.projectgutenberg.org](http://www.projectgutenberg.org))

Clare Atkins, *Nona and Me*

Sarah Ayoub, *The Yearbook Committee*

Sonya Hartnett, *The Ghost's Child*

Melissa Kiel, *The Incredible Adventures of Cinnamon Girl*

Will Kostakis, *The First Third*

Norman Lindsay, *The Magic Pudding*

David Metzenthen, *One Minute's Silence*

Alice Pung, *Laurinda*

Ethel Turner, *Seven Little Australians*

Claire Zorn, *The Sky So Heavy*

*Redfern Now* (television series) – available online via the Macquarie Library streaming service.

## Policies and Procedures

Macquarie University policies and procedures are accessible from [Policy Central](#). Students should be aware of the following policies in particular with regard to Learning and Teaching:

Academic Honesty Policy [http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/academic\\_honesty/policy.html](http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/academic_honesty/policy.html)

Assessment Policy [http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/assessment/policy\\_2016.html](http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/assessment/policy_2016.html)

Grade Appeal Policy <http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/gradeappeal/policy.html>

Complaint Management Procedure for Students and Members of the Public [http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/complaint\\_management/procedure.html](http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/complaint_management/procedure.html)

Disruption to Studies Policy (in effect until Dec 4th, 2017): [http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/disruption\\_studies/policy.html](http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/disruption_studies/policy.html)

Special Consideration Policy (in effect from Dec 4th, 2017): <https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policies/special-consideration>

In addition, a number of other policies can be found in the [Learning and Teaching Category](#) of Policy Central.

## Student Code of Conduct

Macquarie University students have a responsibility to be familiar with the Student Code of Conduct: [https://students.mq.edu.au/support/student\\_conduct/](https://students.mq.edu.au/support/student_conduct/)

## Results

Results shown in *iLearn*, or released directly by your Unit Convenor, are not confirmed as they are subject to final approval by the University. Once approved, final results will be sent to your student email address and will be made available in [eStudent](#). For more information visit [ask.mq.edu.au](#).

## Student Support

Macquarie University provides a range of support services for students. For details, visit <http://students.mq.edu.au/support/>

## Learning Skills

Learning Skills ([mq.edu.au/learningskills](http://mq.edu.au/learningskills)) provides academic writing resources and study strategies to improve your marks and take control of your study.

- [Workshops](#)
- [StudyWise](#)
- [Academic Integrity Module for Students](#)
- [Ask a Learning Adviser](#)

## Student Services and Support

Students with a disability are encouraged to contact the [Disability Service](#) who can provide appropriate help with any issues that arise during their studies.

## Student Enquiries

For all student enquiries, visit Student Connect at [ask.mq.edu.au](http://ask.mq.edu.au)

## IT Help

For help with University computer systems and technology, visit [http://www.mq.edu.au/about\\_us/offices\\_and\\_units/information\\_technology/help/](http://www.mq.edu.au/about_us/offices_and_units/information_technology/help/).

When using the University's IT, you must adhere to the [Acceptable Use of IT Resources Policy](#). The policy applies to all who connect to the MQ network including students.

## Graduate Capabilities

### PG - Capable of Professional and Personal Judgment and Initiative

Our postgraduates will demonstrate a high standard of discernment and common sense in their professional and personal judgment. They will have the ability to make informed choices and decisions that reflect both the nature of their professional work and their personal perspectives.

This graduate capability is supported by:

## Assessment task

- Class Participation

## PG - Discipline Knowledge and Skills

Our postgraduates will be able to demonstrate a significantly enhanced depth and breadth of knowledge, scholarly understanding, and specific subject content knowledge in their chosen fields.

This graduate capability is supported by:

## Learning outcomes

- To develop a broad sense of how the concerns of Australian children's literature have evolved over the past century
- To gain a good working knowledge of the principal themes of Australian children's literature over this period
- To theorise concepts of gender representation and examine changing representations of gender in Australian children's literature
- To understand theories of genre and examine prominent genres used in a range of texts written for children in Australia

## Assessment tasks

- Literature Review
- Final Essay

## PG - Critical, Analytical and Integrative Thinking

Our postgraduates will be capable of utilising and reflecting on prior knowledge and experience, of applying higher level critical thinking skills, and of integrating and synthesising learning and knowledge from a range of sources and environments. A characteristic of this form of thinking is the generation of new, professionally oriented knowledge through personal or group-based critique of practice and theory.

This graduate capability is supported by:

## Learning outcomes

- To develop a broad sense of how the concerns of Australian children's literature have evolved over the past century
- To gain a good working knowledge of the principal themes of Australian children's literature over this period
- To theorise concepts of gender representation and examine changing representations of gender in Australian children's literature



- To understand theories of genre and examine prominent genres used in a range of texts written for children in Australia

## **Assessment tasks**

- Literature Review
- Final Essay

## **PG - Research and Problem Solving Capability**

Our postgraduates will be capable of systematic enquiry; able to use research skills to create new knowledge that can be applied to real world issues, or contribute to a field of study or practice to enhance society. They will be capable of creative questioning, problem finding and problem solving.

This graduate capability is supported by:

## **Learning outcome**

- To theorise concepts of gender representation and examine changing representations of gender in Australian children's literature

## **Assessment task**

- Final Essay

## **PG - Effective Communication**

Our postgraduates will be able to communicate effectively and convey their views to different social, cultural, and professional audiences. They will be able to use a variety of technologically supported media to communicate with empathy using a range of written, spoken or visual formats.

This graduate capability is supported by:

## **Assessment tasks**

- Literature Review
- Final Essay
- Class Participation

## **PG - Engaged and Responsible, Active and Ethical Citizens**

Our postgraduates will be ethically aware and capable of confident transformative action in relation to their professional responsibilities and the wider community. They will have a sense of connectedness with others and country and have a sense of mutual obligation. They will be able to appreciate the impact of their professional roles for social justice and inclusion related to national and global issues

This graduate capability is supported by:

## Assessment task

- Class Participation

## Changes from Previous Offering

This unit has not been offered since 2011. All texts have been updated.

## Requirements and Expectations

To complete LIT 855 students must:

- Attend and participate in seminars (if internal)
- Complete all prescribed assessment tasks
- Reach a satisfactory level of achievement in the prescribed assessment tasks.

\*Absence from more than two seminars without written explanation (medical or counselling certificate) will disqualify a student from passing the unit. University regulations also stipulate that a student must attempt every part of assessment in order to be eligible to pass a unit of study.