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TLS 582
THE ART OF THE PICTUREBOOK, Spring 2020

Course Intent:

A picturebook conveys meaning through the sign systems of language and art. In a well-designed picturebook, the total format conveys meaning so that both the text and illustrations are essential to the telling of the story. A picture book must be a seamless whole conveying meaning in art, text, and book design. The illustrations do not just reflect the action in the text but share in moving the story forward and in conveying and enhancing the meaning behind the story. In order for readers to fully engage with the story, they must be able to "read" both the text and illustrations. Thus, readers need to be visually and verbally literate. Because our world has become more visually oriented, educators need knowledge and experience with art to design experiences that involve children in exploring and developing visual literacy through their interactions with books.

In this course, we will explore visual literacy specifically in relation to the art of the picturebook. Several broad questions frame the course: What is a picturebook? What is art? How do art and words work together to create meaning within a picturebook? What are the strategies that illustrators use as meaning-makers? How do viewers construct meaning from illustrations? How can art as a meaning-making process become a tool in children's inquiries? How do art media, tools, techniques, and composition impact and inform our meaning-making in a picturebook? Within these broad questions, a number of strands will be woven throughout the course, including art and artists, illustrators, styles of illustration, elements of art, composition, artistic techniques/media, types of picturebooks, bookmaking/design, and a semiotic analysis of how pictures, words, and design work together to convey meaning in a picturebook.

Course participants will read about art, illustration, picturebooks, and the role of visual literacy in children's understandings of books. They will also participate in studio experiences using various art media and in literature circles on picturebooks. They will consider the relationship between illustrations and text in picturebooks and ways to integrate art and picturebooks into inquiries with children. Participants will engage in their own inquiries related to illustration and picturebooks.

Our class experiences are based on the following beliefs about learning:

1. Learning is an active process.
We will immerse ourselves in reading and responding to professional readings and children's literature and in exploring art as a meaning-making system through studio experiences.
2. Learning is a social process of collaborating with others.
We will explore our thinking about our reading and art experiences through dialogue in small groups. We will engage in inquiry with others who have similar questions and concerns.
3. Learning occurs as we make connections to our own experiences.
Responses to literature and to art will focus on personal responses and connections to our lives and experiences. We will share ideas and concerns from our teaching and professional experiences and will design projects that fit our current needs and interests. We will search for connections between our experiences as readers and artists and our experiences as educators.
4. Choice allows learners to connect to their experiences and feel ownership in their learning.
We will have choices in the books we read, the art experiences in which we engage, our responses to reading and art, and the specific focus of projects and small group activities.
5. Learning is reflective as well as active.

We will have many opportunities to reflect on what we are learning through writing, talking, sketching, and self-evaluations.

6. Learning occurs in a diverse world with many ways of knowing.

We will search for literature and art that reflects diversity in experiences and ways of expressing those experiences.

7. Learning is a process of inquiry.

As learners we need to search out the questions that matter in our lives and develop strategies for exploring those questions and sharing our understandings with others.

Course Materials:

Martin Salisbury and Morag Styles. *Children's Picturebooks: The Art of Visual Storytelling*. King, 2020.

Molly Bang, *Picture This: How Pictures Work*. Chronicle, 2016.

Megan Lambert, *Reading Picture Books with Children*. Charlesbridge, 2016.

Maria Nikolajeva & Carole Scott, *How Picturebooks Work*. Routledge, 2001/2006. (recommended)

Clare Painter, J.R. Martin, & Len Unsworth, *Reading Visual Narratives*. Equinox, 2014. (recommended)

Articles and chapters on D2L

Course Organization:

This course is based on learning as a process of authoring--to create meaning to make sense of the world--and of inquiry--asking and exploring questions that are significant to us. To facilitate our authoring and inquiry the following tentative time blocks will be used:

5:00-5:15 Whole class meeting, announcements, read aloud

5:15-5:45 Discussion of readings/small group meeting

5:45-6:15 Whole group presentation/demonstration

6:15-6:30 Break

6:30-7:00 Literature circles/browsing/studio

7:00-8:00 Studios

8:00-8:30 Whole class meeting/reflection/announcements

***** We will begin promptly at 5:00 ******

Course Learning Engagements:

1. Professional Readings

As you read the professional readings for the course, find some way of keeping track of your response so that you are ready to discuss and share your questions and connections during class sessions. You might use post-it notes, write in the margins, sketch a response, or keep a reflective journal. In addition to the class readings, each person will read professional articles/books related to their inquiry projects and personal interests. Some of the readings will involve responding in your sketch journal.

2. Visual Journal -- a repository of visual ideas, thoughts and expressions

We will be using a visual journal to push our understandings about art as a way of creating and sharing meaning about our experiences. Purchase some kind of notebook or journal and art materials that you can easily carry with you. Twice a week make an entry in your visual journal. Each week, when you arrive at class, find someone and share one of your entries with that person. You can share with the same person each week or a different person. There are also times we will use the visual journal as a way to sketch notes and responses from the readings.

This journal is a place to combine visual images, sketches and words in observing what is happening around you and capturing some of those observations on paper through sketches, quotes, thoughts, webs,

etc. These observations can come from daily life, nature, experiences in school, readings, professional experiences, class, our studio, etc. The focus is process and visual ideas, not finished art pieces.

Your entries might involve

- observations of past or present events and images or of particular feelings and emotions.
- copying from other pieces of art
- trying out particular art media or techniques
- sketching objects, nature, or people
- rough sketches of designs for a book, poster, or piece of art you are considering making
- visual artifacts from your daily life or photographs of those artifacts
- sketches of your emotions or images as you listen to a favorite piece of music
- playing with color or lines, rather than trying to create a realistic image

For each entry in your visual journal, add a short reflection indicating

- Context - short description of how or why you made this entry and why it is important to you
- Description – describe the visual qualities of your entry using art terminology

Ultimately, a visual journal is like a bank---invest in it and you will have a wealth to draw upon! Use this as a repository of your growth and process within the course, a place to visually connect your thoughts and reflections on this class, but also your challenges and desires for all that you are and can be! Be playful with your ideas. This journal is more about **PROCESS** than **PRODUCT**!

You may also want to use your visual journal as a place to store the pieces that you explore and create during studio each week in class. In addition to your studio experiences, you are asked to make two entries a week in your journal. Evaluation of the visual journal will be based on completing these entries and reflections on a regular basis.

3. Children's Literature Readings

You will read many children's picturebooks throughout the course. Devise some type of record keeping system so that you can keep track of the books for later use. This system is for your use so the format and extensiveness of the record is your decision. Think about what kinds of information, particularly in relation to illustrations, that you want available for later use.

4. Illustrator Study

In groups of 2-3, choose an illustrator whose work interests you and whom you want to know more about, either as a person or their illustration processes.

- Gather biographical information and any articles about that illustrator or interviews of the illustrator (Something about the Author and on-line sources)
- Gather and study a collection of books by the illustrator
- Copy several of the illustrator's illustrations in your visual journal
- Play with the media and techniques used by the illustrator in your visual journal.
- Analyze the illustrations using the areas discussed in class - elements, media and technique, style, format, book design.
- Write a reflection on what you have learned from this research, focusing on the illustrator's processes and strategies in creating illustrations for picturebooks. **Due April 8.**
- Create a visual display, handout, and studio experience for **April 8.**

5. Inquiry Project

Choose an issue, topic, or question that you want to explore related to illustration, art, picture books, or visual literacy. The project involves developing a plan for exploring that topic, engaging in your inquiry, and sharing the results of your inquiry with others. **The inquiry plans are due on March 25.**

Your inquiry can be done with a group or partner or individually. We will form small groups to support individuals involved in related inquiries. Inquiry projects can take a variety of forms:

- a. Classroom or field-based inquiry where you work with children to investigate a question or issue that intrigues you. You might try illustrator studies or classroom experiences that focus on styles of illustration, techniques, artists, elements of art, design, or bookmaking. You might integrate art experiences into a theme or inquiry or work with children in writing, illustrating, and publishing their own picturebooks. You might examine children's responses to art or illustrations in literature circles. These experiences can occur in the classroom, library, school-wide program, or home setting. Keep track of your "planning to plan" and what actually occurs as you explore with children through field notes, teaching journals, transcripts, interviews, student artifacts, etc.
- b. Theoretical research or a literature review of a question or issue explored primarily through professional readings such as visual literacy, visual culture, the role of imaging in learning, sign systems, cultural authenticity, or the history of illustration.
- c. Critical analysis of a particular body of children's picturebooks, such as picturebooks from a specific country, culture, genre, or topic.
- d. Development of a curricular framework or plan for how to organize the integration of illustration and creating meaning using art throughout your curriculum in the classroom, library, or school. This could include gathering resources and information on illustration, illustrators, and/or different aspects of art, organizing them, and creating a "plan of possibilities" for their use in your curriculum. These plans might involve planning a professional development workshop, course, or set of materials.
- e. Learning something new. Choose an area or topic such as a particular art media that you know little about but are interested in and develop a plan for learning about that topic. Keep a journal about what you are learning and how you are going about learning.
- f. Illustrate your own book.
- g. Your proposal

As part of your inquiry, keep track of your process of research including all notes, rough drafts, artifacts, etc. Some type of written "product" will be turned in at the end of the course such as a paper, curriculum notebook, draft of a picture book, or learning log and reflections. In addition, each project will be shared with other class members on **May 6 and 13**. You will also write a self-evaluation of the process and product for your inquiry project.

Class participation and attendance.

Participate in class sharing times, literature circles, written responses, small group projects, studio time, and curricular invitations. Class sessions involve many discussions and collaborative engagements. If you are absent or not prepared for a class session, your actions will have a significant impact on others in the class as well as on your own learning. If you absolutely must miss a class session due to illness, leave a message for Kathy in advance on e-mail. Contact a class member so that you are fully prepared for the next class meeting. Bring a written note to the following class session and meet with Kathy after class to make plans to make up the work of the missed class session. **More than one absence or excessive tardiness/leaving early will affect your grade for the course.** Your attendance and active participation is highly valued and an essential aspect of the course.

Evaluation

Self-evaluation and reflection are essential to learning. For each major project, you will write a self-evaluation of your goals, process, and product and we will add our evaluative comments based on your

statement of goals. You will also write a self-evaluation of your learning at mid-term and at the end of the course.

Your final evaluation will be holistically based on both our and your own evaluation of your growth and learning, the quality of your work, and your attendance, participation, and preparation for class sessions. We assume you will complete all of the projects listed on the syllabus to fulfill course requirements, unless you have negotiated another option. Your final grade will be based on the thoughtfulness and quality of this work with a B reflecting the completion of all course projects at a satisfactory level. Incompletes will not be given for the course except in extreme situations and only with prior approval.

TLS Position Statement on Social Justice (3/25/2014)

The members of the TLSS community are committed to providing equal opportunity and nurturing an academic climate dedicated to social justice. Injustice takes many forms. Oppressive acts are sometimes overt, but most are subtle, and are difficult to document. These hidden forms of discrimination are identified in the literature as microaggressions, often resulting from unexamined attitudes and beliefs. Macroaggressions are expressions of both the overt and systemic forms of injustice.

Our commitment to social justice reflects an orientation to our goals and practices in education and ultimately, an orientation to life that values a diversity and inclusion of viewpoints and experiences of all people as valuable contributors to the experience of schooling and society. This stance recognizes that individuals bring a variety of linguistic, social, and cognitive strengths from their families and communities into the classroom; we view these strengths as assets.

- We value and honor human diversity.
- We recognize that all relationships include dynamics of power. We are committed to relating to each other with conscious awareness and sensitivity to these power dynamics.
- We pledge to contribute to expanding the linguistic and cognitive strengths that learners possess and bring with them to the classroom.
- We understand that systemic policies, traditions, and laws along with personal beliefs, experiences and attitudes affect personal relationships and equitable treatment and opportunity for all.
- We strive to provide a context where we all have the venue, the opportunity, and the confidence to express our experiences and that these experiences will be heard constructively, critically, and with sensitivity.
- Hence, we are not color blind. We will not erase who someone is in the name of equality, nor deny the historical, material and emotional impacts of racialized and gendered identities, and colonial legacies.

We stand alongside and speak out with our colleagues, staff, students, and community members when any of us or others experience micro- or macroaggressions. We recognize that those of us who enjoy privileged status due to our racialized, gendered, heteronormative, or otherwise privileged aspects of our identities may be unaware of the ways this privileged status marginalizes others. We pledge to listen to our colleagues, students, staff, and community members when any of us make efforts to remain diligent in maintaining awareness of micro, macro aggressions, and raise our awareness around issues of invisibility, marginalization, normativity, power, and privilege.

We view these goals as both crucial and ambitious. The entrenched nature of oppression requires both institutional restructuring and new social discourses. Therefore, our stance on disrupting existing and persisting inequities requires attention to micro and macro level interactions. Every interaction is an opportunity for disrupting processes of marginalization, whether overt or subtle, both through person-to-person exchange and through resisting oppressive structures and systems. We commit to holding one other and ourselves accountable, through our research and practice, to rejecting entrenched inequalities, and to cultivating new discourses as groundwork for imagining new social worlds.

Tentative Course Schedule

January 15	Introduction to the course What is a picturebook?	
January 22	What is art?	Bring artifact and time line Salisbury, C. 1 Nikolajeva, Introduction & C. 1
*January 27 – Caldecott announcement (streamed live, go to ALA website)		
January 29	Exploring art through visual journals	<i>The Monument</i> Stephens, Eisner, Kirby Sanders-Bustle
February 5	Illustrator Strategies and Processes	Raschka and Salisbury, C. 2 Caldecott book and speech
February 12	Exploring Media & Technique	Salisbury, C. 6 Horn Book Studio Views Illustrator profile
February 19	Elements and Principles of Art	Bang, Illustrator profile
February 26	Elements and Principles of Art	Bang, Illustrator profile Painter, C. 2
March 4	Style and Cultural Conventions	Smolkin & Suina, Mo & Shen Illustrator profile Midterm reflections due
March 11	Spring Break	
March 14-15	Tucson Festival of Books	Attend picturebook/illustrator studios
March 18	Museum Visits/ Aesthetic Scanning	Hewett & Rush
March 25	Book design	Scieszka, Lambert, C. 1-3 Illustrator profile Project plans due
April 1	Book design/bookmaking	Lambert, C. 4-6, Salisbury, C. 7 Gantos, Shulevitz Museum reflections due
April 8	Illustrator Strategies and Processes	Illustrator profile Illustrator Studies due
April 15	Postmodern Picture Books Visual Culture Visual Narratives	Nikolajeva, C. 7, Goldstone David Wiesner

April 22	Framing and graphic novels Illustrated novels	Painter, C. 4; Pagliaro Illustrator profile Salisbury, C. 7
April 29	Classroom connections Writing and Publishing Response to Literature Art as a Tool for Inquiry	Olshansky, Katie Wood Ray Salisbury, C. 3 and 5
May 6	Classroom Connections Illustrator Visit/Studies Getting Published	Projects and project self-evaluations due Salisbury, C. 8
May 13	Share projects Curricular Thinking	Final self-evaluation due