Philosophy and Children

Sample On-campus course

Thursdays 5:20-8:10 pm

Dr. Wendy C. Turgeon

Syllabus

1/26  Philosophy and Children-an introduction

2/02  Philosophy and Wonderment: defining terms, collecting ideas
      reading: Dialogues by Gareth Matthews

2/09  Our Educational Climate: current dilemmas and proposed solutions
      reading: PIC**, 3
      Kio and Gus Discussion

2/16  Formal Curriculum and Methodology I
      our educational model: philosophy
      reading: PIC, 4 & 5
      KIO AND GUS discussion

2/23  Formal Curriculum and Methodology II
      building an environment and implementing techniques
      reading: PIC, 6 & 7
      KIO AND GUS discussion

3/02  methodology issues and Class work on paper projects

3/09  Exploration of alternative materials
      Short Papers due

3/16  Theoretical Foundations: Logic and Creativity
      reading: PIC, 8
      KIO AND GUS discussion
      Short papers due

3/23  Teaching ethics?
      reading: PIC, 9
      KIO AND GUS discussion

3/30  Philosophy and other disciplines
      Social studies, language arts, sciences
      KIO AND GUS discussion

4/06  Lisa-- philosophical text
      Class panels leading discussion

4/13  Spring Break- no class

4/20  Lisa--
      Class panels leading discussion

4/27  Lisa-- discussion continues
      Class panels leading discussion
Required Texts (four texts)
**PIC= Philosophy in the Classroom by Lipman, Sharp, Oscanyan
Dialogues or Philosophy and the Young Child by Gareth Matthews (excellent background reading to accompany the theoretical text).
Lisa this is a philosophical novel written for high school children
Kio and Gus this novel is written for 2nd/3rd graders

Recommended additional text: Philosophy Goes to School and Thinking, Children and Education both by Matthew Lipman and Teaching for Better Thinking by Ann Margaret Sharp and Laurance Splitter.

Assignments
1. Reflections paper (5-8 pages)
   Students will be assigned either a child's story with philosophical themes or some other form of philosophical catalyst (art work, film, etc.). You will each engage a group of children in a discussion about your material and your essay will report on the ensuing discussion and evaluate it. More information will be presented about this as the course goes on. Due March 9th

2. Final paper-- Choose from the following options based on your own personal research interests:
   --theoretical background: psychological/philosophical perspectives; Growing Up with Philosophy or Thinking, Children and Education both edited by M. Lipman are good sources for ideas
   --a review of current literature in psychology or philosophy of education; an active discussion debating the need for and methodology of educational reform includes writings by E.D. Hirsch, Jr., David Elkind, Howard Gardner, Nel Noddings, Theodore Sizer and Neil Postman.
   --alternative curricula & methods that introduce philosophy into the classroom
   --practical application: choose one of the philosophical novels (listed below) by Lipman and introduce it to a group of children
   --write a comprehensive teaching manual for a children's book using the text manuals as a model
   --choose a content discipline (eg., social studies, science) and explore how philosophy can be incorporated into its curriculum
   --a review and analysis of web sites devoted to p4c concepts and materials
   --write a philosophical children’s story with an accompanying short manual

The paper should be 10-15 pages; due May 4th

3. Participate as facilitator in a class discussion of the novel Lisa to the class. Introduce the material, lead the discussion, assist the class in summarizing their discussions. The final facilitator(s) will return to Kio and Gus and do likewise.
   **This assignment may change based on enrollment counts

4. Another avenue for enrichment is participation in the BlackBoard inquiry that will be generated throughout the semester. I will also post our handouts in our online Blackboard site as well. I will discuss this in class.

Please note: The final grade will also take into account attendance and participation as well as written work. This class is essentially a community exploration of the themes of children and philosophy. Your participation and contribution will greatly shape the nature and focus of the whole group and is necessary for us all to benefit from the readings and ideas therein. If you miss more than two classes, your final grade will be lowered in proportion to the lack of participation.

**Philosophical**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Novels written for children</th>
<th>Grades targeted</th>
<th>Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Doll Hospital</td>
<td>preschool</td>
<td>Pre-K-K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elfie</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>K-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kio and Gus</td>
<td>2-3</td>
<td>K-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pixie</td>
<td>3-4</td>
<td>K-5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nous</td>
<td>3-6</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Harry Stottlemeier's</td>
<td>5-6</td>
<td>4-7</td>
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**Discovery**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Grades targeted</th>
<th>Range</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lisa</td>
<td>7-8</td>
<td>7-12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suki</td>
<td>9-10</td>
<td>8-11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mark</td>
<td>11-12</td>
<td>9-12</td>
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</tbody>
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**Some questions to invite children to think about:**

Have you ever thought about being some else if you had another name?
Do you ever wonder if you can do something wrong, even if everybody else is doing the same?
Do you sometimes wonder if something can happen completely by accident?
Do you wonder sometimes if all were different, if we had no clocks?
Do you wonder sometimes what are colors in fact?
Do you wonder sometimes if a robot can think?
Do you wonder sometimes where the numbers come from?
Do you wonder sometimes if a stone has feelings?
Do you wonder sometimes if all that is happening can as well be a dream?
## Children's Books for Philosophical Discussions

**Books with Universal Appeal**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Title</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Andersen H.C.</td>
<td>The Ugly Duckling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baum Frank</td>
<td>The Wonderful Wizard of Oz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caroll Lewis</td>
<td>Alice in Wonderland</td>
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<tr>
<td>Caroll Lewis</td>
<td>Through the Looking Glass</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jarrell Randall</td>
<td>The Bat Poet</td>
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<tr>
<td>Milne A.A.</td>
<td>The World of Pooh</td>
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<tr>
<td>Steig William</td>
<td>Pink and Yellow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VanAllsburg Chris</td>
<td>Jumanji</td>
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<tr>
<td>VanAllsburg Chris</td>
<td>The Polar Express</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VanAllsburg Chris</td>
<td>Two Bad Ants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VanAllsburg Chris</td>
<td>The Sweetest Fig</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VanAllsburg Chris</td>
<td>The Wretched Stone</td>
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<tr>
<td>White E.B.</td>
<td>Charlotte's Web</td>
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<tr>
<td>Williams Margery</td>
<td>The Velveteen Rabbit</td>
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**Primary Grades (Kindergarten to Second)**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Title</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aardema Verna</td>
<td>Why Mosquitoes Buzz in People's Ears</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Babbit Natalie</td>
<td>The Something</td>
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<tr>
<td>Baynton Martin</td>
<td>Jane and the Dragon</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brenner Barbara</td>
<td>Wagon Wheels</td>
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<tr>
<td>Browne Anthony</td>
<td>The Tunnel</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bunting Eve</td>
<td>Swan in Love</td>
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<tr>
<td>Catalanotto Peter</td>
<td>Emily’s Art</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chorao Kay</td>
<td>Albert's Toothache</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dahl Roald</td>
<td>Fantastic Mr. Fox</td>
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<tr>
<td>Depaola Tomie</td>
<td>The Legend of Blue Bonnet</td>
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<tr>
<td>DuQuette Keith</td>
<td>Happy as a Tapir</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fenner Carol</td>
<td>Tigers in the Celler</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fox Mem</td>
<td>Wilfrid Gordan McDonald Partridge</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gannett Ruth Stills</td>
<td>My Father's Dragon</td>
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<tr>
<td>Goble Paul</td>
<td>Iktomi Loses His Eyes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hall Donald</td>
<td>Oxcart Man</td>
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<tr>
<td>Himmelman John</td>
<td>Talester the Lizard</td>
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<tr>
<td>Keats Ezra Jack</td>
<td>Dreams</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leonni Leo</td>
<td>Alexander and the Windup Mouse</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leonni Leo</td>
<td>Fish is Fish</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leonni Leo</td>
<td>Frederick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leonni Leo</td>
<td>Let's Make Rabbits</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Leonni Leo Swimmy
Lobel Arnold Frog and Toad Together
Lobel Arnold Owl at Home
Madonna Mercer There's a Nightmare in my Closet
Mayer Mercer A Silly Story
McCloskey Robert Make Way for Ducklings
McKee David Tusk Tusk
McLerran Alice The Mountain who loved a Bird
McNaughton Colin Once Upon an Ordinary School Day
Moss Marissa Regina’s Big Mistake
Munson Derek Enemy Pie
Parish Peggy Amelia Bedelia
Pfister Marcus The Rainbow Fish
Pollaco Patricia Babushka Baba Yaga
Seuss Dr. Hurray for Duttendorf (and any of his other books!)
Seuss Dr. Thudwick the Big Hearted Moose
Silverstein Shel The Giving Tree
Tashlin Frank The Bear that Wasn't
Tudor Tasha First Delights
Waber Bernard Ira Sleeps Over
Waber Bernard I Was All Thumbs
Waber Bernard But names Will Never Hurt Me
Wells Rosemary Peabody
Wright Betty Ren The Cat Next Door

Intermediate Grades (third, fourth and fifth)
Baylor Byrd Hawk, I'm your Brother
Brown Jeff Flat Stanley
Carrick Carol The Accident
Carter Forrest The Education of Little Tree
Cooney Barbara Miss Rumpius
Creech Sharon Love That Dog
Dahl Roald The Magic Finger
Estes Eleanor A Hundred Dresses
Gardiner John Reynolds Stone Fox
Gerstein Mordecai The Man who walked between the Towers
Greaves Margaret A Net to Catch the Wind
Knutson Barbara Why the Crab Has No Head
Meddaugh Susan Martha Calling
Meddaugh Susan Martha Speaks
Miles Miska Annie and the Old One
Patterson Katherine The Great Gilly Hopkins
Patterson Katherine The Crane Wife
Polacco Patricia Appelemando's Dream
Rawls Wilson Where the Red Fern Grows
Rotowoski Margaret After the Dancing Days
Smith Doris A Taste of Blackberries
Smith Roger The Empty Island
Steig William Abel's Island
Steig William Dominic
Steig William Sylvester and the Magic Pebble
Steig William The Amazing Bone
Tudor Tasha A Time to Keep
Tudor Tasha Springs of Joy
Viorst Judith The Tenth Good Thing about Barney
White E.B. Stuart Little
Wagner Jane J.T.
Willard Nancy Nightgown of the Sullen Moon
Zolotow Charlotte William's Doll

**Advanced grades (fifth, sixth, etc.)**

Babbitt Natalie Tuck Everlasting
Banks Lynn Reid Indian in the Cupboard
Brinton Turkle Thy Friend, Obadiah
Bryars Betsy The Summer of the Swan
Buffet Jimmy The Jolly Mon
Cleary Beverly Ralph S. Mouse
Cooper Susan Over the Sea Under Stone, The Dark is Rising, Greenwitch, etc.
Evaline Ness Same, Bangs and Moonshine
George Jean C. Julie of the Wolves
Graham Kenneth Wind in the Willows
Hinton S.E. The Outsiders
Jester Norman The Phantom Tollbooth
L'Engle Madelaine The Time Trilogy
Lewis C.S. the Narnia series
Lowery Lois The Giver
McLachlan Patricia Baby
Musgrove Margaret Ashanti to Zulu
Steinbeck John The Pearl
Walsh Jill Paton Unleaving
Zindel Paul The Pigman

This bibliography simply offers suggestions. If you know of other works that you feel might make excellent material for a philosophic discussion, by all means try them out! This is how the bibliography grows.

1/2006
What sorts of puzzlement constitute a philosophical attitude towards experience? In thinking about the issues below, ask yourself: what do I think of this question? In what ways would children engage themselves in this question?

**Ethics**
1. What makes something right or wrong? How many meanings of "right" and "wrong" are there?
   - the right time
   - the wrong shoe
   - the right thing to do
   - my right hand
   - the wrong book
2. Likewise, the notions of "good" and "bad"...?
3. How do I know what is "fair"?

**Epistemology or Theory of Knowledge**
4. How do I decide to do something?
5. What makes an idea or statement true or false? Can truth change?
6. How do words mean? How does language come about and relate (or does it) to the world?
7. What is the difference between a belief, an opinion, and knowledge?

**Philosophy of God**
8. Can you think about God? Describe the contents of your thoughts.
9. I've never seen God; is It real? How do I know it is real?
10. Why do people talk about God in such different ways? Are some ways better than others? How would we judge among them?

**Metaphysics**
11. What makes me 'me'? How much can I change and still be me?
12. Is time real? How so or why not?
13. What makes something real?
14. Is there a meaning of life? What does that question itself mean?
Aesthetics

15. What makes something beautiful? the eye of the beholder or a quality in the object?


17. How does an artist create?

18. What is the "work of art" (in literature, painting, music, dance, theater? etc.??)

As a group, come up with what you judge to be a philosophical question. What makes it philosophical?