As the recipient of funding to prepare a course on multiethnic children’s literature, I was grateful to have the time in the summer of 2019 to read and research the relevant literature and scholarship.

The extensive reading I did over the summer led me to the realization that my initial plan to teach a course on the whole of multiethnic literature was too broad. As a result, I have focused on African-American children’s literature and have created a syllabus focused on this subject but pointing potentially to other multiethnic traditions. Thus, I must update my initial grant narrative as follows:

This course will focus on children’s literature by and about African-Americans. In doing so, it will examine several genres of children’s literature including picture books, novels, graphic novels, and memoirs, and it will analyze these texts using the paradigms developed by African-American theorists. The immediate goal of the course will be to provide students with a history of African-American children’s literature, a justification for the reading and teaching of this literature, and the analytical tools to write and speak persuasively about this tradition.

The long-term goal of this new course is to contribute to a change in the market conditions for African-American children’s literature. The children’s book market is in large part determined by demands from teachers and librarians. The books that are published reflect the curricula of elementary schools. By providing JMU students—many of whom will go on to be teachers, librarians, editors, and publishers—with the analytical tools for engaging with books by and about African Americans, I can encourage them to choose these books for their future students, communities, and readers.

Re-evaluating, revising, and assessing the timeline:

2019

- June 1 to July 14: research on the history, themes, genres, and theories of multiethnic children’s literature
  - From this research, I decided to focus on African-American children’s literature
- July 15-July 25: generate list of primary and secondary readings for students
  - This portion took longer: July 15-August 10; August 21-August 30
  - Completed
- July 26-July 31: create syllabus and assignments; submit initial statement of completion
  - This portion was started later and took longer: August 21-September 17
  - A draft syllabus has been completed; the types of assignments have been indicated
2020

- January - April: teach course
  - The date for teaching this course could be either Spring 2020 or Fall 2020
  - This course could be taught either as a lecture and discussion course, or as a seminar
  - After teaching this course, I will assess its efficacy based on student feedback

Primary Texts


Significant Secondary Texts


Sweeney, Meghan. “Making Good Trouble: John Lewis, Andrew Aydin, and Nate Powell’s March Trilogy and the Lessons of the Civil Rights Movement.” Contending with Gun


---. The Dark Fantastic: Race and the imagination from Harry Potter to the Hunger Games. NYU P, 2019.