# Workshop: Children's literature, cinema and tv

## Prof. Maria Chiara Oltolini

***COURSE AIMS AND INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES***

The course aims to provide students with a diachronic overview on juvenile fiction in Italy and abroad; special emphasis will be given to: a number of case histories accounting for the transformations in the system from past to present; stressing the importance of intellectual properties, enucleating the connections between creators, publishing and audiovisual industry in the multi-platform age; teaching the basics of storytelling for the audience under consideration.

At the end of the course, students will be able to orient themselves in the galaxy of productions geared at children and kids; orient themselves between the different medias punctuating children’s culture, identifying well-established and emerging languages and formats, with a focus on animation and comics (Western and Eastern); knowing the main targets and their implications in terms of narrative choices, consumption patterns and business strategies; reasoning on stories and contents that left an imprint on global children’s culture, analysing the underpinning themes and archetypal characters, as well as situating them within their historical context; understanding the features of the Italian framework, and imagining work proposals poised between individual creativity and market needs today.

***COURSE CONTENT***

The course will include lectures (supported by screenings of clips and PowerPoint slides-hows) and a practical exercise.

– Young audiences between media and popular culture. Theories, values, demographics.

– Old and new classics for kids. Genres, characters, themes.

– Audiovisual industry and franchise. Seriality, branding, adaptation, transmedia.

– The art of storytelling. Ingredients and techniques to write children’s fiction.

– Exercise: creating a concept or analysing a work of your choice.

***READING LIST***

M.C. Oltolini, *Scrivere bambini, scrivere per bambini*, in A. Fumagalli-C. Albani-P. Braga (ed.), *Storia delle serie tv*, Vol. 1, Dino Audino, Roma 2021: 195-229.

If necessary, a further reading list will be provided by the lecturer during the course.

***TEACHING METHOD***

Lectures (with projections of clips and slide-shows), supervised practical work, group work. In case the current Covid-19 health emergency does not allow frontal teaching, remote teaching will be carried out following procedures that will be promptly notified to students.

***ASSESSMENT METHOD AND CRITERIA***

Students will be required to: interact during classes, practicing the analysis of cultural products for kids using the tools and notions learnt during the course; grasp the differences between the target audiences and the features of the Italian scene; exchange skills and ideas based on prior knowledge and personal intuition; think from the point of view of creators and users of such works, advancing reading and work hypotheses.

For the written component, which counts as the final mark, students will decide, alone or in groups of 2-3 people, whether to analyse a work of their choice, modelled on the examples distributed in lectures, or develop a narrative concept, i.e., a project idea for kids. In both cases, students will be required to know - at least in broad terms - the main features of children’s culture and fiction, explaining their arguments in a clear and convincing way. The written exam will be assessed according to the criteria laid down during the course, taking into account the care and attention in writing the text, study of materials and sources, independence of judgement and critical sense. In order to be checked on practical class attendance, students are supposed to submit their texts to the lecturer. However these assignments will not be assessed.

***NOTES AND PREREQUISITES***

Prof. Maria Chiara Oltolini can be contacted by email at: [mariachiara.oltolini@unicatt.it](mailto:mariachiara.oltolini@unicatt.it) and will meet students at arranged times. There are no prerequisites for attending the course. However, students should show a certain curiosity towards the subject. In addition, students should be ready to consider kids’ fiction as one of the “educational” tools for their life.

Further information can be found on the lecturer's webpage at http://docenti.unicatt.it/web/searchByName.do?language=ENG or on the Faculty notice board.