Enchanted: The Power of Stories in Children's Literature (and Beyond in College)

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Abstract
Did you have in childhood a favorite book whose story cast a spell in your heart, giving you an initial--and enduring--sense of the joy of reading and the power of words? If so, this Micro-Seminar will give you a fun chance to share this story and explore its hold on you, then and now. The reading for this course will be plentiful (maybe 12-18 books) but light: it will be "quick reads" drawn from our favorite books as kids (e.g., "Goodnight Moon") plus a contemporary revision or two (e.g., "Goodnight IPad") and a feminist fairy tale by Rebecca Solnit ("Cinderella Liberator"). The seminar will also consider the place of stories in various academic disciplines at USC including not just literature and film studies but history, political science, the natural sciences and business.

Faculty Biography
I've taken great joy in serving as a professor in the English Department at USC since 1984. I love the challenge of defending the power of the word and book in a place--Los Angeles--so identified with Hollywood and visual culture. My favorite courses to teach include two large lecture General Education courses: "Los Angeles: The City, the Novel, the Movie" and "Reading the Heart: Emotional Intelligence and the Humanities." I love comparing and contrasting the various arts of storytelling in these courses, and this Micro-Seminar gives me a chance to consider how children's literature enchants us through a combination of word and picture. When I retire from USC, I plan to become a volunteer librarian for a K-5 school where my stepdaughter teaches.