F13D071 – Children's Book Writing and Illustration
Instructor: Peter Adamakos

Sunday, 1:00 – 4:00
Sep 15 – Dec 8
12 sessions

While most drawing and writing will be done at home, classes will be mostly used for review and instruction. Students will illustrate their own children's book in the style and medium of their choice; writing their own story or adapting one already known. The goal is to have a full-size sample ("dummy") book by the end of the course.   Each class will include teaching, evaluations of projects, published books and class discussions.

We begin by having each student select a subject, story and characters. This is not easy and about half usually change theirs after starting it – part of the learning process. We examine throughout the course published children's books, especially current ones. Students also bring in old or current favorite books, often their children's current books for all to see, read and discuss.

We learn about publishing, see what different publishers have as submission guidelines, study ever-changing trends, and usually make one class a field trip to Classics Book Store nearby to see the most current books and discuss them. We learn the importance of covers and their layout, design and appeal, age group parameters and related subjects. Layout is extremely important, where illustrations should go, left and right side page positioning for effect, size of illustrations, and of course which moments of the story to best illustrate. Good basic illustration drawing is also a skill to be learned or improved.

The students continue to write their stories, design their characters and lay out their book, adjusting, changing as they go along. Everyone gets a chance to know each other's book well and before too long are making positive criticism and suggestions which is taken and given on a professional and not personal basis. The students bring in work they have done on their book since the previous class, and there are detailed analysis and suggestions given. It is and ongoing process until the final mock-up book is done. Students learn at their own pace and some never do complete their mock-up book in the three months or so of the course. They will make enough progress, however, that hey can complete it on their own after the course and submit it for publication after the course, and I have met with some of them to review their final work when competed without any obligation on their part.