

English 341: Fantasy

Tuesday/Thursday 4:10 - 5:30
1401 Mason Hall

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Course Description:

What is fantasy, in our literature and in ourselves? This course will explore the nature and uses of fantastic narratives from the beginning of the nineteenth century to the present, drawing texts from such widely different fields as fairy tale, science fiction, and the so-called New Novel. No special background in literature is required for registration, but we will begin immediately to consider broad concepts of art and analysis that should help increase understanding and enjoyment of the books and develop ourselves as imaginative and incisive thinkers. The course requires attendance at two lecture/discussion sections per week. The work for the course will revolve around three medium-length papers and weekly forum posts on the readings. There will be no exams. Underclasspersons may register for the course, but it is intended primarily for upperclasspersons.

Required Texts:

- Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm, *The Complete Fairy Tales of the Brothers Grimm* (978-0553382167)
- E.T.A. Hoffmann, *Tales of E.T.A. Hoffmann* (978-0226347899)
- Edgar Allan Poe, *The Portable Poe* (978-0143039914)
- Lewis Carroll, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland and Through the Looking Glass* (0451527747)
- H.G. Wells, *The Island of Dr. Moreau* (978-0451529893)
- H.G. Wells, *The Invisible Man* (978-0451531674)
- Franz Kafka, *The Complete Stories* (978-0805210552)
- Virginia Woolf, *Orlando* (978-0156701600)
- Alain Robbe-Grillet, *The Erasers* (978-0802150868)
- J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Tolkien Reader* (978-0345345066)
- Norton Juster, *The Phantom Tollbooth* (978-0394820378)
- Italo Calvino, *Cosmicomics* (978-0156226004)
- Marge Piercy, *Woman on the Edge of Time* (978-0449210826)
- Laura Esquivel, *Like Water for Chocolate* (978-0385420174)

Work Commitments

Work commitments for this course include three papers, each of which are 5-6 pages in length and each of which are worth 25% of your final grade.

- **Close Reading.** This paper argues for an interpretation of one story or novel.
- **Comparative Analysis.** This paper develops an argument that compares and contrasts works by two different authors.
- **Generalization.** This paper makes a general claim about how fantastic literature handles a theme, motif, or image, using evidence from works by three or more authors.

You may write these papers in any order that you chose. At the top of the first page, give your name, identify which of the three papers it is, and identify the author(s) being analyzed. Each paper must discuss different authors. So, for example, if your first paper was a comparative analysis of Hoffman and Poe, your close reading cannot analyze Hoffman or Poe. Your generalization paper may discuss authors who you analyze in your close reading and/or your comparative analysis, but it must discuss at least three authors who you do not discuss in the other papers. By the end of the semester, you should have written on at least six of the thirteen authors who we read in this course.

Each paper should aim to enrich the reading of an intelligent senior in the class. This means that you should read the books with care, annotating as you go, and looking for matters that particularly interest you. When you finish this first reading, review the text(s) and your annotations, seeking a better understanding of some aspect of the text(s). This might be the significance of an image, the nature of a given character, the structure of the narration, the revelation of theme, the importance of some feature of style, or any other literary matter that you believe is worthy of your extra attention. Generate a hypothesis concerning this matter. Test it against the text(s) in order to confirm it, modify it, or discard it as necessary. Once you have a hypothesis you believe would be valuable to a classmate who had also read the books but had happened to be working on another aspect of it, draft your paper so as to present that hypothesis clearly and persuasively. Where appropriate, paraphrase and/or quote from the text. Use page references in parentheses. Do not, however, make your paper mere summary. The intelligent senior already knows what happened in the books; you are trying to add to this knowledge by revealing the significance and/or subtlety of the books' meaning or technique. Reread your draft with the eyes of a potentially dissenting reader and revise to meet any legitimate objections. The resulting second (or third?) draft will not only capture part of your own understanding of the books but will bring you to class well prepared to participate in discussion and to understand the full significance of what others say. The discipline of this type of assignment will not only help you get the most from the books but will greatly sharpen your reading and writing skills.

All papers should be typed in 12 point Times New Roman font with one-inch margins on all sides. They should be double-spaced and should include page numbers and a title, but not a separate title page. Improperly formatted papers will not be accepted.

Forum Posts

Every week I will post a discussion question to CTools pertaining to the next week's readings, which you must respond to by noon on Monday. You are encouraged but not required to reply to one another's responses. Participation on the CTools forum is worth 25% of your final grade.

Course Policies

- **Attendance**
Attendance will be taken at the beginning of each class by way of a sign-in sheet. If you are late to class and miss the sign-in sheet, it is your responsibility to make sure that your attendance is recorded. Students are allowed two unexcused absences without penalty. More than two unexcused absences will lower your final grade by 1/3 of a letter grade per additional absence. Absences will be excused only if you ask to be excused in advance. I will grant such an excuse when class conflicts with a religious holiday or on a case-by-case basis with regard to other events that make missing class unavoidable. I may ask for documentation to confirm the justification for the absence. Absences for medical or family emergencies are, of course, understandable and will be excused if acceptable documentation is provided.
- **Email and Office Hours**
Please allow for up to 24 hours for a response to any email. We will not provide comments on paper drafts via email, but we will provide comments in office hours.
- **Late Papers**
Late Papers will incur a loss of 1/3 of a letter grade per day late. We will offer extensions on papers on a case-by-case basis, but only if you speak with us prior to the due date.
- **Food and Drink**
Feel free to eat or drink in class, so long as it is not loud or otherwise distracting and you keep the classroom clean.
- **Laptops, Cell Phones, MP3 Players, etc.**
Pretend this is an airplane and turn off all electronic devices before class begins.
- **Pen and Paper**
Remember to always bring a pen and paper to class.
- **Disabilities**
If you would like accommodation for a disability, please contact us as soon as possible. Any information you give us will be treated as strictly confidential. We also encourage you to contact the office of Services for Students with Disabilities in order to obtain disability verification and assistance in determining reasonable accommodations. Their website can be found at: <http://www.umich.edu/~sswd/>.
- **Plagiarism**
The definition of and department policy about plagiarism are available online at: <http://www.lsa.umich.edu/english/undergraduate/advising/plagNote.asp>. Department policy states that if you plagiarize, you will fail the assignment and the course. In addition, your case will be sent to the Dean of Student Affairs, who will review the case and may recommend further penalty.
- **The Sweetland Writing Center**
The Sweetland Writing Center is an excellent resource for help with papers. They can offer you expert one-on-one assistance at all stages of the writing process. Their website: <http://www.lsa.umich.edu/sweetland>.

Weekly Schedule

- 9-3** Introductions
- 9-10** Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm, *The Complete Fairy Tales of the Brothers Grimm*
Selections: "The Frog King," "Rapunzel," "The Three Spinners," "Hansel and Gretel,"
"The White Snake," "The Straw, the Coal, and the Bean," "The Fisherman and His
Wife," "The Brave Little Tailor," "Cinderella," "Little Red Cap," "The Bremen Town
Musicians," "Clever Hans," "Clever Else," "The Magic Table, the Golden Donkey, and
the Club in the Sack," "Thumbling," "The Juniper Tree," "Brier Rose," "Snow White,"
"Rumpelstiltskin," "The Golden Bird," "Freddy and Katy," "Little Farmer," "How Six
Made Their Way in the World," "Clever Gretel," "Lucky Hans," "The Goose Girl,"
"The Raven," "The Jew in the Thornbush," "The Clever Little Tailor"
- 9-17** E.T.A. Hoffmann, *Tales of E.T.A. Hoffmann*
Selections: Introduction, "Ritter Gluck," "The Golden Pot," "The Sandman," "Councillor
Krespel," "Mademoiselle de Scudéri," "The Doubles"
- 9-24** Edgar Allan Poe, *The Portable Poe*
Selections: "The Tell-Tale Heart," "The Oval Portrait," "The Black Cat," "The Pit and the
Pendulum," "The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar," "The Purloined Letter," "The
Murders in the Rue Morgue," "William Wilson," "Ligeia," "The Fall of the House of
Usher," "The Cask of Amontillado," "Annabel Lee," "The Bells," "The Raven," "On the
Prose Tale"
- 10-1** Lewis Carroll, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland and Through the Looking Glass*
- 10-8** H.G. Wells, *The Island of Dr. Moreau* and *The Invisible Man*
PAPER 1 DUE
- 10-15** Study break; Franz Kafka, *The Complete Stories*
Selections: Introduction/Foreword, Chronology, "Before the Law," "An Imperial
Message," "The Judgment," "The Metamorphosis," "In the Penal Colony," "A Country
Doctor," "A Report to an Academy," "A Hunger Artist," "A Dream," "The Next
Village," "Jackals and Arabs," "An Old Manuscript," "A Common Confusion," "The
Truth about Sancho Panza," "On Parables"
- 10-22** Virginia Woolf, *Orlando*
- 10-29** Alain Robbe-Grillet, *The Erasers*
- 11-5** J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Tolkien Reader*
PAPER 2 DUE
- 11-12** Norton Juster, *The Phantom Tollbooth*
- 11-19** Italo Calvino, *Cosmicomics*
- 11-26** Marge Piercy, *Woman on the Edge of Time*; Thanksgiving break
- 12-3** Laura Esquivel, *Like Water for Chocolate*
- 12-10** Conclusion
PAPER 3 DUE