

Department of English & Writing Studies

Speculative Fiction: Fantasy

English 2072F (001)

Fall 2022

Instructor: Dr. Gabrielle Ceraldi

UC 4431

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Office Hours: T, Th: 3:30-4:30

Course Location: TC 204

Course Date/Time: Tuesdays 11:30 am -
12:30 pm; Thursdays 11:30 am - 1:30 pm

Course Description

Wizards, vampires, fairies, and the Chosen One – these figures are no longer confined to a genre ghetto but have instead moved to the mainstream. This course examines the roots of the fantasy genre in novels such as *Dracula* and *The Lord of the Rings* and considers how the tropes of the genre have been reproduced and transformed by authors like J.K. Rowling and Neil Gaiman. We will examine the continuing appeal of stories about magic, whether they involve supernatural intrusions, visits to the realm of faerie, or extraordinary powers hidden in apparently ordinary places.

Learning Objectives:

By the end of the course, the successful student will be able to:

- Place individual texts into the context of the fantasy genre as a whole;
- Identify and analyze the basic elements of literature such as plot, character, point of view, theme, setting, imagery, and diction;
- Understand the political, religious, moral, and philosophical underpinnings of the texts on the course;
- Write an essay about a work of literature containing an effective thesis supported by adequate evidence from the original text;
- Offer independent insights, beyond those outlined in class;
- Organize and present ideas clearly and effectively.

Course Materials

Required Texts:

J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Fellowship of the Ring* (Harper)

The Two Towers (Harper)

The Return of the King (Harper)

Jo Walton, *Among Others* (Tor)

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Lev Grossman, *The Magicians* (Plume)

Neil Gaiman, *Fragile Things* (HarperCollins)

Bram Stoker, *Dracula* (Penguin)

J.K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* (Bloomsbury)

3. Requests for extensions will be handled according to the practices recommended by the university; these may evolve based on the COVID-19 pandemic, and if any changes do occur, I will post an announcement on the OWL. Currently, students can obtain academic consideration by submitting appropriate documentation to the academic counsellor in their home faculty (see page 6 of this syllabus for more details). Please email me only after you have contacted academic counselling.
4. The Participation Grade will reflect your presence in class and your lively participation in discussions.
5. All grades, once assigned and/or posted, are final. While formal appeal processes do exist in the Department of English and Writing Studies, grades will not be changed after the fact in response to emailed requests and/or GPA requirements, nor will the weighting of assignments be altered for individual students.

Accommodation Policies

Students with disabilities work with Accessible Education (formerly SSD) which provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive testing. The accommodation policy can be found here: [Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities](#)

Students seeking academic accommodation on medical grounds

Academic Offences

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

Plagiarism:

Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea or passage from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offence

Plagiarism is a major academic offence. It is defined as the use of another person's work without their permission and without giving proper credit to the original author. This includes copying text, images, or other content from the internet, books, or other sources without proper citation. Plagiarism is a serious violation of academic integrity and can result in severe consequences, including suspension or expulsion from the university.

Oct. 18-20: Jo Walton, *Among Others*

Portal Fantasy

Oct. 25: C.S. Lewis, *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*

Oct. 27: *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*

Neil Gaiman, "The Problem of Susan" (from *Fragile Things*)

Oct. 31-Nov. 4 – FALL READING WEEK (no classes)

Nov. 8: C.S. Lewis, *The Magician's Nephew*

Nov. 10: C.S. Lewis, *The Magician's Nephew*

Lev Grossman, *The Magicians* (up to p. 70)

Nov. 15-17: Lev Grossman, *The Magicians*

Intrusive Fantasy

Nov. 22-24: Bram Stoker, *Dracula*

Nov. 29: Bram Stoker, *Dracula*; Neil Gaiman, "A Study in Emerald" (from *Fragile Things*)

Hidden Worlds

Dec. 1: J.K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*

Dec. 6: J.K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*

Dec. 8: Eliezer Yudkowsky (Less Wrong), *Harry Potter and the Methods of Rationality* (Chapters 1-6)
Review

Grading Rubric

THESIS

- Is there a unifying idea in this paper?
- Is this idea specific, original, and argumentative?
- Is this idea explained clearly near the beginning of the paper?

ARGUMENT

- Does the material in this paper go beyond description to explore the implications and meaning of the text(s)?
- Have opposing ideas been acknowledged and given a convincing response?

ORGANIZATION

- Do paragraph breaks reflect a meaningful shift in topic?
- Does the opening sentence of each paragraph identify the central idea of that paragraph and its relationship to the thesis?

USE OF SOURCES

- Is there textual evidence to back up each claim in the paper?
- Is there an attention to detail (word choice, imagery, etc.) that adds intricacy to the argument?
- Are quotations integrated smoothly and cited correctly?

STYLE

- Is the writing style clear, concise, and readable, so that the focus falls on the ideas in the paper?
- Are sentences punctuated correctly?

A+ (90-100) = Excellent ("Yes, absolutely!" in all categories)

A (80-89) = Very Good ("Yes" in almost all categories)

B (70-79) = Good ("Yes" or "Somewhat" in all categories)

C (60-69) = Satisfactory ("Somewhat" in most categories OR "No" in one category)

D (50-59) = Poor ("No" in several categories)

F (49 or below) = Unsatisfactory (does not meet the requirements for the assignment)

