

**Writing 3900F (Fall 2020)**  
**Writing Fantasy**  
**Online/Asynchronous**

**Instructor: Michael Fox**  
**Office: UC 3429**  
**Office Hours: Zoom, Wednesdays 10:00-12:00**  
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**Course description and objectives**

*Character wants a good job, plenty of excitement, quest, possible assistance from mentors and companions.*

Students in this course will work on various aspects of a full-length fantasy novel, focusing on aspects of world-building, the use and transformation of common fantasy motifs, various ways to structure the narrative and tell the story, and how to devise the most affective and climactic scenes. We will read some secondary material (including Tolkien and others on the genre), and students will also be required to read

**Recommended further primary reading (secondary material below)**

Byock, Jesse, trans. . Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.

---. *The Saga of King Hrolf Kraki*. London: Penguin, 1998.

Liuzza, R.M., trans. *Beowulf* (with facing page OE), 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. Peterborough: Broadview, 2013.

Pálsson, Hermann and Paul Edwards, trans. *Seven Viking Romances*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1985.

[*The Saga of Arrow-Odd*, pp. 25-137]

Tolkien, J.R.R. *The Hobbit or There and Back Again*. London: HarperCollins, 2006.

Old English (in general) and *Beowulf* (in particular) were Tolkien's literary inspirations for his creative work. Because *The Hobbit*

### **Final Project (40%; due Friday, December 11)**

The final project will consist of five parts: 1) a language/myth document; 2) at least three character biographies; 3) a one-page (single-spaced) synopsis of a full-length work of fantasy; 4) an explanation of how that full-length work of fantasy deploys the motifs, movements, and structures we have learned in the course; and 5) an excerpt from the work, one “great” scene (if necessary with an introduction to contextualize the scene). The length of the final part will vary, but it should be in the vicinity of at least 2500 words.

### **Course Policies**

#### **Assignment Format**

All assignments are to be typed, and must have your name, course name, section number, and instructor’s name on the first page. Do not use a cover page; these are particularly unnecessary for online submissions. When using sources, you will be expected to follow MLA, APA, or Chicago citation practice.

#### **Submitting Assignments**

Assignments are due on the dates specified in the syllabus. Late work **will be penalized at 2.5% per day unless** I have permitted an extension of the due date. You must contact me ahead of time for an extension ( below).

#### **Attendance/Participation**

This is a senior-level seminar course. I expect you to be “present” and participating, but the only penalties revolve around missing peer review. *Peer review is an important part of the course. Students who do not participate in the peer review or who fail to submit drafts for peer review will receive a 10% deduction on their assignments. That could be 10% on the character biographies and then 10% more on the great scene peer review.*

### **STUDENT CONDUCT**

This ought to go without saying, but please remember, especially as we conduct our conversations remotely and asynchronously, that *the use of racist or any language that works against the values of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion will not be tolerated.*

### **SCHOLASTIC OFFENCES, INCLUDING PLAGIARISM**

The University Senate requires the following statements, and Web site references, to appear on course outlines:

“Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site: [https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/scholastic\\_discipline\\_undergrad.pdf](https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf).

Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea, or a passage of text 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 (see Scholastic Offence Policy as above).



[Policy on Academic Consideration for Student Absences - Undergraduate Students in First Entry Programs](#)

and for the Student Medical Certificate (SMC), see:

[http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf).

**Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to MentalHealth@Western: (<https://www.uwo.ca/health/psych/index.html>) for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.**

### **Religious Accommodation**

Students should consult the University's lis

Clute, John, and John Grant. *The Encyclopedia of Fantasy*. New York: St Martin's Press, 1997.

Frye, Northrop. *The Secular Scripture: A Study of the Structure of Romance*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1976.

Jackson, Rosemary. *Fantasy: The Literature of Subversion*. London: Methuen, 1981.

James, Edward and Farah Mendlesohn, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Fantasy Literature*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012.

---. *A Short History of Fantasy*. London: Middlesex University Press, 2009.

Mendlesohn, Farah. *Rhetorics of Fantasy*. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2008.

[Todorov, Tzvetan. *The Fantastic: A Structural Approach to a Literary Genre*. Trans. Richard Howard. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1975.]

Tolkien, J.R.R. ---. "On Fairy-Stories." *Tolkien: On Fairy-Stories*, ed. Verlyn Flieger and Douglas A. Anderson. London: HarperCollins, 2014, pp. 27-84.

### **Basic reading on writing the genre**

Chester, Deborah. *The Fantasy Fiction Formula*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016.

### **On language (creation)**

Petersen, David J. *The Art of Language Invention*. New York: Penguin, 2015.

Rosenfelder, Mark. *The Language Construction Kit*. Chicago: Yonagu Books, 2010.

Tolkien, J.R.R. *A Secret Vice*. Ed. Dimitra Fimi and Andrew Higgins. London: HarperCollinsPublishers, 2016. [the essay "A Secret Vice" is also available in Christopher Tolkien, ed. *The Monsters and the Critics and Other Essays*. London: George Allen and Unwin, 1983, pp. 198-223.]

### **Miscellaneous other readings/resources (these are NOT necessarily appropriate or desirable for the critical reading assignment)**

Aarne, Antti and Stith Thompson. *The Types of the Folktale: A Classification and Bibliography*.

Hodge, James L. "The Heroic Profile of Bilbo Baggins." *Florilegium* 8 (1986): 212-221.

Howlett, David. *British Books in Biblical Style*. Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1997. [pp. 504-40]

Tolkien, J.R.R. "Beowulf: The Monsters and the Critics." *The Monsters and the Critics and Other Essays*. Edited by Christopher Tolkien. London: George Allen and Unwin, 1983, pp. 5-48.

Vogler, Christopher. . 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Studio City, CA:  
Michael Wiese Productions, 2007.