

Department of English & Writing Studies

Speculative Fiction: Fantasy**English 2072G (001)**

Winter 2020

Instructor: Dr. Gabrielle Ceraldi
UC 4431
gceraldi@uwo.ca

Course Location: Social Science Centre 3022

Course Date/Time: Mondays 11:30 am -
12:30 pm; Wednesdays 11:30am - 1:30 pm

Office Hours: Tues./Thurs. 2:00-3:00

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)

C.S. Lewis, *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* (Harper)

The Magician's Nephew (Harper)

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)

Methods of Evaluation

<i>Lord of the Rings</i> Assignment (750 words, due February 12)	20%
Essay (1750 words, due March 25)	35%
Attendance and Participation	10%
Final Exam	35%

Please note: The department of English & Writing Studies does not release final grades. All undergraduate grade reports will be available online from the Office of the Registrar.

Students are fully responsible for looking at and being familiar with the information posted on the department website at <https://www.uwo.ca/english/undergraduate/Student%20Information.html>.

General Information:

1. Regular attendance at lectures is essential. A verbal or emailed explanation is sufficient for a class missed due to emergency or illness; for longer legitimate absences (a week or more), students should see the academic counsellor in their dean's office to arrange accommodation in order to avoid penalty.
2. All written assignments should be double-spaced and printed in a standard font such as 12-pt Times Roman. Please follow MLA format (see attached guidelines). Essays can be handed in during class or dropped off in the Department of English Essay Drop-Off Box (across from UC 2431). Do not leave essays under office doors. Two percent per day (including weekends) will be deducted from late essays. Extensions will be approved only with a recommendation for accommodation from an academic counsellor. No paper will be accepted beyond three weeks after the due date, or after the last day of classes (April 3). Email is not an accepted method of submission; essays must be submitted as hard copies.
3. The Participation Grade will reflect your presence in class and your lively participation in discussions.
4. 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.

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)

Sample MLA Format:

Surname 1

Your Name

Name of T.A./Professor

English 2072G

February 12, 2018

Diary of a Young Girl

First-Person Narration in Jo Walton's *Among Others*

If you have a snappy, attention-grabbing title, follow it with an informative subtitle that indicates your topic as well as the work(s) you will be discussing. Titles of books should be *italicized*. Titles of articles and short stories should be put in "Quotation Marks." Introduce quotations in your own words, identifying the speaker and context: EXAMPLE: As Morwenna points out, "If you love books enough, books will love you back" (300). Use ellipses to indicate where you have omitted words from the quotation, and put any changes in brackets: EXAMPLE: The White Witch is described as "a great lady ... covered in white fur up to her throat [who] held a long straight golden wand in her right hand" (33).

If the quotation is longer than four lines, do not use quotations marks; instead, indent the passage ten spaces from the left and continue to double space.

EXAMPLE: Walton offers a sceptical take on the boarding-school novel:

My popularity, bizarrely, goes both up and down slightly because of the marks. They don't care about lessons, and they hate me for beating them, but you get house points for exceptional marks, and they care a lot about house points. It's depressing how much boarding school is just like Enid Blyton showed it, and all the ways it's different are ways it's worse. (35-36)

At the end of the essay, list all the works you have discussed or used in the preparation of your paper. Staple the top left hand corner.

Works Cited

Lewis, C.S. *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*. HarperTrophy, 1950.

Walton, Jo. *Among Others*. Tor, 2010.

Accommodation

Students seeking academic accommodation on medical grounds for any missed tests, exams, participation components and/or assignments worth 10% or more of their final grade must apply to the Academic Counselling office of their home Faculty and provide documentation. Academic accommodation cannot be granted by the instructor or department. Documentation shall be submitted, as soon as possible, to the Office of the Dean of the student's Faculty of registration, together with a request for relief specifying the nature of the accommodation being requested. The UWO Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness and further information regarding this policy can be found at http://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf.

Downloadable Student Medical Certificate (SMC):

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf

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 Checking:

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com <http://www.turnitin.com>.

All instances of plagiarism will be reported to the Chair of Undergraduate Studies. Proven cases of plagiarism will result in a grade of zero for the assignment. Subsequent offences will result in failure for the course.

Support Services

Registrarial Services <http://www.registrar.uwo.ca>

Student Support Services <https://student.uwo.ca/psp/heprdweb/?cmd=login>

Services provided by the USC <http://westernusc.ca/services/>

Student Development Centre <http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/>

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to MentalHealth@Western: <http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

Timetable

- Jan. 6: Introduction
Jan. 8: J.R.R. Tolkien, "On Fairy-Stories"; A.S. Byatt, "Harry Potter and the Childish Adult"
- Immersive Fantasy**
- Jan. 13: J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Fellowship of the Ring* (Foreword to the Second Edition; Prologue; Book 1, Chapters 1-5)
Jan. 15: *Fellowship* (Book 1, Chapters 6-12; Book 2, Chapters 1-5)
Jan. 20: *Fellowship* (Book 2, Chapters 6-10)
Jan. 22: J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Two Towers* (Book 3)
Jan. 27: *The Two Towers* (Book 4)
Jan. 29: J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Return of the King* (Book 5)
Feb. 3: *The Return of the King* (Book 6)
Feb. 5: *The Return of the King*
Jo Walton, *Among Others* (up to p. 75)
Feb. 10-12: Jo Walton, *Among Others*
Feb. 17-19: READING WEEK (no classes)
- Portal Fantasy**
- Feb. 24: C.S. Lewis, *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*
Feb. 26: *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*
Neil Gaiman, "The Problem of Susan," "The Fairy Reel," "Closing Time," "Instructions" (from *Fragile Things*)
Mar. 2: C.S. Lewis, *The Magician's Nephew*
Mar. 4: C.S. Lewis, *The Magician's Nephew*
Lev Grossman, *The Magicians* (up to p. 70)
Mar. 9-11: Lev Grossman, *The Magicians*
- Intrusive Fantasy**
- Mar. 16-18: Bram Stoker, *Dracula*
Mar. 23: Bram Stoker, *Dracula*; Neil Gaiman, "A Study in Emerald" (from *Fragile Things*)
- Hidden Worlds**
- Mar. 25: J.K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*
Mar. 30: J.K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*
Apr. 1: Eliezer Yudkowsky (Less Wrong), *Harry Potter and the Methods of Rationality* (Chapters 1-10)
Review