

Department of English & Writing Studies

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

Winter 2022

Instructor: Dr. Gabrielle Ceraldi

UC 4431

gceraldi@uwo.ca**Course Location:** AHB-2B04**Course Date/Time:** Mondays 11:30 am -
12:30 pm; Wednesdays 11:30am - 1:30 pm**Office Hours:** Mon. 1-2 /Wed. 2-3Course 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 7)	20%
Essay (1750 words, due March 21)	40%
Attendance and Participation	10%
Final Exam	30%

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>.

Attendance

Attendance is mandatory in all classes and tutorials. In cases of excessive absenteeism (e.g. more than 9 unexcused hours for a half course, 18 for a full course), which are not accounted for by either academic consideration or accommodation, students may be debarred from taking the final examination, and will receive an official warning to this effect by or before the course drop date (see Senate policy). In classes with or without final exams, students who do not attend class will receive 0% for course participation grades. Unless other policies dictate a different set of penalties in specific English and Writing Studies programs, this will apply to all department programs.

Intellectual Property/Copyright

All instructor-written materials (e.g. PowerPoints, lecture notes, oral lectures) for this course are created solely for students' personal use within the course, and remain the instructor's intellectual property. Further reproduction, fixation, distribution, transmission, dissemination, communication, or any other uses, without securing the consent of the copyright owner (the course instructor) may be an infringement of copyright. You may not distribute, email, or otherwise communicate these materials to any other person. These limitations extend to recording, photographing, or sharing lectures (online or in-person) and lecture material without permission. Posting the instructor's content from this course to online course sharing sites like OneClass or Course Hero without permission is both an infringement of intellectual property law and a violation of academic integrity guidelines. The instructor will pass these cases on to the Western University Ombudsperson or their Department Chair as appropriate.

General Information

1. Regular attendance at lectures is essential (see department policy below). 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 must be uploaded as documents to the Assignments tool. Email is not an accepted method of submission. To count as on time, an essay must be uploaded to the OWL by 11:55 pm on the due date. One percent per day (including weekends) will be deducted from late essays. No paper will be accepted beyond three weeks after the due date or after the last day of classes (Apr. 1).

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 either (a) submitting a Self-Reported Absence or (b) 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 completed one of these two steps. (You should note that the essay due Dec. 1 is not eligible for a self-reported absence as it is worth more than 30% of the final grade.)
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](#).

Academic Consideration for Student Absence:

Students will have up to two (2) opportunities during the regular academic year to use an on-line portal to self-report an absence during the term, provided the following conditions are met: the absence is no more than 48 hours in duration, and the assessment for which consideration is being sought is worth 30% or less of the student's final grade. Students are expected to contact their instructors within 24 hours of the end of the period of the self-reported absence, unless noted on the syllabus. Students are not able to use the self-reporting option in the following circumstances:

- for exams scheduled by the Office of the Registrar (e.g., December and April exams)
- absence of a duration greater than 48 hours,
- assessments worth more than 30% of the student's final grade,
- if a student has already used the self-reporting portal twice during the academic year

If the conditions for a Self-Reported Absence are *not* met, students will need to provide a Student Medical Certificate if the absence is medical, or provide appropriate documentation if there are compassionate grounds for the absence in question. Students are encouraged to contact their Faculty academic counselling office to obtain more information about the relevant documentation.

Students should also note that individual instructors are not permitted to receive documentation directly from a student, whether in support of an application for consideration on medical grounds, or for other reasons. **All documentation required for absences that are not covered by the Self-Reported Absence Policy must be submitted to the Academic Counselling office of a student's Home Faculty.**

For Western University policy on Consideration for Student Absence, see [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.

Religious Accommodation:

Students should consult the University's list of recognized religious holidays, and should give reasonable notice in writing, prior to the holiday, to the Instructor and an Academic Counsellor if their course requirements will be affected by a religious observance. Additional information is given in the [Western Multicultural Calendar](#).

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/>

Academic Support and Engagement <http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/>

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

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.

Timetable

- Jan. 3: Introduction
Jan. 5: J.R.R. Tolkien, "On Fairy-Stories"; A.S. Byatt, "Harry Potter and the Childish Adult"
- Immersive Fantasy**
- Jan. 10: J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Fellowship of the Ring* (Foreword to the Second Edition; Prologue; Book 1, Chapters 1-5)
Jan. 12: *Fellowship* (Book 1, Chapters 6-12; Book 2, Chapters 1-5)
Jan. 17: *Fellowship* (Book 2, Chapters 6-10)
Jan. 19: J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Two Towers* (Book 3)
Jan. 24: *The Two Towers* (Book 4)
Jan. 26: J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Return of the King* (Book 5)
Jan. 31: *The Return of the King* (Book 6)
Feb. 2: *The Return of the King*
Jo Walton, *Among Others* (up to p. 75)
Feb. 7-9: Jo Walton, *Among Others*
- Portal Fantasy**
- Feb. 14: C.S. Lewis, *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*
Feb. 16: *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*
Neil Gaiman, "The Problem of Susan" (from *Fragile Things*)
Feb. 21-23: SPRING READING WEEK (no classes)
Feb. 28: C.S. Lewis, *The Magician's Nephew*
Mar. 2: C.S. Lewis, *The Magician's Nephew*
Lev Grossman, *The Magicians* (up to p. 70)
Mar. 7-9: Lev Grossman, *The Magicians*
- Intrusive Fantasy**
- Mar. 14-16: Bram Stoker, *Dracula*
Mar. 21: Bram Stoker, *Dracula*; Neil Gaiman, "A Study in Emerald" (from *Fragile Things*)
- Hidden Worlds**
- Mar. 23: J.K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*
Mar. 28: J.K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*
Mar. 30: Eliezer Yudkowsky (Less Wrong), *Harry Potter and the Methods of Rationality* (Chapters 1-10)
Review