

English 507.001
Narrative Transformations in Literature for
Children and Adolescents
Fall 2012

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Image: Illustration from Joseph Jacobs, English Fairy Tales (1895)



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| <p>Course Description</p> | <p>English 507, “Narrative Transformations in Literature for Children and Adolescents,” is a study in the adaptation, appropriation, and reinvention of traditional fairy tales into contemporary narrative forms. Throughout the term, we will study several fairy tales in their various “traditional” forms and then look at those tales again as they are re-worked by contemporary authors. Our readings will include a number of books written for adolescents, along with texts directed more toward adult readers. As we read, we will want to keep some core questions in mind. How, for instance, do shifting ideologies about childhood and about literary value inform the place of fairy tales in culture? How have various writers reinvented traditional stories to suit different audiences? How might fairy tales function in contemporary settings to address political and social issues? How do anxieties about race, class, and gender (to name just three things) inform fairy tales both in their historical and their transformative contexts?</p> |
| <p>Course Objectives</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Students will understand traditional fairy tales and their contemporary incarnations in relation to their cultural, aesthetic, and historical contexts. ▪ Students will demonstrate effective analysis of critical scholarship about fairy tales and their narrative transformations. ▪ Students will produce original research papers with well-crafted argumentation. |
| <p>Student Learning Outcomes</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Students will demonstrate effective analysis of critical scholarship that meets or exceeds expectations, as measured by a rubric used in evaluating the bibliographic essay. ▪ Students will demonstrate well-crafted argumentation in the research paper through the use of thesis statements that meet or exceed expectations, as measured by the thesis rubric used for evaluating the final paper. |
| <p>Required Texts</p> | <p>The following works are required for this course. In addition, you will have some readings that you will either download from eCollege or from internet websites (details provided in schedule of assignments). In general, you may use any edition of the books you like. The ISBNs listed correspond with the editions ordered through the bookstore.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Maria Tatar, ed. <i>Classic Fairy Tales</i> (ISBN 978039972771) ▪ Angela Carter, <i>The Bloody Chamber</i> (ISBN 9780140178210) |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Gail Carson Levine, <i>Ella Enchanted</i> (ISBN 9780143039631) ▪ Donna Jo Napoli, <i>Zel</i> (ISBN 9780141301167) ▪ Jane Yolen, <i>Briar Rose</i> (ISBN 9780765342300) ▪ Francesca Lia Block, <i>The Rose and the Beast</i> (ISBN 9780164407458) ▪ L. Frank Baum, <i>The Wonderful Wizard of Oz</i> (ISBN 9780688166779) ▪ John Connolly, <i>The Book of Lost Things</i> (ISBN 9780743298902) ▪ Kate DiCamillo, <i>The Tale of Despereaux</i> (ISBN 9780763625290) ▪ Adam Gidwitz, <i>A Tale Dark and Grimm</i> (ISBN 9780525423348) ▪ Catherynne Valente, <i>The Girl Who Circumnavigated Fairyland in a Ship of Her Own Making</i> (ISBN 9780312649616) | | | | | | | | |
| Grading Breakdown | <table> <tr> <td>Bibliographic essay</td> <td>35%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Research paper</td> <td>40%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Class participation and discussion</td> <td><u>25%</u></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td>100%</td> </tr> </table> | Bibliographic essay | 35% | Research paper | 40% | Class participation and discussion | <u>25%</u> | Total | 100% |
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| Total | 100% | | | | | | | | |
| Writing Assignments | <p>You will have two major writing assignments for this course. The first is a bibliographic essay (8-10 pages, worth 35% of final grade), and the second a research paper (15-18 pages, worth 40% of final grade). Details about the bibliography essay are located at the end of this syllabus. Information about the final research paper is forthcoming.</p> | | | | | | | | |
| Technology Requirements | <p>This course will be supplemented using eCollege, the Learning Management System used by TAMU-Commerce. We will be using the Dropbox, DocSharing, and Weblibliography, and I will be maintaining my gradebook there. To get started with the course, go to http://leo.tamuc.edu. You will need your CWID and password to log in to the course. If you do not know your CWID or have forgotten your password, contact Technology Services at 903-468-6000 or helpdesk@online.tamuc.org. To access eCollege, you will need a computer with internet access (high speed recommended, not dial-up), and a word processor equipped with Microsoft Word. Our campus is optimized to work in a Microsoft Windows environment. This mean our courses work best if you are using a Windows operating system (XP or newer) and a recent version of Microsoft Internet Explorer (6.0, 7.0, 8.0). Your courses will also work with Macintosh OS x along with a recent version of Safari 2.0 or better. Along with Internet Explorer and Safari, eCollege also supports the Firefox browser (3.0) on both Windows and Mac operating systems.</p> | | | | | | | | |
| Attendance | <p>Your attendance in class is crucial. According to the TAMU-Commerce student handbook, “students are expected to be preset for all class meetings of any course for which they are enrolled. I will keep attendance, and you can expect your grade to be docked for unexcused absences. By departmental policy, students are permitted to make up work for excused absences, examples of which may include participation in a required or authorized university activity, or death in the immediate family. If you know that you are going to be absent for any authorized reason, please make arrangements with me in advance.</p> | | | | | | | | |
| Additional Policies | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Instructors in the Department of Literature and Languages do not tolerate plagiarism or other forms of academic dishonesty, and acts of plagiarism can lead to immediate failure of the assignment and/or course. Instructors uphold and support the highest academic standards, and students are expected to do likewise. Penalties for students guilty of academic dishonesty include disciplinary probation, suspension, and | | | | | | | | |

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| | <p>expulsion (<i>Texas A&M University—Commerce Code of Student Conduct 5.b[1,2,3]</i>). Examples of plagiarism include but are not limited to cutting and pasting information directly from online sources, copying material from books without providing source documentation, taking essays wholesale from online sources, having someone else write a paper for you, and turning in work that you have already submitted for another class.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ All students enrolled at the University must follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. Standards of decency and acceptable behavior extend to the use of cell phones and instant messaging—please turn them off in the classroom unless you are awaiting a real emergency call for some reason. Additionally, please note that I enforce standards of inclusiveness in my classes. What that means is that I will not tolerate discrimination and disrespect in regard to race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, disability, public assistance status, veteran status, or sexual orientation. ▪ The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact: Office of Student Disability Resources and Services, Texas A&M University-Commerce, Gee Library 132, Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835, Fax (903) 468-8148. StudentDisabilityServices@tamu-commerce.edu. ▪ You are responsible for reading and understanding all the information on this syllabus, as well as on any additional materials I distribute during the course. |
| Assignments | |
| Week 1 8/27 | Introduction to course |
| Week 2 9/3 | No class (Labor Day) |
| Week 3 9/10 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Read from Maria Tatar, <i>Classic Fairy Tales</i>: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Introduction (ix-xviii) ▪ Little Red Riding Hood (3-24) ▪ Zohar Shavit, “The Concept of Childhood and Children’s Folktales” (317-332) ▪ Cinderella (101-131) ▪ Read Gail Carson Levine, <i>Ella Enchanted</i> |
| Week 4 9/17 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Read from Maria Tatar, <i>Classic Fairy Tales</i>: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Bluebeard (138-178) ▪ Read Angela Carter, <i>The Bloody Chamber and Other Stories</i> |
| Week 5 9/24 | <p>MEET IN HL 203</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ View film together: <i>The Company of Wolves</i> ▪ Read from Maria Tatar, <i>Classic Fairy Tales</i>: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Jack Zipes, “Breaking the Disney Spell” (332-352) |
| Week 6 10/1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Read from Maria Tatar, <i>Classic Fairy Tales</i>: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Bruno Bettelheim, “The Struggle for Meaning” (269-273) ▪ Read Kate DiCamillo, <i>The Tale of Despereaux</i> |

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| Week 7 10/8 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Read Rapunzel stories (http://www.pitt.edu/~dash/type0310.html) ▪ Read Donna Jo Napoli, <i>Zel</i> |
| Week 8 10/15 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Read from Maria Tatar, <i>Classic Fairy Tales</i>: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Hansel and Gretel (179-211) ▪ Bruno Bettelheim, “Hansel and Gretel” (273-280) ▪ Read Adam Gidwitz, <i>A Tale Dark and Grimm</i> |
| Week 9 10/22 | No class tonight—bibliographic essay due by midnight in the Week 9 Dropbox |
| Week 10 10/29 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Read Sleeping Beauty stories (http://www.pitt.edu/~dash/type0410.html) ▪ Read Jane Yolen, <i>Briar Rose</i> |
| Week 11 11/5 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Read from Maria Tatar, <i>Classic Fairy Tales</i>: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Beauty and the Beast (25-73) ▪ Read Francesca Lia Block, <i>The Rose and the Beast: Fairy Tales Retold</i> |
| Week 12 11/12 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Read Catherynne Valente, <i>The Girl Who Cumnavigated Fairyland in a Ship of Her Own Making</i> |
| Week 13 11/19 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Read John Connolly, <i>The Book of Lost Things</i> |
| Week 14 11/26 | MEET IN HL 203 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Read L. Frank Baum, <i>The Wonderful Wizard of Oz</i> ▪ Film: <i>The Wizard of Oz</i> |
| Week 15 12/3 | No class (work week for research papers) |
| Finals Week | Research papers due Monday, 12/10 by midnight in eCollege Week 15 Dropbox |

English 507, Narrative Transformations

Bibliographic Essay

Dr. Roggenkamp

Your first paper will be a short **bibliographic essay**, based on three or four scholarly articles or book chapters (both of which generally run 20-30 pages), and written about any aspect of fairy tales in literature or scholarship, or about any of the works on our syllabus in terms of their fairy tale qualities.

A bibliographic essay is a narrative discussion—a sort of review—of criticism written about a particular topic. However, unlike a standard bibliography, the bibliographic essay doesn't just list secondary sources. Rather, it first summarizes the thesis and major points of the article/book chapter under review, and then it draws evaluative conclusions about the article/book chapter. The bibliographic essay compares, contrasts, and evaluates the critical works in question—it draws a qualitative picture of a bit of the secondary criticism published about a topic.

By technical definition and often in practice, a bibliographic essay is supposed to provide a more or less exhaustive look at the major criticism published about a primary work or topic. The assignment for this class, however, does NOT ask you to provide an extensive or exhaustive survey of all critical sources. Again, you will choose only three or four key articles. You will need to locate and read a number of scholarly articles from our library databases and print collections. From this collection of essays/articles, choose a small number to structure your essay around—you might want to choose a couple that extend similar points of view, or, probably more fruitfully, you might want to choose some that seem radically different in viewpoint.

Remember, you are seeking solid academic writing here, as opposed to the generally unscholarly materials one finds on the internet—Wikipedia is not, it should go without saying, a scholarly resource. If you do not understand how the library's databases work or have never used a source like the MLA International Bibliography to search for academic articles, a visit or call to the reference librarians at Gee Library is in order. It's your responsibility as graduate students to know the basics of how to do academic research. Remember that while you can find full-text articles in a database like ProjectMuse or JSTOR, these are not comprehensive databases. The best resource to use is the MLA database, which will list virtually all the essays published on any given literary subject (in both scholarly journals and book collections). While Gee Library may have some of these essays available as full-text items (or included in books in the print collection), you will likely also need to order some articles via Interlibrary Loan. ILL takes time, so this is not a project you can put off by any means!

In the essay itself, your goal is to (1) summarize the basic argument of the essay, (2) evaluate the validity and persuasiveness of the argument from your own critical perspective, and (3) draw comparisons between the essays. Learning how to balance your summary of other critics' work with your own evaluation of that work is definitely an acquired skill. On the one hand you will want to briefly reword or summarize the thesis and the main points of the author. But on the other hand you need to make some sort of critical judgment or assessment as to the author's focus, approach, or conclusions. You will want to make sure that you use direct quotations judiciously and sparingly—don't let your own essay be hijacked by quoting extensively from the essays you are evaluating.

As with any formal essay, you will need an introduction, which brings the reader's attention to the significance of your focus, as well as a conclusion, which provides some sort of summation of the essays and your thoughts

about them. And of course you will need a thesis to draw out through your paper, even if it's a rather basic thesis.

Some questions to help you think about the essays you choose to write about:

- How do the works present their arguments, and what kinds of evidence do they call upon?
- What are the theories, methods, conclusions, or points of view presented in these critical works?
- What assumptions do the authors make, or what assumptions do they question?
- What do the critics leave out?
- What are the problems, issues, and points of contention or debate?
- In what way is the source provocative and/or interesting?
- Is the source written primarily for experts on the text? Experts in the field of children's literature? The field of American or British lit? A more generalized audience?

(Do not feel that you have to answer every single question provided here—these are presented just as things you can consider in writing your essay.)

Some technicalities:

- Length: 8-10 pages
- Double-spaced, 12-point type in standard font (Times New Roman, Arial), with one-inch margins
- Provide a separate works cited page, preferably in *MLA Handbook* style or *Chicago Manual of Style*, which are the standards for literary analysis
- Due in Week 9 Dropbox by midnight on October 22nd