

ENGLISH ____

OUR FAIRIES, OURSELVES: THE OTHERWORLDLY IN HUMAN CULTURE

DAYS TIME-TIME, ROOM

INSTRUCTOR: ARIELLE MCKEE

OFFICE: _____

EMAIL: _____ (BEST WAY TO REACH ME)

OFFICE HOURS: _____ (OR BY APPOINTMENT)



Description: This is an upper-division seminar on otherworldly creatures as they appear in literature from the Middle Ages to the Present. Let's face it, fairies are weird. Over the course of the semester we will explore the connections between otherworldly creatures and human concerns like death, madness, imagination, and the world's unpredictability, and will encounter a variety of texts from folk and fairy tales and works by Shakespeare to clips from Disney films and even some *Battlestar Galactica*. We will also consider how fairy traditions have evolved over time, addressing questions such as: how did capricious tricksters and indomitable, supernatural noble men and women become tiny pixies with sparkly wings and a stockpile of mischief?; how have we reinterpreted fairy traditions in the age of digital technology?; what are the differences between otherworldly creatures and monsters?; and why are humans so fascinated with the fay? Recommended supplies include: textbooks, coursepack, writing materials, salt, milk, and hot iron.

Learning Objectives:

- To gain knowledge of key fairy traditions and to begin thinking about how fairy motifs commonly interact with questions about human life;
- To consider human engagement with chaos and uncertainty across time and cultures;
- To further refine written and verbal communication skills and emotional intelligence; and
- To develop your research and time- and project-management skills.

Textbooks:

Coursepack (available at ____)
William Shakespeare, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*
Holly Black, *Tithe*
Diana Wynne Jones, *Fire and Hemlock*

Assignments:

Participation - 10%

You are expected to come to every class prepared and ready to engage with both the material and your classmates. (See Participation Policy)

Essay 1 - 20%

A **3-5 page (double spaced)**, essay examining a supernatural creature from anywhere in the world in relation to fairy tropes. Make an argument: is this creature a monster or something different and otherworldly? What does this help us understand or consider about traditions surrounding the creature you selected? (See assignment sheet for a list of suggested creatures and for more details)

Essay 2 - 20%

A **3-5 page (double spaced)**, essay discussing a fictional otherworld appearing in a text read or viewed outside of class—for example, Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* or Norton Juster's *The Phantom Tollbooth*. Your essay should think about the depiction of this world in relation to Aisling Byrne's discussion of otherworlds and metafiction. *NB: this essay is not due until the end of the semester, but it would behoove you to start your outside reading well before the deadline so that you have time to construct a compelling and well-crafted argument. (See assignment sheet for more details and a full list of suggested texts)

Annotated Bibliography - 25%

You will spend the first half of this course conducting research on a self-selected and instructor-approved topic related to the fay (topic selection due to instructor by the end of Week 2). An annotated bibliography of **at least 5 secondary sources** is due some time before Week 7. (See assignment sheet for more details)

Final Project - 25%

Using the research from your annotated bibliography as a starting point, you will, sometime before Week 13, compose **either a 5-7 page argumentative essay** about one of the course texts, **or**, you may write your own **5+ page (or equivalent) fairy text** imagining an otherworld that is informed by your research (this piece should also be accompanied by a **2 page reflection** explaining your work and your research's role in its creation). (See assignment sheet for more details)



COURSE SCHEDULE



Week 1

M: Syllabus and Introductions

W: What is “the” Otherworld?: Faerie vs. fairies

Reading: Aisling Byrne, “Introduction: Worlds within Worlds,” In *Otherworlds: Fantasy and History in Medieval Literature* (Coursepack)

F: Are Fairies Monsters?

Week 2

M: Fairy Motifs

Reading: James Wade, “Fairies and Humans Between Possible Worlds,” In *Fairies in Medieval Romance* (Coursepack)

W: Fairy Expectations: Are Elves Fairies?

F: Norse and Anglo-Saxon (Elves):

Reading: *Völundarkviða* (Coursepack) & “Elves and Anglo Saxon Manuscripts” (<http://tinyurl.com/gsdsmo4>)

In Class: Clips from *The Lord of The Rings*

Week 3

M: Conducting Research - Library resources, databases, ILL, &c.

W: Research Process and Annotated Bibliographies - Practice

F: Wales:

Reading: *The Mabinogion* (Branches One and Four) (Coursepack)

Week 4

M: Ireland:

Reading: *Irish Fairy and Folk Tales*, Ed. William Butler Yates - “Teig O’Kane and the Corpse,” “The Brewery of Egg-Shells,” and “The Piper and the Puca” (Coursepack)

W: Roman Influence:

Reading: Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, “Orpheus and Eurydice” and *Sir Orfeo* (Coursepack)

F: Medieval England: The Gentry, The (Bodily) Threats, The Lovers, and The Dead

Essay 1 Due

Week 5

M: Early Modern Fairies:

Reading: William Shakespeare, *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*

W: *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, continued

F: Complete *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*

Week 6

Last Week to Submit Annotated Bibliography

M: Comparing Shakespearean Fairies:

Reading: The Queen Mab Monologue, *Romeo and Juliet*

In Class: Clip from Baz Luhrmann's *Romeo + Juliet*

W: Continental Fairies:

Reading: Charles Perrault - "The Fairies" and "The Sleeping Beauty in the Wood"; The Brother's Grimm - "Frau Holle" and "Little Briar-Rose" (Coursepack)

F: Dangerous Journeys into the Otherworld:

Reading: The Brother's Grimm - "The Twelve Dancing Princesses" (Germany); "Hildur the Fairy Queen" (Iceland); "Dorani" (Punjab, India);

Proserpine/Persephone (Greece/Rome) (Coursepack)

Week 7

M: Fairy Tales and Children's Literature:

Reading: C.S. Lewis, "On Three Ways of Writing for Children" and J.R.R. Tolkien, "On Fairy Stories" (Coursepack)

W: Disnification:

In Class: Clips – *Cinderella*, *Sleeping Beauty*, *Pinocchio*, *Peter Pan*, and *Hook*

F: Children and Otherworld(s)

In Class: Begin *Spirited Away* (2001), Dir. Hayao Miyazaki

Week 8

M: Children and Otherworld(s), cont.

In Class: Finish and Discuss *Spirited Away*

W: Children and Otherworld(s), cont.

Reading: Hans Christian Andersen, "The Snow Queen" (Coursepack)

F: Why Children's Literature? Why Fantasy?

Week 9

M: The Goblin Market

Reading: Christina Rossetti, "Goblin Market" (<http://bit.ly/2bb0nBy>) and Excerpt from Sarah Rees Brennan, *The Demon's Lexicon* (Coursepack)

W: The Romantic Fairy:

Reading: "The Evolution of the Romantic Fairy" (<http://tinyurl.com/hrfm8th>)

F: Romantic Fairies, cont.

Reading: John Keats, "La Belle Dame sans Merci: A Ballad"

Week 10

M: Fairy Mistresses:

Reading: *Sir Launfal* and *Tam Lin* (Coursepack)

W: Quick and Dirty Modern Fantasy; Modern Medievalists – Lewis and Tolkien

F: Introduction to Diana Wynne Jones (vs. Lewis and Tolkien)



Week 11

M: Adaptations:

Reading: Diana Wynne Jones, *Fire and Hemlock*

W: *Fire and Hemlock*, continued

F: Complete *Fire and Hemlock*

Week 12

Last Week to Submit Your Final Project

M: Cyber Fairies:

Reading: Review Wade, "Fairies and Humans Between Possible Worlds"

In Class: Introduce *Battlestar Galactica* + Compile Fairy Trope Watchlist

W: Cyber Fairies, continued:

In Class: *Battlestar Galactica* (2003 miniseries, Part II)

F: Cyber Fairies, continued:

Complete *Battlestar Galactica* (Part II) and Discuss

Week 13

M: Fairies Among Us:

Reading: Holly Black, *Tithe*

W: *Tithe*, continued

F: Complete *Tithe*

Week 14

M: *Tithe* in Context - What traditions are being drawn on?

W: Where are we now and why do we care?

F: Student's Choice Day!!

Essay 2 due

