

The Well-Trained Mind Academy
Fantasy Literature for the Rhetoric Stage

Course Blackboard site: wtma.blackboard.com

Course Description: The primary goal for this course is to provide students with an opportunity to explore and discuss fantasy literature authors and their writings. Students will develop the ability to discern motivations, intentions, and perspectives of writers from the past and present. During the class students will read multiple writings from select recognized and celebrated authors of the genre. Students will build upon this foundation by exploring, comparing, and evaluating writings from an approved fantasy author's work to an author that has been studied in the class.

Course Goals/Class Outcomes

As a result of completing this course, students will:

- Identify fantasy literature writers and their works.
- Consider fantasy literature as a building block for strong character and moral strength.
- Analyze and evaluate the themes found in fantasy literature and identify aspects of good versus evil within the book.
- Relate the plot, characters, and situations to those found in their own world.
- Compare and evaluate the writing of an author not covered in class to the works previously read.

Required Texts:

1. Lewis Carroll – Alice's Adventures in Wonderland
2. Susan Cooper – Over Sea Under Stone
3. Kenneth Graham - The Wind in the Willows
4. Stephen Lawhead – The Paradise War
5. C.S. Lewis – Out of the Silent Planet
6. Madeline L'Engle – Many Waters
7. Rick Riordan – The Lightning Thief
8. J.R.R. Tolkien – Smith of Wootton Major

ALSO REQUIRED: *Students are also required to record and save notes and assignments and to save all assignments in a digital archival file folder. A microphone and camera on the computer being used is mandatory in class.

Assignments and Class Work:

1. Each book must be read before the class period in which that book is to be discussed. (Students not equipped with knowledge of the material will not participate in the discussion and incur a loss of points for not being prepared.)

2. Joint research with another student from the class, on one of the authors from the books read in class. The research should cover historical and biographical time frames of the author's life, the cultural context of the author's writings, and impact of the author and his writings.
3. Reflective journaling on lead questions and submission upon request.
4. Discussion of themes and lead questions in class as they relate to the book being read.

Lead Questions:

- What is a fairy tale? Why are fairy tales so enduring? Is it wrong to portray good and truth by using wizards and witches in fantasy? Why or why not? Defend your position.
 - Is there a difference between fantasy and fairy tales?
 - Why is fantasy so enduring? When was the first fantasy tale written down? Was it the first fantasy story?
 - Discuss fantasy role playing and whether you see this as a good or bad thing with a reasoned defense.
 - Do you think that “longing” “looking forward to” or “hope” have anything to do with love of fantasy? And does everyone have this as part of their makeup?
 - Discuss the “childlike” nature. Does everyone still retain childlikeness? Is it important? How would it change things if everyone freely accessed their inner childlikeness?
 - Should adults read fantasy? Should adults read fairy tales? Defend your position.
 - What are the monsters and dragons that you face? Are they real or fantasy?
 - Does everyone have a “dragon”? What dragons does your culture face? How can the study of fantasy help?
 - Why is fantasy important? Relate your response to your world and culture. Defend your response.
 - Do you see significant cultural history allusions or hints in the book being read?
 - What is the importance of myth? How does it relate to truth? What bearing does it have on culture?
 - What is “home”? How does it relate to fantasy? Can you compare a love for fantasy to wishing for home? How could you use this in advancing your own development as a person?
 - What is this author trying to say throughout the book? What is the theme?
5. Students will prepare one original paper, based upon a book from a fantasy writer not addressed in class. The author and book must be preapproved by the instructor. This paper will include title, author, publisher, date of first publication, synopsis of the plot, theme, evaluation, criticism, and a comparison/contrast to a book read in class.

Addition Reading Suggestions:

1. Beowulf – Old English (Saxon) Author unknown
2. Homer – Iliad

3. Lewis Carroll – Alice Through the Looking Glass; The Hunting of the Snark.
4. Susan Cooper – The Dark is Rising Sequence
5. Charles Kingsley- The Water Babies
6. Edgar Allan Poe – Mask of the Red Death
7. Winnie the Pooh – A.H. Milne
8. George MacDonald – The Princess and Curdie; At the Back of the Northwind
9. T.H. White – The Once and Future King
10. C.S. Lewis – Perelandra; That Hideous Strength
11. J.R.R. Tolkien –The Adventures of Tom Bombadil; The Lord of the Rings
12. Madeline L’Engle – A Wrinkle in Time
13. John White - The Archives of Anthropos Series
14. Stephen Lawhead – The Silver Hand, The Endless Knot
15. Lloyd Alexander – The Chronicles of Prydain Series
16. Roald Dahl – James and the Giant Peach
17. G.P. Taylor – Shadowmancer
18. Roald Dahl – James and the Giant Peach
19. Susan Cooper – The Dark is Rising Series
20. Rick Riordan – The Lightning Thief
21. J.K. Rowling - Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone

***Course Calendar found on the next page of this document.**

Example schedule:

Weeks 1 & 2: J.R.R. Tolkien – Smith of Wootton Major

Weeks 3 & 4: C.S. Lewis – Out of the Silent Planet

Weeks 5 & 6: Lewis Carroll – Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland

Weeks 7 & 8: Rick Riordan – The Lightning Thief

FALL BREAK

Weeks 9 & 10: Stephen Lawhead – The Paradise War

Week 11 & 12: Madeline L’Engle – Many Waters

Weeks 13 & 14: Kenneth Graham - The Wind in the Willows

THANKSGIVING BREAK

Week 15 & 16: Susan Cooper – Over Sea Under Stone

Week 17: Exam Week - Author project due.