

Spring 2015
ENGLISH 3000-101
CRITICAL PRACTICES AND PROCESSES IN LITERARY STUDIES

Thematic Title: *Magic and Literature*

MW 3:30-4:45

Cudahy Hall 143

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Office Hours: MTW 2:00 PM-3:00 PM or by appointment

This course serves as an entry point to advanced study in the English discipline, using literary depictions of magic from William Shakespeare to J.K. Rowling as its organizing principle. We will consider the ways a wide range of authors have taken up magic from a variety of critical perspectives, from feminist and Marxist analysis to genre criticism to postcolonial theory and beyond, as well as consider the possibilities and limits of reading “magic” allegorically. What is the relationship between magic and religion on the one hand, and magic and science on the other? How do stories about magic suggest powerful critiques of Western technologies of power and ways of thinking? Conversely, how do they reinforce our positions as good subjects of democratic capitalism? Why are stories about magic, and fantasy more generally, still largely understood as belonging to children’s literature, even as related speculative genres like science fiction and superheroes have enjoyed a renaissance of “serious” critical attention? For that matter, why does our society persist in raising its children in such magical worlds, only to finally spit them out as adults into this one? This course will help students develop fluency with academic discourses and habits of literary criticism that will serve them in their upper-division courses at Marquette, as well as develop their skills as writers and thinkers in their own right.

WHAT IS ENGLISH 3000?

ENGLISH 3000 is a new course, emerging out of the English’s department recent redesign of its curriculum, which is intended to serve as a gateway to 4000-level study in the discipline (as well as in the humanities more generally). The previous major had tended to silo different historical periods, forms, genres, and methodological approaches each within their own courses, constructing an intellectually diverse curriculum primarily through the juxtaposition of the various course requirements. In contrast, the new major loosens those requirements and chooses instead to put the different perspectives together *within a single course*, in an effort to promote shared conversations and collective interests across the English major while also allowing students more freedom to define a course of study that truly matters to them. This, of course, is ENGLISH 3000, which was taught for the first time in Fall 2014.

The plan is for the ENGLISH 3000 sections to gather together a variety of literary forms (poetry, drama, prose fiction, film, and so on) from a variety of historical periods (ours runs from Shakespeare to *Harry Potter*) and explore them through a variety of critical perspectives and

interpretive lenses (we study feminism, Marxism, postcoloniality, queer theory, genre theory, New Criticism, structuralism, disability studies, and reader response). Our conversations will thus become richer and denser as we go, as we build a shared vocabulary for our critical interventions. In the process, we will also be able to explore a number of the multiple writing styles and publishing venues that are available to literary-minded thinkers today: creative writing and academic writing, of course, but also journalistic writing, popular criticism, the personal blog, fan criticism, and even fan fiction. I hope you will find these examples inspirational as you think about the possibilities for your own writing in the future.

Professors teaching ENGLISH 3000 each choose some wide-ranging but ultimately unifying theme to structure their courses; while we might have studied literature and medicine, or literature and science, or literature and the law, the theme I have selected for our section of this course this semester is “magic and literature.” This theme is present in some way or another through every literary text we will encounter, from the vaunted heights of the literary canon to culturally suspect and supposedly frivolous works of genre fiction (again: Shakespeare to *Harry Potter*).

Although ENGLISH 3000 shares some similarities with our sophomore-level courses, including its consideration of multiple authors and historical periods and the use of a “theme” as an organizing principle, ENGLISH 3000 should *not* be thought of as an introductory or remedial course, nor as a free-form general-interest survey; rather, it is an opportunity for you to meet together as emerging literary scholars to figure out what you think defines (and what should define) literary study in the twenty-first century. The conversations we begin here will, I hope, ripple across all the courses you take in the English department at Marquette.

LEARNING GOALS

At the completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Identify and understand various formal characteristics of major texts in the contemporary literary canon;
- Demonstrate understanding of the cultural, historical, and political contexts in which various works of literature have been produced and commented upon;
- Apply techniques of critical analysis as appropriate to texts, literary form, and genre;
- Interpret texts via a variety of methodologies and critical perspectives;
- Understand and participate in ongoing debates within the English discipline;
- Use literary study to develop skills for careful reading and clear writing;
- Read and discuss literature on the levels of both form and content.

REQUIRED TEXTS (available at the Book Marq on 16th Street)

Robert Dale Parker, *How to Interpret Literature: Critical Theory for Literary and Cultural Studies* (3rd edition)

William Shakespeare, *The Tempest*

Gabriel García Márquez, *One Hundred Years of Solitude*

J.K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*

Please note: An earlier version of my bookstore order included Henry James's *The Turn of the Screw*. This book is no longer on the syllabus and does not need to be purchased.

Additional readings and course materials will occasionally be made available via D2L.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Attendance, D2L, and Class Participation: 25%

Group Presentation: 15%

First Paper: 15%

Second Paper: 20%

Final Paper: 25%

Additional details on all assignments will be distributed in class well in advance of the due date.

GRADING

Grades will follow the following rubric:

* To earn a **C**, you must clearly restate the meaning or project of a text in your own terms. A C essay may volunteer an original argument, but will likely lack evidence or analysis of its sources. C essays are clearly written, though they might display some grammatical weakness.

* To earn a **B**, you must begin to raise important questions about the text under consideration and to use those questions to drive your own interpretive agenda. A B essay typically advances an original argument and provides solid analysis of the text(s) under consideration. B essays are clear, concise, and free of grammatical errors.

* To earn an **A**, you must construct an essay that does more than simply comment on the work of others; you must forward, counter, or transform what they have to say. An A essay advances an original argument that builds toward a climax and makes a persuasive case for its own significance. A essays are clearly written, and often eloquent.

* A **D** means that you have not written in clear prose or that you seem to have deeply misunderstood the text. An **F** means that you did not fully or seriously engage the assignment.

* **AB, BC, and CD** grades fall squarely in the gaps between the above categories.

FORMAT OF WRITTEN WORK

Your final paper should be typed in twelve-point font, double-spaced with one-inch margins, saved in a format Microsoft Word can open. Your filename should contain *your name* in it, for example, yourlastname-firstpaper.docx.

I expect you to *edit* and *proofread* all written work, even blog posts and blog comments. Drafts that contain excessive typos or grammar mistakes may be returned to the author for correction before I offer comments.

Please give each piece of writing an original title, and include your name, assignment, and due date in a header on the first page. Insert page numbers if your work spans more than one page.

All sources relied upon for the writing of your paper, including the primary text, must be appropriately cited.

PAPER SUBMISSION

The papers should be submitted via D2L's Dropbox by class time on the due date. **Late papers will be penalized a full grade for each day that it is late; due to university policy late final papers will not be accepted at all.** Except in very unusual circumstances, work will not be accepted by email.

Your other written work (which will primarily take the form of discussion forum comments) will be posted on the D2L forums. These mini-papers will have **flexible due dates** driven by your own interests and responses. **It is thus your responsibility to make sure you are properly keeping up with this portion of the course.**

Except in very unusual circumstances, work will not be accepted by email.

EXTENSIONS

Although the papers in this course have a sufficiently long timetable to allow you to plan and complete all assignments in a timely manner, I nonetheless recognize that each of you has a unique schedule and that some of the due dates I have selected could occasionally prove problematic for individual students in the course. **If you find that you will need an extension on a particular assignment due to this kind of conflict, please contact me as soon as possible to arrange an alternative due date.** There is no need to concoct an elaborate story to justify this, or to lie to me; simply tell me the truth about what's going on and we can work out an alternative that works for you.

Please note: Extensions cannot be granted retroactively, nor can they be granted on the due date itself.

TECHNOLOGY IS TERRIBLE: PLAN AHEAD!

The Internet goes down. Files become corrupted. Computers crash. These are predictable facts of twenty-first century life, not emergencies. For this course, for all your courses, for the rest of your career and your life in this world you need to develop work habits and strategies that take into account the basic, inescapable unreliability of computers. Start your assignments well in advance of the due date; save them often; save backup copies of essential documents, including copies off-site using a service like Carbonite, Dropbox, or Google Drive.

ATTENDANCE AND CLASS PARTICIPATION

Class discussion is an essential component of this seminar; class discussion, not lecture, will be the primary means by which we will investigate these texts together. It is therefore crucial that you come to class every day having read the required material and prepared to discuss it.

Consequently, attendance in this class is absolutely mandatory. You should plan on attending every class. Please talk to me (in advance if possible) if you ever find you will need to miss a class meeting.

The course adheres to Marquette University's attendance policy, which can be found on the Internet at <http://bulletin.marquette.edu/undergrad/academicregulations/#attendance>.

You are allowed **three absences** over the course of the fall semester. **After that, your class participation will drop by a letter grade for each additional unexcused absence.** Upon the seventh unexcused absence, you will receive a WA (Withdrawn—Excessive Absences) for the semester.

Merely being present in class is insufficient to earn an “A” for class participation. Each student is expected to *participate in* and *contribute to* our discussions. Just being in the room is not enough.

GROUP PRESENTATION

The culminating assignment of this course is an in-class symposium on *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*, applying our one or more of our theoretical lens to this text. Full details on this group assignment will be distributed in class.

D2L FORUMS

This course will make extensive use of the D2L forums at <http://d2l.mu.edu>. In addition to being a place where you can find electronic copies of the syllabus and other course handouts, D2L also features an online forum where you can express your response to the material before class begins and where we can continue our discussions after class is over.

The D2L discussion forums are an excellent place for people who may feel inhibited by in-class discussion to share their opinions with the class. I will be reading the discussion forum regularly and I recommend you do the same. I encourage you to think of your D2L posts as “seeds” for the longer papers; feel free to begin to develop your thoughts there. You may choose either to begin a discussion thread on a new topic or to respond to a post composed by one of your classmates.

Before class on Friday, every student is required to take the following actions:

- * **upload a picture of their face to their D2L profile**
- * **write a short, 2-3 paragraph post commenting on or responding to Auden, Rimbaud, or Frost.**

After that, students must write **six short posts** responding to **any six texts** across the remainder of the course. These posts should be completed either by noon before one of the class discussions devoted to that text or by the noon before the following class. At least half of the posts must be completed before Spring Break.

EMAIL

Students in this class are required to check their official Marquette email account—whatever account D2L sends its emails to—at least once a day, in case there are any last-minute announcements or disruptions.

I endeavor to respond to all emails within 24 hours, usually much less—but please do not send me urgent emails regarding your assignments on the night before they are due and expect an immediate reply.

LAPTOP POLICY

In-class use of laptops, Kindles, iPads, etc. is permitted for access to electronic versions of our texts and for notetaking. However, students *must* refrain from non-class-related computer use, including email, instant messaging, Facebook, Twitter, and the like. I reserve the right to ban individual technological devices if this becomes a problem. No use of cell phones will be permitted during class time; please turn off your ringers and put them out of sight.

CONFERENCES

All students are asked to meet with me in at least one short one-on-one conference at my office at least once during the semester to discuss the course and your work within it. Please know I am very happy to meet with you individually to discuss either graded work or work-in-progress in excess of this requirement as many times as you like. Simply come to my weekly office hours, or see or email me to set up an appointment.

FLEXIBILITY

If it will benefit the class, changes may be made to the above.

WRITING CENTER

Students are strongly encouraged to make use of the Writing Center, located in Raynor Library Room 240, at any stage of the writing process. Please visit the Writing Center website at <http://www.marquette.edu/english/writingcenter/> to find out how to schedule an appointment and to access the studio's online resources.

ACCOMMODATIONS

Students with disabilities who believe they will require accommodations in this course should contact me early in the semester so your learning needs can be appropriately met. Per university policy, you are required to provide documentation of your disability to the Office of Disability Services.

If you are unsure of what you need to do to qualify for services, you can begin by visiting the Office of Disability Services in Marquette Hall, Lower Level, Room 05, or by visiting their website at <http://www.marquette.edu/disability-services.index.shtml>.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

Students are expected to abide by the academic honesty policy outlined in your undergraduate bulletin. I urge you all to examine this material and consult me with any questions you may have about plagiarism or academic integrity *before* it becomes an issue.

Ignorance of what constitutes plagiarism is not an acceptable excuse for plagiarism. **Academic dishonesty of any kind will not be tolerated and will result in a failing grade for the course.** No exceptions or special dispensations will be made.

Full details of Marquette’s academic integrity policy are available on the Internet at <http://bulletin.marquette.edu/undergrad/academicregulations/#academichonestypolicy>.

ACADEMIC FREEDOM

We all enter this classroom with preexisting political, ethical, philosophical, and intellectual commitments. You are all required to engage the material—but you are absolutely *not* required to agree either with any of the writers we will discuss, or with me, in whole or in part.

RESPECT

This classroom is a community. It is crucial that we treat each other with the appropriate level of courtesy and respect. No one should be made to feel unwelcome here.

Failure to treat other students with the respect they deserve will **severely** negatively impact your class participation grade.

PRELIMINARY SCHEDULE

Any changes to this schedule will be announced in class as they become necessary.

Students should come to class prepared to discuss the listed texts or chapters.

GENERAL COURSE PLAN

WEEKS 1-2: INTRODUCTIONS AND CONTROVERSIES: POETRY

Concepts: **New Criticism, Structuralism**

WEEK 3-5: DRAMA: *THE TEMPEST*

Concept: **Postcoloniality**

WEEK 6-8: NOVEL: *ONE HUNDRED YEAR OF SOLITUDE*

Concept: **Marxism, Genre, Allegory, Utopia**

WEEK 9: THE SHORT STORY: “THE YELLOW WALL-PAPER” AND “THE PROBLEM OF SUSAN”

Concept: **Feminism**

WEEK 10-11: FILM: *FROZEN*

Concept: **Cultural Studies, Queer Theory, Disability Studies, Reader Response**

WEEK 12-16: YOUNG-ADULT LITERATURE: *HARRY POTTER AND THE ORDER OF THE PHOENIX*

M	January 12	FIRST DAY OF CLASS
W	January 14	W.H. Auden, “So An Age Ended...” [D2L] Arthur Rimbaud, “After the Flood” [D2L]
M	January 19	MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY—NO CLASS

W	January 21	New Criticism <i>How To Interpret Literature</i> : “New Criticism” Robert Frost, “Mending Wall” [D2L]
M	January 26	Structuralism <i>How to Interpret Literature</i> , “Structuralism” Dan Harmon, “Story Circle 101” [online] J.R.R. Tolkien, “On Fairy-Stories” [D2L] in-class discussion: <i>The Lord of the Rings</i> (film and book)
W	January 28	William Shakespeare, <i>The Tempest</i> , Act I
M	February 2	<i>The Tempest</i> , Acts II-III
W	February 4	<i>The Tempest</i> , Acts IV-V
M	February 9	Postcoloniality <i>How to Interpret Literature</i> , “Postcolonial and Race Studies” Heather MacDonal, “The Humanities Have Forgotten Their Humanity” [online] Natalia Cecire, “Humanities Scholarship Is Incredibly Relevant, and That Makes People Sad” [online]
W	February 11	Postcolonial Commentary on <i>The Tempest</i> George Lamming, “A Monster, A Child, A Slave” Barbara Fuchs, “Conquering Islands: Contextualizing <i>The Tempest</i> ”
M	February 16	Gabriel García Márquez, <i>One Hundred Years of Solitude</i> , Chapters 1-5
W	February 18	Gabriel García Márquez, <i>One Hundred Years of Solitude</i> , Chapters 6-10
M	February 23	Gabriel García Márquez, <i>One Hundred Years of Solitude</i> , Chapters 11-15 FIRST PAPER DUE
W	February 25	Gabriel García Márquez, <i>One Hundred Years of Solitude</i> , Chapters 16-20 Gabriel García Márquez, “The Solitude of Latin America”
M	March 2	Marxism <i>How to Interpret Literature</i> , “Marxism” Gregory Lawrence, “Marx in Macondo” [D2L]
W	March 4	Tools and Methods: Genre, Allegory, and Utopia Fredric Jameson, “Radical Fantasy” [D2L] Ursula K. Le Guin, “The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas” [D2L]
M	March 9	<i>SPRING BREAK—NO CLASS</i>

W	March 11	SPRING BREAK—NO CLASS
M	March 16	Feminism Charlotte Perkins Gilman, “The Yellow Wall-Paper” [D2L] <i>How to Interpret Literature</i> , “Feminism”
W	March 18	<i>The Chronicles of Narnia</i> C.S. Lewis, <i>The Last Battle</i> (excerpt) [D2L] Neil Gaiman, “The Problem of Susan” [D2L] SECOND PAPER DUE
M	March 23	Cultural Studies <i>How to Interpret Literature</i> , “Historicism and Cultural Studies” David Forgacs, “Disney Animation and the Business of Childhood” [D2L] Lili Loofbourow, “Just Another Princess Movie” [online]
W	March 25	Queer Studies <i>Frozen</i> <i>How to Interpret Literature</i> , “Queer Studies” Google Search: “queer reading of Frozen” [Google]
M	March 30	Disability Studies <i>Frozen</i> continued <i>How to Interpret Literature</i> , “Disability Studies” Su Holmes, “Cold and Hungry: Discourses of Anorexic Femininity in <i>Frozen</i> ” [online] ZebraGal, “Let It Go—Autism Version” [YouTube]
W	April 1	Readers and Fandoms <i>Frozen</i> continued <i>How to Interpret Literature</i> , “Reader Response” Henry Jenkins, “Transmedia Storytelling 101” [online]
M	April 6	EASTER HOLIDAY—NO CLASS
W	April 8	J.K. Rowling, <i>Harry Potter</i> 1-4 review and discussion
M	April 13	J.K. Rowling, <i>Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix</i>
W	April 15	<i>Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix</i>
M	April 20	<i>Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix</i>
W	April 22	<i>Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix</i>
M	April 27	IN-CLASS WORKSHOP DAY FOR GROUP PRESENTATIONS
W	April 29	GROUP PRESENTATIONS
F	May 8	FINAL PAPER DUE VIA D2L DIGITAL DROPBOX BY 3 PM

Additional Reading

Students interested in diving deeper into genre study about magic and fantasy might be interested in some of the following texts as starting points:

Brian Attebery, *Strategies of Fantasy*

Brian Attebery, *The Fantasy Tradition in American Literature*

Mark Bould and China Miéville, special issue editors, *Historical Materialism* 10.4: "Symposium: Marxism and Fantasy" (2002)

Mark Bould and China Miéville, eds., *Red Planets: Marxism and Science Fiction*

Maggie Ann Bowers, *Magic(al) Realism*

Joseph Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*

Barbara Creed, *The Monstrous-Feminine: Film, Feminism, Psychoanalysis*

Edward James and Farah Mendlesoh, *The Cambridge Companion to Fantasy Literature*

S.T. Joshi, *The Weird Tale*

Ursula K. Le Guin, *Dancing at the Edge of the World*

Farah Mendlesohn, *Rhetorics of Fantasy*

Eric S. Rabkin, *The Fantastic in Literature*

Tzvetan Todorov, *The Fantastic: A Structural Approach to a Literary Genre*

Lana R. Whited, *The Ivory Tower and Harry Potter: Perspectives on a Literary Phenomenon*

Lois Parkinson Zamora and Wendy B. Faris, eds., *Magical Realism: Theory, History, Community*

Jack Zipes, *Breaking the Spell*