

FYS 100: Twice-Told Tales: Fairy Tales in Literary and Popular Culture

Professor Elisabeth Rose Gruner

Office: Ryland Hall 303-C

804-289-829

egruner@richmond.edu

Office Hours: TBA

Spring, 2012: WF 12 – 1:15 pm

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Fairy tales are among the most popular, and least understood, literature and entertainment we provide to children. But did you know that most fairy tales were not originally intended for children? That they contain stories of violence, adultery, cannibalism, and more? How did these become “nursery fare”? Do those origins still leave their traces in the children’s movies and books that we know and love? And why do we keep telling them over and over again?

In this first-year seminar course we will delve into fairy tales, fairy tale revisions, adaptations, and reworkings, in order to explore the relevance of fairy tales for and beyond childhood and for and beyond entertainment. Questions we’ll consider include:

- do fairy tales express universal truths or culturally-specific values—or both?
- what makes a story a “fairy tale”?
- who are fairy tales for?
- what does it mean to revise and/or rework a fairy tale?



“Into the Woods: Little Red's all grown up—and scarlet capelets are her storied accessory of choice.” (Vogue Knitting, Early Fall 2011)

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

The mission of this course is to help you to develop tools to both appreciate and analyze a wide variety of fairy tales and fairy tale revisions; to understand and be able to explain why the study of fairy tales and other popular culture entertainments (especially for children) is valuable; to evaluate and/or create interesting and rich fairy-tale based entertainments; and to develop the skills to pursue further research in the areas that interest you.

In addition, all first-year seminar courses share a set of common and interlocking goals for students. They will:

1. expand and deepen students' understanding of the world and of themselves
2. enhance their ability to read and think critically
3. enhance their ability to communicate effectively, in writing, speech, and other appropriate forms
4. develop the fundamentals of information literacy and library research
5. provide the opportunity for students to work closely with a faculty mentor

These goals support and complement the specific learning goals for this seminar.

[We will discuss and perhaps revise or supplement these goals as the semester goes on: what are your goals for the course? What do you hope to learn?](#)

ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION

We've got some big goals for this class—how will we achieve them? How will we know we've achieved them? There are several different kinds of assignments you'll be doing in the class—some formal, some informal, some that I'll assess, some that you, your peers, or even someone outside the class will assess for you.

Analytical papers (2)—35%

These papers will help you develop your skills in critical thinking and persuasive writing. The rubric [\[link\]](#)for them emphasizes thesis development, use of evidence, and clarity of expression—all components of good writing and thinking that we will work on in class. For both of these papers, you will produce an initial draft and then revise it with feedback from our Writing Consultant.

Creative project—20%

Your final project combines library research and creative expression, and will allow you to explore both what makes a fairy tale entertaining and why it matters. It will proceed in stages, with work accomplished both in and out of class and with feedback at various points along the way. The project will either be a proposal for a theatrical production at UR, or a brief theatre piece for children. You will present your final project in class as well as turning in written materials (bibliography, proposal, and reflection) at the end of the semester. The rubric [\[link\]](#) for your creative project emphasizes clarity of purpose, originality, and appropriate use of resources.

Class participation, including informal writing—25%

Class discussion is the lifeblood of the course—it is how we both create and share new knowledge. Some discussions will be in small groups, others in the full class, but we will have some discussion every day. Many of our discussions will be primed by either in-class or out-of-class writing, including freewriting, discussion prompts, response papers, and reflective pieces. Periodically throughout the semester you'll receive feedback on your class participation; you may also want to review the rubric for participation here. [link]

Learning portfolio—20%

At the end of the semester, you'll assemble most of the materials you've produced during the semester into a learning portfolio which you will turn into me with an essay in which you reflect on what you've learned over the course of the semester. I'll also ask you to write a letter to a future student in this course, suggesting tips for success.

COURSE TEXTS

Please do not buy your course textbooks until you've come to class; we will not always all be reading the same books. Books marked with an asterisk will be required of all students.

Alan Dundes, ed. *Cinderella: A Casebook*

Alan Dundes, ed. *Little Red Riding Hood: A Casebook*

*Martin Hallett and Barbara Karesek, eds.. *The Broadview Book of Folk & Fairy Tales*

*J.K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*

*Jackson Pearce, *Sisters Red*

*Robin McKinley, *Rose Daughter*

*Keith Hjortshoj, *The Transition to College Writing*

[*Or: Gerald Graff and Cathy Birkenstein, *They Say/I Say: The Moves that Matter in Academic Writing*]

You will also have an opportunity to suggest both additional texts and films for the course; be thinking about other fairy tale entertainments that we might all share.



(heavily Photoshopped pictures, widely distributed after the royal wedding. Source for this image: Vincegolango.com)

SCHEDULE OF READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS

Theme for Section One: do fairy tales express universal truths, or culturally-specific values—or both?

Week One

Jan 11

Introduction to the course, syllabus review

Activity: Telling a story (in class)

Jan 13

Read: LRRH or Cinderella versions (by group)—Grimm, Perrault, etc.

Activity: (out of class) articulate goals for course; in class, discuss them

Week Two

Jan 18

Read: Karen Rowe: “Feminism and Fairy Tales”

Activity: write a version of your story (out of class)

Jan 20

Read: Bettelheim: "The Struggle for Meaning"

Activity: Think-Pair-Share w/critical essay (pair LRRH students with Cinderella students)

Week Three

Jan 25

Read: more versions of the tale (multicultural)

Jan 27

Read: "[Forget what you know...](#)" (NYTimes article on studying)

Thesis development workshop: from topic to question to thesis

Review rubric, view sample introductory paragraphs

Week Four

Feb 1

Readings TBA

Feb 3

Film viewing [Into the Woods, part one]

Activity: draft of paper #1 due

(peer review w/writing consultant during this week; revise)

Week Five

Feb 8

Reading TBA

Red Riding Hood students pair with Cinderella students to discuss representations of both in the film

Feb 10

Into the Woods, part two

Revised draft of paper #1 due

Theme for section two: What is a fairy tale?/What do fairy tales do?

Week Six

Feb 15

Read: Sleeping Beauty, Beauty and the Beast, Ugly Duckling

Feb 17

Read: two more critical essays (Bottigheimer? Jack Zipes?)

Activity: Write a letter to your mother/best friend/other interested party: why this class?

Week Seven
Feb 22
Reading TBA

Feb 24
Reading TBA
Activity: revise or rewrite the fairy tale you wrote for week two, taking into account other versions you have now read and critical approaches to fairy tales. This may serve as source material for your final project.

Week Eight
Feb 29
Reading TBA

Mar 2
Reading TBA

Week Nine
SPRING BREAK

Week Ten
Mar 14
Evidence workshop: developing an argument

Mar 16
Library workshop
Draft of paper #2 due

Week Eleven
Mar 21
Disney Cinderella in class (or Beauty & the Beast?)

Mar 23
Revised draft of paper #2 due
*Active learning activity: developing your final project [link; see below]

Theme for Section Three: What does it mean to revise/rework a fairy tale? What is intertextuality?

Week Twelve
Mar 28
Reading: *Rose Daughter*

Mar 30

Reading: *Rose Daughter*/other B&B versions

Annotated bibliography due in class: resources for final project

Week Thirteen

Apr 4

Reading: *Sisters Red*

Apr 6

Reading: *Sisters Red*/other LRRH versions

Proposal for final project due in class

Week Fourteen

Apr 11

Reading: *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*

Apr 13

Reading: *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* /other Cinderella versions

Week Fifteen

Apr 18

Workshop final project

Apr 20

Last day of spring classes: workshop final project

Final presentations will be during the time scheduled for our final exam: TBA

*Active learning activity: come to class with an idea of which topic you'll choose.

Students will be grouped according to their choices and will brainstorm approaches. After brainstorming, write down

- 1) what you already know about the project you're taking on
- 2) what you still need to know
- 3) how you plan to learn #2

review this with someone not in your original group, revise (peer assessment)

turn in revised version (instructor assessment)

assessment will be formative: useful for refining/revising project, not graded.

A LITTLE MORE ON ASSIGNMENTS

Out of class writing assignments:

- 1) Jan 18: Write your own fairy tale (informal)

- 2) Feb. 3/10: Paper #1: Analyze a version through a critical lens (scaffolded project: use Karen Rowe with a selected version) (formal)
- 3) Feb. 17: Letter to a parent/friend: why is this class valuable? (informal)
- 4) Feb. 24: Revise your own fairy tale from week one, reflect on the revision: are there things you want to change having learned something about how critics read fairy tales? (informal)
- 5) Mar. 16/23: Paper #2: Compare and contrast some versions you've read (again, with critical lens?) (formal)
- 6) Unit three and exam week: final project as described below—build this one in stages from bibliography to prospectus etc. (public presentation and formal writing)

1. Imagine that you are helping the UR Theatre Department choose a version of Cinderella to perform on stage. You need to convince them that your version (one you've seen or read, or the one you wrote earlier in the semester) is appropriate for an intellectually curious and thoughtful audience—that is, your version should of course entertain, but it should also make people think. This means you'll need to provide a précis of your chosen version and how it differs from or conforms to our general assumptions about Cinderella. After that, you should argue for both the innovation and tradition your version represents, demonstrating a familiarity with prior research on Cinderella and earlier versions of the story.
2. Produce a children's theatre production of a fairy tale of your choosing. This is like option #2, but with a different audience. Option to work on this with elementary/middle school students? (Depends on CBL placement.)

COURSE POLICIES

- This is a discussion and writing class—we write every day, we talk every day. Obviously you can't participate if you're not here. So the first and most important policy for this class is to come, and come prepared. "Prepared" means you've done the reading (or the viewing, or the writing) for the day, thought about it, taken some notes, and even given some thought to what you'd want to say about it in class. Class meetings by their nature cannot be made up. However, I recognize that sometimes unavoidable situations arise—illness, mandatory events for other classes or activities, etc. Therefore, **you may miss two class meetings (one full week) with no questions asked; after that, missed classes will begin to affect your grade.** (This includes the library workshop.) See me if you have a conflict such as a game, field trip, or family obligation **beforehand**—email or call if you'll miss class because of an illness.
- In class: no laptops; cellphones off—unless we have a use for them, specified ahead of time. Since our class meets at what may feel like a mealtime, you may bring food & drinks into the classroom, but try to be discreet: onion sandwiches probably won't go over too well with your classmates.
- Because you will be working either with your peers or with your Writing Consultant on your written work, it is imperative that you make your deadlines so

they can make theirs and give you good feedback. Similarly, when you are responsible for feedback, you need to provide it in a timely manner. I, too, will provide feedback on final drafts that is intended to help you improve on subsequent written work. All of this feedback takes time, though, and if your work at any stage is late, the feedback you receive will be compromised. Final drafts must be accompanied by marked drafts and any editorial feedback you've received. If I don't receive those materials with your paper, I won't read it until I get them—and I'll mark it late.

- The library workshop and consultations with your Writing Consultant are mandatory. Again, other people are committing their time to us—to be respectful of their time, we need to be on time, be prepared, and be attentive at these events just as for class.
- This class is exploratory in nature—it's more about finding the right questions to ask than mastering a body of material. So at times the syllabus may change as we decide to follow a different set of questions. If/when that happens, I'll give you plenty of notice both in class and online—**please check your richmond.edu email regularly so you know what's going on.**

RESOURCES

There are some wonderful online resources for the study of fairy tales, and of Cinderella and Little Red Riding Hood in particular. Here are a few; let me know if you find more!

[Sur La Lune's Cinderella Page](#)

[The Cinderella Project, University of Southern Mississippi](#)

[D. L. Ashliman's Cinderella Page](#)

[The Cinderella Bibliography](#), by Russell Peck

[The Little Red Riding Hood Project, University of Southern Mississippi](#)

[Sur La Lune's Little Red Riding Hood Page](#)

[D.L. Ashliman's Little Red Riding Hood Page](#)

Finally, some links that have nothing to do with Cinderella or Little Red Riding Hood:

[How to Study: A Brief Guide](#), by William J. Rappaport

