DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
UNDERGRADUATE COURSE DESCRIPTION
Spring 2013

ENG257

Growing Up In Other Worlds: Fantasy and Children’s Literature

CRN: 18519, Times: Monday, Wednesday & Friday 10:30–11:30 pm, Location: HODGES 223
Instructor: P. Brown, e-mail: piers.brown@mail.wvu.edu, Course Website: ecampus.wvu.edu
Office Hours: Mon & Wed: 1:30–3 pm, & by appointment, Office Location: COLSON 131

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF COURSE

As a genre, Fantasy Literature has seen a sudden leap in popularity over the last two decades, primarily as a result of novels for children (the Harry Potter books, the novels of Philip Pullman) and of film adaptations of J. R. R. Tolkien’s Lord of the Rings, and HBO’s version of Game of Thrones. Despite these events it remains one of the most marginalized genre categories in fiction, both in academia and in culture more generally—a marginalization that is all the more striking considering the general acceptance of magic realist novels as part of the wider literary culture. In this course we will re-read the genre of fantasy for continuities with the wider history of the novel, focusing particularly on thebildungsroman, children’s literature, and historical narratives.

REQUIRED READING:

Any version of the novels listed in the schedule should be adequate for the course. They should all be widely available at both first- and second-hand bookstores, as well as from most public libraries.

Ursula Le Guin, A Wizard of Earthsea.
George R. R. Martin, A Game of Thrones.
C. S. Lewis, The Voyage of the Dawn Treader.
Philip Pullman, The Golden Compass.
Neal Stephenson, The Diamond Age.
Tim Powers, Last Call.
Octavia Butler, Parable of the Sower.

The short-stories and articles marked † will be provided at the course website: ecampus.wvu.edu

METHOD OF INSTRUCTION

One three-hour classes per week, with each week usually devoted to a single novel or thematic topic. In the first two classes, we will cover the and in the final class.

METHOD OF EVALUATION

Course Requirements: Four short assignments (500 words each.) 10% each; group presentation 15%; essay proposal (250 words) 10%; final essay (1500 words, due April 29th) 30%; Participation 10%.

Group Presentation (15 mins): 10%
During the second half of the course, we divide up into groups of 3-4. Each group will be responsible for introducing one of the novels in weeks 8-14 to the class as a whole. Guidelines and sign up in Monday, February 11th.

Short assignments (500 words): 10% each
Four short papers on different aspects of novels covered in the class: one on maps and mapping; an appendix; a symbolic or allegorical reading; and a biography of a character. Guidelines will be distributed in class. Due: In class, Friday, February 1st & 15th, & March 1st & 15th.

Final Paper (1500 words): 10% & 30%
A paper discussing a thematic topic in two or three works covered in the course. You may substitute a text from outside our readings with permission. Essay questions will be distributed in class, Monday March 4th. DUE: Proposal (10%), Friday, April 5th. Paper, Friday, April 26th.

Essays are to be submitted in hard copy only. Good practice requires that you keep all notes and working papers, as well as a duplicate of the final version, at least until the course is finished in December. Essays should be double-spaced, with 1” left and right margins, printed in minimum 12-point font.

Essays are due on Fridays, and are to be handed in in class. If not handed in on the date due, they are due at the next class. Do not hand essays in either at the department or under my office door. Late essays will incur a penalty of ten percent (10%), and papers more than a week late will not be accepted. If you need an extension for any reason, you should see me during
my office hours prior to the due date of the assignment. In all cases, it is better to contact me and discuss any difficulties you may have beforehand, rather than afterwards. If something happens which that drastically effects your attendance or your ability to complete work on time (serious illness, family tragedy, etc.), I would strongly encourage you to contact Dr. Thomas Sloane, Sr. Associate Dean of Students, at 293-5611 or tom.sloane@mail.wvu.edu.

When you begin work on the first assignment, you should take advantage of the resources of the English Department’s Writing Center. There you will find essential advice on planning your work, using and documenting sources, avoiding plagiarism, style and editing, grammar and punctuation, and ESL questions.

**Participation**

As in any English class it is vital that you do two things: do the day’s reading and bring the text to class so that we can discuss it in detail. In cases where there is an electronic text, you should print it out and bring it with you. If you do not have the assigned text with you during class, I may ask you to...

Although this is a course about reading and writing, it is also more generally about communication. Your participation mark is based on your active engagement with the material in the course. You can participate by asking questions in class or during office hours, by demonstrating your understanding of the assigned readings, and by helping to foster an atmosphere in which all the other students in class are also able to contribute.

**PART ONE: THE HISTORY OF FANTASY**

**Week 1: Beginnings**

**Monday, January 14th:** Introduction

**Wednesday, January 16th**

**Reading:** from Francis Spufford, *The Child that Books Built.*

**Friday, January 18th**

**Reading:** Ursula Le Guin, *A Wizard of Earthsea* (Chapters 1-4).

**Week 2: Building Other Worlds**

**Monday, January 21st**

**Martin Luther King Day, No Class**

**Wednesday, January 23rd**

**Reading:** Ursula Le Guin, *A Wizard of Earthsea* (Chapters 5-7)

**Friday, January 25th**

**Reading:** Ursula Le Guin, *A Wizard of Earthsea* (Chapters 8-10).

**Week 3: High Fantasy**

**Monday, January 28th**

**Reading:** George R. R. Martin, *A Game of Thrones* (pp. 1-292).

**Wednesday, January 30th**

**Reading:** George R. R. Martin, *A Game of Thrones* (pp. 293-522).

**Friday, February 1st**

**Reading:** George R. R. Martin, *A Game of Thrones* (pp. 523-807).

**Assignment 1:** Map assignment due

**Week 4: Fantastic Histories**

**Monday, February 4th**

**Reading:** Tolkein, “Appendices,” *The Return of the King.*

**Wednesday, February 6th**

**Reading:** “A Description of the Island of Numenor,” *Unfinished Tales.*

**Friday, February 8th**

**Reading:** “Of the Rings of Power and the Third Age,” *The Silmarillion.*

**Part Two: Fantasy and Children’s Literature**

**Week 5: Fairy Tales**

**Monday, February 11th:**


**Sign Up:** Group Presentations

**Wednesday, February 13th**

**Reading:** Angela Carter, “The Bloody Chamber.” Tanith Lee, “Red as Blood.”

**Friday, February 15th**

**Reading:** C. S. Lewis, *The Voyage of the Dawntreader.*

**Assignment 2:** Appendix assignment due

**Week 6: Fantasy and Allegory**

**Monday, February 18th**

**Reading:** C. S. Lewis, *The Voyage of the Dawntreader.*

**Wednesday, February 20th**

**Reading:** C. S. Lewis, *The Voyage of the Dawntreader.*

**Friday, February 22nd**

**Class Cancelled**

**Week 7: Liminal Spaces**

**Monday, February 25th**

**Reading:** Philip Pullman, *The Golden Compass.*

**Wednesday, February 27th**

**Reading:** Philip Pullman, *The Golden Compass.*
FRIDAY, MARCH 1ST

ASSIGNMENT 3: Allegory assignment due

PART THREE: BILDUNGSROMANS

Week 8: Seeing the World
MONDAY, MARCH 4TH:
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 6TH
FRIDAY, MARCH 8TH

Week 9: Anti-Potters
MONDAY, MARCH 11TH
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 13TH
FRIDAY, MARCH 15TH

ASSIGNMENT: Biography assignment due

Week 10: Fantasy, Cliché and Myth
MONDAY, MARCH 18TH
READING: Michael Swanick, The Iron Dragon's Daughter (Chapters 1-8).
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 20TH
READING: Michael Swanick, The Iron Dragon's Daughter (Chapters 9-17).
FRIDAY, MARCH 22ND

LAST DAY TO DROP CLASSES

Spring Break

Week 11: Future Fantasies
MONDAY, APRIL 1ST
READING: Neal Stephenson, The Diamond Age (Part One).
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 3RD
READING: Neal Stephenson, The Diamond Age (Part Two).
FRIDAY, APRIL 5TH
READING: Neal Stephenson, The Diamond Age (Conclusion).

ASSIGNMENT: Essay proposal due

Week 12: Appropriating Modernism
MONDAY, APRIL 8TH
READING: Tim Powers, Last Call (Prologue and Book One).
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 10TH
READING: Tim Powers, Last Call (Book Two).
FRIDAY, APRIL 12TH

Week 13: Ecologies
MONDAY, APRIL 15TH
READING: Octavia Butler, Parable of the Sower (Chapters 1-10).
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 17TH
READING: Octavia Butler, Parable of the Sower (Chapters 11-17).
FRIDAY, APRIL 19TH
READING: Octavia Butler, Parable of the Sower (Chapters 18-24).

Week 14: Fantasy and Magic Realism
MONDAY, APRIL 22ND
READING: Junot Diaz, The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao (pp. 1-77).
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 24TH
READING: Junot Diaz, The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao (pp. 77-202).
FRIDAY, APRIL 26TH
READING: Junot Diaz, The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao (pp. 203-335).
ASSIGNMENT: Final essay due.

Week 15: Endings and Beginning Again
MONDAY, APRIL 29TH
READING: Chabon, "The Martian Agent."†
WEDNESDAY, MAY 1ST
READING: Gaiman, "The Problem with Susan."† Sady Doyle, "Hermione Granger."†
FRIDAY, MAY 3RD
READING: Course Wrap-Up and Evaluations