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MW 3:20-4:40 p.m., Tillett 253
Spring 2014
Professor Martha Helfer
Office: 172 College Ave
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Fairy Tales Then and Now

Course description:

This course analyzes the structure, meaning, and function of fairy tales and their enduring influence on literature and popular culture. While we will concentrate on the German context, and in particular the works of the Brothers Grimm, we will also consider fairy tales drawn from a number of different national traditions and historical periods, including the American present. Various strategies for interpreting fairy tales will be examined, including methodologies derived from structuralism, folklore studies, gender studies, and psychoanalysis. We will explore pedagogical and political uses and abuses of fairy tales. We will investigate the evolution of specific tale types and trace their transformations in various media from oral storytelling through print to film, television, and the stage. Finally, we will consider potential strategies for the reinterpretation and rewriting of fairy tales.

Core certification: [pending approval]

Satisfies SAS Core Curriculum Requirements AHp, WCd

Arts and Humanities Goal p: Student is able to analyze arts and/or literature in themselves and in relation to specific histories, values, languages, cultures, and/or technologies.

Writing and Communication Goal d: Student is able to communicate effectively in modes appropriate to a discipline or area of inquiry.

Required readings:

The following texts are available for purchases at the bookstore:

The Complete Fairy Tales of the Brothers Grimm, tr. Jack Zipes, 3rd ed. (Bantam, 0553382160)

Spiegelman, *Maus I and Maus II* (Pantheon, 0679748407)

Carroll, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (Dover 0486275434)

Dahl, *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* (Puffin 0142410314)

All other readings will be made available via Sakai or on reserve at Alexander Library.

Course requirements and grading:

Regular class attendance, careful preparation of assigned readings and viewings, active class participation, and completion of **all** assignments are required to receive a passing grade in this course. Periodic unannounced quizzes will be given on assigned readings. There will be an in-class midterm exam. Essay assignments are designed to test course content and to develop critical reading and writing skills. The first essay will be based on a choice of assigned topics; the second will involve a comparison of two different versions of the same tale from different perspectives, or the interpretation of a single fairy tale using one or more of the methodologies introduced in class; the third will involve either the creative rewriting or reinterpretation of a fairy tale, or the analysis of one or more modern retellings of a fairy tale.

Course learning goals:

Students will: Acquire an understanding of the structure, meaning, and function of fairy tales and their enduring influence on literature and culture; ground this understanding in historical, cultural, and theoretical contexts; hone analytical skills in written interpretation; be able to propose an argumentative thesis and support it with appropriate evidence. Assessment will be based on evaluation of assigned written work.

Grades will be based on the following formula:

Class participation	5%
Quizzes	5%
Midterm exam	25%
2 5-page essays (20% each)	40%
1 8-page essay	25%

Grade distribution:

A=90-100%; B+=85-89; B=80-84; C+=75-79; C=70-74; D=65-69; F-64 and below.

Course Overview

Weeks One and Two: Introducing Little Red (yes, that's Riding Hood!)

To what degree do fairy tales raise timeless and universal issues and to what extent are they specific to a single time and place? During the first two weeks we'll consider the special place of fairy tales between the oral and written traditions of narrative, and the differences between fairy tales and related genres such as myths and folktales. We'll also study the origins and development of the Grimms' *Tales*. A comparison of the Grimms' version of "Little Red Riding Hood" with Angela Carter's "The Company of Wolves" will serve to introduce many of the themes of the course.

Reading: Jakob and Wilhelm Grimm, Prefaces to the First and Second Edition; Jack Zipes, "Once There Were Two Brothers Named Grimm"; Ruth Bottigheimer, "The Ultimate Fairy Tale: Oral Transmission in a Literate World"; Rudolf Schenda, "Telling Tales – Spreading Tales: Change in Communicative Forms of a Popular Genre"; Marina Warner, "The Old Wives' Tale"; Robert Darnton, "Peasants Tell Tales"; Jakob and Wilhelm Grimm, "Little Red Cap"; Angela Carter, "The Company of Wolves."

Weeks Three and Four: Praising Boys, Punishing Girls

These weeks' readings will concentrate on the disciplinary edge to many fairy tales, especially with regard to the inculcation of gender expectations for girls and boys. The focus will be on fairy tales depicting transgressive behavior and the different consequences of disobeying commands for male and female protagonists.

Readings: Grimm, "Frau Trude," "Snow White," "Robber Bridegroom," "Fitcher's Bird," "The Golden Bird," "White Snake," "Iron Hans," "The Table, Ass, and Stick," "Thrushbeard," "The Youth Who Went Forth to Learn About Fear"; Perrault, "Bluebeard"; Margaret Atwood, "Bluebeard's Egg"

Recommended reading:

Victor Turner, "Betwixt and Between: The Liminal Period in *Rites de Passage*"

Maria Tatar, "'Teaching Them a Lesson': The Pedagogy of Fear in Fairy Tales" (*Off with their Heads!*, pp. 22–50)

Week Five: Beauty and the Beast

This week's reading considers the transformation of a single tale type. While tracing the evolution of the topos of "Beauty and the Beast" and trying to understand something of the process by which tales both persist and change across different times and cultures, we will also continue our discussion of the ways in which curiosity, disobedience, and violence figure in the tales, and the lessons conveyed about appropriate gender behavior.

Readings: Apuleius, "Cupid and Psyche"; Madame de Beaumont, "Beauty and the Beast"; Grimm, "The Frog-King," "Rumpelstiltskin," "The Six Swans," "The Seven Ravens"; Disney Studios, *Beauty and the Beast* (video); Jean Cocteau, *Beauty and the Beast* (video)

Recommended reading:

Maria Tatar, "Beauties and Beasts: From Blind Obedience to Love at First Sight" (*Off with their Heads!*, pp. 140–162).

Week Six: Theoretically Speaking (Folklore, Literature, Psychoanalysis, Feminism)

We will consider several widely influential approaches to the interpretation of fairy tales. We will read key excerpts from Vladimir Propp's *Morphology of the Folktale* and Bruno Bettelheim's *The Uses of Enchantment* and analyze several fairy tales to illustrate their modes of reading. We will also begin to consider feminist perspectives.

Readings: Freud, "The Occurrence in Dreams of Material from Fairy Tales"; Bettelheim, *The Uses of Enchantment*, pp. 277-310; Propp, *Morphology of the Folktale*, pp. 19-65; Angela Carter, "The Tiger's Bride"; Karen Rowe, "Feminism and Fairy Tales."

Week Seven: Grimm-ly Violent

Why is violence such a prevalent ingredient in the stories read to children, and what effect do violent stories have on children? What forms of violence are most likely to pervade fairy tales, and to what purpose is violence put: retaliation, demeaning cruelty, cathartic pleasure?

Readings: Grimm, "The Juniper Tree," "Allerleirauh," "The Maiden without Hands," "Hansel and Gretel," "Cinderella"

Recommended readings:

Maria Tatar, "Telling Differences: Parents vs. Children in 'The Juniper Tree'" (*Off with their Heads!*, pp. 212–228)

Maria Tatar, "Sex and Violence: The Hard Core of Fairy Tales" (*Hard Facts*, pp. 3–38)

Week Eight: Transformations

Building on the material covered in Weeks Six and Seven, we'll examine several feminist rewritings of fairy tales.

Readings: Anne Sexton (selections from *Transformations*), Angela Carter ("The Courtship of Mr Lyon), and Tanith Lee ("Wolfland").

Week Nine: Fairy Tales and the Transmission of Prejudice; the Anti-Fairy Tale

This week we'll read three Grimms' tales about Jews and explore how they contribute to the construction of the rhetoric of anti-Semitism in 19th-century German culture. We'll then read Art Spiegelman's graphic narrative *Maus*, with its ironic "Happy, Happy Ever

After” ending, as an anti-fairy tale. We’ll also discuss my perhaps controversial decision to place Spiegelman’s text on the syllabus in this context.

Readings: Grimm, “The Good Bargain,” “The Clear Sun Will Bring it To Light,” “The Jew in Thorns”; Spiegelman, *Maus I*, *Maus II*

Weeks Ten and Eleven: Little Red Goes to Barnes and Noble (Fairy Tales and Literature, Fairy Tales in Literature, Fairy Tales as Literature)

During these weeks we’ll consider the differences between fairy tales deriving from an anonymous oral culture and literary fairy tales written by a known author, with a more general focus on the boundaries separating and joining the realms of folklore and literature.

Week Ten: Mermaids and other Merpeople

Readings: Hans Christian Andersen, “The Little Mermaid”; Friedrich de la Motte Fouqué, *Undine*; Walt Disney Studios, *The Little Mermaid* (video)

Week Eleven: “Modern” Fairy Tales, Romantic Style

Readings: E.T.A. Hoffmann, *The Golden Pot*; Ludwig Tieck, “The Fair-Haired Eckbert,” “Rune Mountain”

Week Twelve: Little Red Goes to Broadway and Hollywood (Fairy Tales on the Stage and the Screen)

We will use the critical reading skills honed in this course to attempt to analyze the most dominant forms of fairy tale production in contemporary American culture. Texts to be considered include Stephen Sondheim’s musical *Into the Woods*; Walt Disney Studios animated films *Cinderella* and *The Lion King*; and the popular television series *Grimm* and *Once Upon a Time*

Week Thirteen: Fractured Fairy Tales

After reading Lewis Carroll’s *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* (which Dodgson himself considered to be a fairy tale), we will look at contemporary efforts to reinterpret fairy tales through their retelling. We will focus in particular on the narrative and graphic strategies used to simultaneously perpetuate and fracture traditional modes of fairy-tale telling.

Readings: Lewis Carroll, *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*; Roald Dahl, *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*; Maurice Sendak, *Where the Wild Things Are*; John Scieszka, *The Stinky Cheese Man & Other Fairly Stupid Tales*

Week Fourteen: Writing Anew (Writing Workshop)

We will try our hand at writing tales of our own!

Week Fifteen: Once Upon a Time and Happily Ever After

Review; student presentations of final paper topics

Syllabus:

Introducing Little Red (yes, that's Riding Hood!)

1/22 "Little Red Cap" (The Brothers Grimm)

1/27 Angela Carter, "The Company of Wolves"

Robert Darnton, "Peasants Tell Tales"

Rudolf Schenda, "Telling Tales – Spreading Tales: Change in Communicative Forms of a Popular Genre"

Ruth Bottigheimer, "The Ultimate Fairy Tale: Oral Transmission in a Literate World"

Marina Warner, "The Old Wives' Tale"

1/29 Grimm, Prefaces I and II

Jack Zipes, "Once There Were Two Brothers Named Grimm"

Praising Boys, Punishing Girls

2/3 Grimm, "Frau Trude," "Snow White," "Robber Bridegroom," "Fitcher's Bird" (43, 53, 40, 46)
Perrault, "Bluebeard"
Margret Atwood, "Bluebeard's Egg"

2/5 Maria Tatar, "'Teaching Them a Lesson': The Pedagogy of Fear in Fairy Tales" (*Off with their Heads!*, pp. 22–50)

2/10 Grimm, "White Snake," "The Table, Ass, and Stick," "Iron Hans," "Thrusbeard," "The Golden Bird" (17, 36, 136, 52, 57)

2/12 Grimm, "The Youth who went forth" (4); review

Beauty and the Beast

2/17 Apuleius, “Cupid and Psyche”
Madame de Beaumont, “Beauty and the Beast”
ESSAY ONE due

2/19 Grimm, “The Frog-King,” “Rumpelstiltskin,” “The Six Swans,” “The Seven Ravens” (1, 55, 49, 25)
Disney Studios, *Beauty and the Beast* (video)

Recommended reading:
Maria Tatar, “Beauties and Beasts: From Blind Obedience to Love at First Sight” (*Off with their Heads!*, pp. 140–162)

Theoretically Speaking (Folklore, Literature, Psychoanalysis, Feminism)

2/24 Propp, *Morphology of the Folktale*, pp. 19-65
Freud, “The Occurrence in Dreams of Material from Fairy Tales”
Bettleheim, *The Uses of Enchantment*, pp. 277-310

2/26 Angela Carter, “The Tiger’s Bride”
Karen Rowe, “Feminism and Fairy Tales”

Grimm-ly Violent

3/3 Grimm, “The Juniper Tree,” “Allerleirauh,” “The Maiden without Hands,” “Hansel and Gretel,” “Cinderella” (47, 65, 31, 15, 21)

Recommended reading: Maria Tatar, “Sex and Violence: The Hard Core of Fairy Tales” (*Hard Facts*, pp. 3–38)

3/5 **MIDTERM EXAM**

Transformations

3/10 Anne Sexton, *Transformations* (selections)

3/12 Angela Carter, "The Courtship of Mr Lyon; Tanith Lee, "Wolfland"

SPRING BREAK!

Fairy Tales and the Transmission of Prejudice; the Anti-Fairy Tale

3/24 Grimm, "The Good Bargain," "The Clear Sun Will Bring it To Light,"
"The Jew in Thorns"

3/26 Art Spiegelman, *Maus I, Maus II*

**Little Red Goes to Barnes and Noble:
Fairy Tales and Literature, Fairy Tales in Literature, Fairy Tales as Literature**

3/31 Hans Christian Anderson, "The Little Mermaid"
Friedrich de la Motte Fouqué, *Undine*

4/2 Disney Studios, *The Little Mermaid* (video)
ESSAY TWO due

4/7 E.T.A. Hoffmann, *The Golden Pot*

4/9 Ludwig Tieck, "The Fair-Haired Eckbert," "Rune Mountain"

**Little Red Goes to Broadway and Hollywood:
Fairy Tales on the Stage and the Screen**

4/14 Disney Studios, *Cinderella, The Lion King*

4/16 Stephen Sondheim, *Into the Woods*

Fractured Fairy Tales

- 4/21 Lewis Carroll, *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*
- 4/23 Roald Dahl, *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*
 Maurice Sendak, *Where the Wild Things Are*
 John Scieszka, *The Stinky Cheese Man & Other Fairly Stupid Tales*

Writing Anew (writing workshop)

- 4/28 Inventing Modern Fairy Tales (I)
- 4/30 Inventing Modern Fairy Tales (II)

Once Upon a Time; Happily Ever After

- 5/5 Review; student presentations
 ESSAY THREE due

Departmental policies

Attendance: All students must attend regularly and arrive prepared; if you expect to miss one or two classes, please use the University absence reporting website <https://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra/> to indicate the date and reason for your absence. An email is automatically sent to me. Note: It is the responsibility of students who have been absent (for any reason) to find out what they have missed and obtain materials that may have been handed out.

Photocopies: Department photocopying fees add up quickly and impressively; we will therefore need to collect from each student 5 cents per page toward the cost of handouts other than quizzes and tests.

Disability Support Services: Students who may be requesting accommodations due to disabilities are encouraged to familiarize themselves with procedures and policies regarding disability support services at the following website: <http://disabilityservices.rutgers.edu/>. It is recommended that students seeking accommodations begin filing paperwork as soon as possible as the documentation review process may take up to 30 business days. Students are encouraged

to speak with instructors about these issues at the beginning of the term. All such conversations will be kept strictly confidential.

Academic Integrity: Violations of academic integrity are an extremely serious matter, and can lead to a student's failing the course and being referred to the University's Office of Student Conduct for disciplinary action. When referring to ideas other than your own, always acknowledge your sources clearly and completely, whether you are quoting or paraphrasing. Note also that use of online translation services is not permitted as a tool for generating work that you submit for course credit. Please see the University's policies on academic integrity at <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/>, and discuss with your instructor any questions you may have about this and related issues.