UCL SUMMER SCHOOL

FAIRY TALES AND THEIR RETELLINGS

Key Information

Module code: ISSU0058
Taught during: Session Two: Monday 22 July - Friday 9 August 2019
Module workload: 45 teaching hours plus approximately 100 study hours
Module leader: Dr Georgia Panteli
Department: School of European Languages, Culture and Society, Faculty of Arts and Humanities
Credit: 15 UCL credits, 7.5 ECTS, 4 US
Level: Level 1, first year undergraduate
Pre-requisites: Standard entry requirements
Assessment: Presentation (25%), Essay (75%)

Module Overview

Why are fairy tales so popular? Why are the original fairy tales darker than the ones we know? This course will give an introduction to different forms of storytelling, exploring the origins and evolution of fairy tales with a focus on contemporary retellings. A variety of fairy tales will be examined, ranging from ancient myths and medieval storytelling tradition to Disney’s adaptations and TV series such as *Once Upon a Time* and *Grimm*.

The module will introduce students to different literary genres, such as children’s literature (by looking into how children’s novels such as *Alice in Wonderland* and *The Adventures of Pinocchio* have been retold) and graphic novel studies. They will learn different approaches of literary analysis, such as comparative criticism and psychoanalysis. The course will include excursions to relevant exhibitions and interactive workshops on storytelling.

Week One
- Origins and evolution: Italy, France, Germany, Denmark
- Fairy tales, romanticism and the concept of childhood
- The structure of the fairy tale

Week Two
- Myths and symbols: the semiotics of fairy tales
- Readings, retellings and interpretations
- Postmodern retellings of fairy tales
- Feminist retellings of fairy tales

Week Three
- Fairy tales in film and TV
- The Disney legacy

Please note that this module description is indicative and may be subject to change.
Module Aims
To familiarise students with the practice and methodology of comparative literature. You will become acquainted with the genres of fairy tales, children’s literature, film and graphic novel studies and learn to critically approach and analyse texts with confidence.

Teaching Methods
Interactive lectures and seminars, group discussions, film screenings, excursions, workshops, group work and private study. Reading lists and text excerpts will be provided in advance.

Learning Outcomes
Upon successful completion of this module, students will:

- Be confident in the basic principles of comparative studies as well as in the methodology of comparative literature.
- Have experience in critical analysis of literary texts, films and visual arts using different theoretical approaches such as psychoanalysis and feminist theory.
- Have developed their knowledge of different literary genres such as myth and fairy tale studies, children’s literature, popular culture and its relation to ideology.
- Be familiar with the practice of interdisciplinary studies by analysing examples from different fields such as film studies and graphic novel studies.
- Have expanded their creativity through discussions and interactive workshops on storytelling.

Assessment Methods

- 10-minute presentation (25%)
- 2,500-word essay (75%)

Module Leader
Dr Georgia Panteli received her PhD in Comparative Literature at UCL CMII, SELCS. She has taught for the MA in Comparative Literature and the BA in Italian Studies at UCL, as well as at Chapman University, California. Her main research interests are postmodern and posthuman literature, fairy tales and their retellings, myths, archetypes and graphic novel studies. She is currently working on her monograph From Puppet to Cyborg: Pinocchio’s Posthuman Journey to be published next year.

Key Texts


Once Upon a Time, USA: Kitsis/Horowitz, ABC Studios, 2011–present.

Perrault, Charles, Histories or tales of past times told by Mother Goose: with morals, London: The Fortune Press [1928]

Pinocchio, USA: Walt Disney Productions, 1940.


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