

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH AND WRITING STUDIES
ENGLISH 2072F/G (SPECULATIVE FICTION: FANTASY)
ONLINE Fall 2015 SECTION 650

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course presents a study of the purposes and historical origins of fantasy, and modern developments in fantasy: alternate worlds, horror or ghost stories, sword and sorcery, and heroic romance.

Please note that English 134E and English 172F/G are antirequisites to this course; hence, if you have taken English 134E or 172F/G, you cannot receive credit for English 2072F/G.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

- Write an essay about a work of literature, containing an effective thesis supported by adequate evidence from the original text.
- Organize and present ideas clearly and effectively.

COURSE TEXTS

- * J. R. R. Tolkien, Lord of the Rings, including The Fellowship of the Ring, The Two Towers, and The Return of the King.
- * J. K. Rowling, Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone.
- * Peter S. Beagle, The Last Unicorn (ironic fantasy).
- * John Gardner, Grendel (fantasy retelling).
- * Dan Simmons, A Song for Kali (horror).
- * Philip K. Dick, The Man in the High Castle (alternate history).
- * J. G. Ballard, Crash (postmodern fantasy).
- * Fantastic Worlds: Myths, Tales, and Stories, ed. Eric S. Rabkin (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979).

Reading and working with these specific editions is preferred, especially for essays and in discussing the texts. If you already have some or all of the texts in different editions, then inform me what edition you will be using on your essays. The UWO Bookstore will have these texts in stock, and you can order them on-line from the Bookstore. For more information, go to <http://www.bookstore.uwo.ca>. You may also find the books at a local bookseller.

During the course, you are expected to read the relevant sections of the course package in combination with the texts. The package provides important background information on and interpretations of the texts in order to guide you through the readings.

READINGS

The course explores a wide range of fantasy texts and focuses primarily upon materials from the Twentieth century. Rosemary Jackson, in *Fantasy: The Literature of Subversion*, provides a general schema for distinguishing different kinds of the fantastic. Her first category of the marvelous includes the world of the fairy tale, romance, magic, and supernaturalism. The marvelous is characterized by a minimal narrative whose narrator is omniscient and has absolute authority. This form discourages reader participation and represents events which occurred in the past and are assumed to be no longer relevant (33). The mimetic are narratives that claim to imitate an external reality, but which also distance experience by shaping it into meaningful patterns and sequences (or in other words, events that are claimed to be real but

