

Department of English & Writing Studies

**Speculative Fiction: Fantasy**

**English 2072F (650)**

Fall 2017

**Instructor:** Dr. Mark Stephenson  
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**Teaching Assistant:** TBA

**E-mail Policy:** E-mail me for any course-related concerns; I should reply within 24 hours. If you have not received a reply in 24 hours, email me again, and I'll be sure to get back to you shortly (email correspondence occasionally goes missing in cyber-space and/or I may have missed your initial email).

**Office Hours:** I am also available for **consultations on campus**, on Mondays and Wednesdays, **4:30 - 5:30 pm**, in case you are in London. My office is **(Old) Ivey Building, 2G28L**.

**Be sure to read the following information completely and carefully. You are responsible for it.**

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.

Note that English 134E is an anti-requisite to this course; hence, if you have taken English 134E, you cannot receive credit for English 2072F/G.

**Objectives:**

- Place individual texts in their context within the historical development of fantasy as a genre;
- Recognize and understand the features of genres and subgenres such as fantasy, horror fantasy, sword and sorcery, heroic romance, etc.;
- Analyze texts employing the skills of literary analysis, considering features such as narrative technique, symbolism, structure, etc.;
- Understand the political, religious, moral, and philosophical underpinnings of the texts studied;
- Communicate ideas effectively in writing (through discussion posts and persuasive essays);
- Develop a specific, focused argument and support it with textual evidence;
- Approach the fantasy genre as readers and critics.

Course Material

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 are in fact fictional) (34). The fantastic includes narratives that confound elements of both the marvelous and the mimetic. These texts assert that they are real—relying upon all the conventions of realistic fiction to do so—and then they proceed to break that assumption of realism by introducing that which is manifestly unreal. Stories like Poe's "The Black Cat" or

**A Note on Literary Terms:**

If you have previously taken an English course, you are probably familiar with the basic technical vocabulary of English literary studies. If not, you may want to consult a handbook of

## **II Essay 2**

A formal, extended discussion of a theme/ ideological issue as it is reflected in

a) the works of two of the authors studied throughout the course

**OR**

b) one of the literary works studied this term and a film adaptation of that work.

Write a clear, argumentative, and analytical thesis statement that will be developed over the course of the essay. Go beyond mere comparison and provide an in-depth discussion of the ideological implications of the literary text(s)/ film adaptation.

Secondary research is not required. MLA citation style is required. A list of suggested essay topics will be provided in due time. All students who wish to choose a topic that is not on the list should send me a short description of their topic for approval.

### **A Note on the Essay Format and Quotations:**

Your essays must follow MLA (Modern Language Association) format, as detailed in the MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers, 6<sup>th</sup> edition (Joseph Gibaldi, 2003). I strongly suggest consulting a copy of the MLA Handbook while writing your essays, as it contains important information regarding essay format and the citation of sources.

A good introduction to MLA style is available on the UWO English department's web site; you should visit the MLA tips pages for your essays, and even printing out the pages (if possible) is a good idea. The URL is <http://www.uwo.ca/english/undergrad/MLAstyletips.html>

Regarding citations and avoiding plagiarism, the basic rule to follow is that you must indicate the source of any idea and any words that are not your own—whether you are quoting directly or paraphrasing. As well, your Works Cited list should include all sources that you cite in and consulted for your essay, including footnotes/endnotes, dictionaries, and internet material (for citing sources, you will need to look at the MLA Handbook).

Since English 2072F/G is an English literature course, you will be evaluated based on your ability to write clear, well-argued essays. Elements such as grammar, organization, argumentation, citation, and editing are all important and will affect your grade. While planning and writing your essays, as always, feel free to get in touch with me for any questions you might have.

### **Tips for Writing Effective Essays**



“The Marker” (Robert Coover), *FW* 456-459; “Pierre Menard, Author of the *Quixote*” (Jorge Luis Borges), *FW* 415-423; “There Is No Such Place as America” (Peter Bischel), *FW* 443-449; “Pastoral” (Tommaso Landolfi), *FW* 430-

Academic Offences

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at [http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/scholastic\\_discipline\\_undergrad.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf)

**Plagiarism:**

Students must write their essays an