

"A book is made from a tree. It is an assemblage of flat, flexible parts (still called "leaves") imprinted with dark pigmented squiggles. One glance at it and you hear the voice of another person, perhaps someone dead for thousands of years. Across the millennia, the author is speaking, clearly and silently, inside your head, directly to you. Writing is perhaps the greatest of human inventions binding together people, citizens of distant epochs, who never knew one another. Books break the shackles of time—proof that humans can work magic." Carl Sagan

Writing About Magic

ENC1145 3318

Fall 2014, T2-3/ R3 (8:30-10:25/ 9:35-10:25) FLI 0117

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Course Description

"Books [are] proof that humans can work magic."—Carl Sagan. This course will examine humanity's continued preoccupation with magic in popular culture despite the current scientific, rational mindset that holds precedence in contemporary American society. We will view examples of magic (as illusion, as paranormal phenomena, and as mythic fantasy) in early and contemporary literature, film, television shows, comics, and plays and read critical essays on the subject. The course will chronologically trace a limited selection of major texts in English literature to understand the foundations of magical themes and tropes that are found in contemporary popular culture. Students will be encouraged to draw parallels between historical and contemporary texts and actively participate in bringing new ideas and outside readings to the discussion.

Student Learning Outcomes/ Objectives

At the culmination of the term, students will be expected to know how to:

- ✓ creatively explore and apply themes of magic discovered in the course to own narrative work
- ✓ make analytical comparisons between texts in major works of English literature from 14th century to present day
- ✓ glean major concepts from fictional, critical, and theoretical texts and apply them to logical arguments
- ✓ write coherent, cohesive theses and develop them into works that contain thorough research, appropriate organization, and proper formatting

Required Texts

To be Purchased

Chris Van Allsburg *The Mysteries of Harris Burdick*

J.K. Rowling *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*

Project Gutenberg or Course Reserve scans

Faust by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe/Translated by Bayard Taylor

The Tempest by William Shakespeare

The Sorcerer's Apprentice by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe
(http://www.has.vcu.edu/for/goethe/zauber_dual.html)
The Story of King Arthur and His Knights by Howard Pyle
The Wonderful Wizard of Oz by L. Frank Baum
"Defense of Fairy Tales" by Constance Rice
Testing the Tastemakers: Children's Literature, Bestseller Lists, and the "Harry Potter Effect" by Rebekah Fitzsimmons
'Durch Wunderkraft erschienen': Affinities between Goethe's Faust and Shakespeare's The Tempest by Charlotte Lee
Straight Magic: Houdini and the Art of Illusion by

Assignment Descriptions

Assignment 1: Students will generate a narrative in response to one of Chris Van Allsburg's *Mysteries of Harris Burdick*, exploring themes of magic.

Assignment 2: The second assignment will ask students to write a comparative analysis about an early work of literature and a contemporary text about magic.

Assignment 3: The final assignment will challenge you creatively and intellectually. Students will be expected to take the idea of "writing as making" and mix up a little magic of their own. Students will be expected to try to communicate a message about magic in a medium best suited for their future careers. * I am open to less conventional proposals and group projects may be allowed on a case-by-case basis.

Student Evaluation

Students will be evaluated at a collegiate level; expectations are reasonably set that writing assignments are generally free of spelling, grammatical, formatting, and citation errors; follow all instructor-provided directions; and are intelligibly organized.

200 points First Assignment

250 points Second Assignment

300 points Third Assignment

250 points Participation, In-Class Writing Assignments, Attendance, Conferences

Total Calculated out of 1000 points.

The writing assignments for this course are designed to meet the minimum requirements of the University Writing Requirement credit. To satisfy this requirement, every assignment's word count must be fulfilled. Submitted assignments short of the minimum word count will receive zero credit.

Grading Scale:

| | | | | | |
|-------|--------|----------|-------|-------|---------|
| A 4.0 | 93-100 | 930-1000 | C 2.0 | 73-76 | 730-769 |
|-------|--------|----------|-------|-------|---------|

| | | | | | |
|---------|-------|---------|---------|-------|---------|
| A- 3.67 | 90-92 | 900-929 | C- 1.67 | 70-72 | 700-729 |
| B+ 3.33 | 87-89 | 870-899 | D+ 1.33 | 67-69 | 670-699 |
| B 3.0 | 83-86 | 830-869 | D 1.0 | 63-66 | 630-669 |
| B- 2.67 | 80-82 | 800-829 | D- 0.67 | 60-62 | 600-629 |
| C+ 2.33 | 77-79 | 770-799 | E 0.00 | 0-59 | 0-599 |

You must pass this course with a “C” or better to satisfy the CLAS requirement for Composition (C) and to receive the 6,000-word University Writing Requirement credit (E6). You must turn in all papers totaling a minimum of 6,000 words to receive credit for writing 6,000 words.

NOTE: a grade of “C-” will not confer credit for the University Writing Requirement or the CLAS Composition (C) requirement.

General Education

This course can satisfy the General Education requirement for Composition or Humanities. For more information, see:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/advising/info/general.education.requirements.aspx>

This course can provide 6000 words toward fulfillment of the UF requirement for writing. For more information, see:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/advising/info/writing.and.math.requirements.aspx>

Revision of an Assignment

During the course of the semester, you may rewrite any one individual assignment of your choosing (your new grade will replace the previous one). In addition to the revised project, you must also write a one-page memo addressed to the instructor in which you detail what, how, and why you’ve revised. Revised work is due two weeks from the day the assignment is first returned to the class and **students are responsible for knowing the deadline.**

Progress Conferences

Students are required to schedule two conferences during the semester (worth 50 points each), either during scheduled office hours or by appointment, to discuss individual progress in the course. The first meeting should be scheduled before October 10th and the second before November 25th. Be aware that scheduling this meeting is solely the student’s responsibility, and that if this is put off until the last minute and all slots are filled ahead of time, students will not earn and will not be able to make up the 50 points.

In addition, students are encouraged to use the instructor’s office hours when there are questions about progress in the course, work underway, or any other course-related concerns. If there is a conflict with the posted office hours, please contact the instructor to schedule a better time. Having conferences on assignments is

frequently the best way to improve the quality of final drafts. There is a direct correlation between your effort and your grade, so you will get out what you put in. The [*Writing Studio*](#) also offers one-on-one assistance on writing projects and is available to students of all levels.

Attendance and Participation

The full UF Attendance Policy can be located at:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>

The university recognizes the right of the individual professor to make attendance mandatory. After due warning, professors can prohibit further attendance and subsequently assign a failing grade for excessive absences.

Please carefully read and take note of the specifics of this policy. Due to the nature of the Tuesday/ Thursday schedule, the calculation of absences is more complex.

Unlike some of your classes, this course is skills-based. In other words, practice makes all the difference to writing; the more you write, the better you become. Consequently, the effects of this course are cumulative, and frequent absences will affect your progress and success dramatically. Instruction during class is often spontaneous, so it is impossible to offer a recap of what transpired. Writing is process and experience based. This is not a course where you can “catch up” on what happens during class. If you fall behind, you will stay behind.

Attendance is required. The only exemptions to this policy are those absences involving university-sponsored events, such as athletics and band, military duty, court-mandated responsibilities, and religious holidays. It is required and the responsibility of the student to notify the instructor of excused absences a reasonable time in advance of the expected absence. Make-up work will only be accepted due to university-approved excused absences. A valid, signed doctor’s note, with the reason illness or injury prevented you from attending class, may also be submitted, and will be accepted at the discretion of the instructor. Students are permitted to miss six 50-minute blocks.

Because Tuesdays are double-blocks, they will be counted as two absences.

Portfolios will not be accepted for any student who has 6 or more absences. Since this is a participatory workshop class centered on active learning, any lesser number of absences, excused or unexcused will affect your grade. Repeated tardiness will also hurt your participation grade. Attendance is taken at the beginning of class. If you arrive more than 5 minutes after class starts, you will be counted as absent.

Participation is a crucial part of the class and your grade.

Additional Policies

Academic Honesty

As a University of Florida student, your performance is governed by the UF Student Honor Code, (<http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/students.html>). The Honor Code requires Florida students to neither give nor receive unauthorized aid in completing all assignments. Violations include cheating, plagiarism, bribery, and misrepresentation, all defined in detail at the above site.

☑ All students must abide by the Student Honor Code. For more information about academic honesty, including definitions of plagiarism and unauthorized collaboration, see: <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/honorcodes/honorcode.php>

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is a serious violation of the Student Honor Code. The Honor Code prohibits and defines plagiarism as follows:

Plagiarism. A student shall not represent as the student's own work all or any portion of the work of another. Plagiarism includes but is not limited to:

1. Quoting oral or written materials including but not limited to those found on the internet, whether published or unpublished, without proper attribution.
2. Submitting a document or assignment that in whole or in part is identical or substantially identical to a document or assignment not authored by the student.

(University of Florida, Student Honor Code, 8 July 2011)

University of Florida students are responsible for reading, understanding, and abiding by the entire Student Honor Code. The University Writing Program takes plagiarism very seriously, and treats instances of plagiarism as dishonesty and as a failure to comply with the scholarly requirements of this course. You commit plagiarism when you present the ideas or words of someone else as your own.

Important tip: There should never be a time when you copy and paste something from the Internet and don't provide the exact location and citation information for the source.

If a student plagiarizes all or any part of any assignment, he or she will be awarded a failing grade on the assignment. Additionally, University policy suggests that, as a MINIMUM, instructors should impose a course grade penalty and report any incident of academic dishonesty to the Office of the Dean of Students. Each student's work may be tested for its originality against a wide variety of databases by anti-plagiarism sites to which the University subscribes, and negative reports from such sites may constitute PROOF of plagiarism. Other forms of academic dishonesty will also result in a failing grade on the assignment as a minimum penalty. Students could also be assigned a failing grade with no option to withdraw, and repeat offenders could face expulsion. Examples of plagiarism include cheating on a quiz or citing phony sources or quotations to include in your assignments.

General Education Learning Outcomes

Students must pass this course with a "C" or better to satisfy the CLAS requirement for Composition (C). Earning General Education Composition credit, students will

- Demonstrate forms of effective writing (focusing on analyses, arguments, and proposals)

- Learn different writing styles, approaches, and formats and successfully adapt writing to different audiences, purposes, and contexts; effectively revise and edit their own writing and the writing of others
- Organize complex arguments in writing, using thesis statements, claims, and evidence
- Employ logic in arguments and analyze their own writing and the writing of others for errors in logic
- Write clearly and concisely consistent with the conventions of standard written English
- Use thesis sentences, claims, evidence, and logic in arguments

Course grades now have two components, a letter grade and credit for the University Writing Requirement. The University Writing Requirement (WR) ensures students both maintain their fluency in writing and use writing as a tool to facilitate learning. You must pass this course with a “C” or better to receive the 6,000-word University Writing Requirement credit (E6). You must turn in all papers totaling 6,000 words to receive credit for writing 6,000 words.

PLEASE NOTE: a grade of “C-” will not confer credit for the University Writing Requirement or the CLAS Composition (C) requirement.

The instructor will evaluate and provide feedback on the student's written assignments with respect to content, organization and coherence, argument and support, style, clarity, grammar, punctuation, and mechanics. Conferring credit for the University Writing Requirement, this course requires that papers conform to the following assessment rubric. More specific rubrics and guidelines applicable to individual assignments may be delivered during the course of the semester.

Assessment Rubric

| | SATISFACTORY (Y) | UNSATISFACTORY (N) |
|----------------------------|---|---|
| CONTENT | Papers exhibit evidence of ideas that respond to the topic with complexity, critically evaluating and synthesizing sources, and provide an adequate discussion with basic understanding of sources. | Papers either include a central idea(s) that is unclear or off- topic or provide only minimal or inadequate discussion of ideas. Papers may also lack sufficient or appropriate sources. |
| ORGANIZATION AND COHERENCE | Documents and paragraphs exhibit identifiable structure for topics, including a clear thesis statement and topic sentences. | Documents and paragraphs lack clearly identifiable organization, may lack any coherent sense of logic in associating and organizing ideas, and may also lack transitions and coherence to guide the reader. |

| | | |
|----------------------|--|--|
| ARGUMENT AND SUPPORT | Documents use persuasive and confident presentation of ideas, strongly supported with evidence. At the weak end of the satisfactory range, documents may provide only generalized discussion of ideas or may provide adequate discussion but rely on weak support for arguments. | Documents make only weak generalizations, providing little or no support, as in summaries or narratives that fail to provide critical analysis. |
| STYLE | Documents use a writing style with word choice appropriate to the context, genre, and discipline. Sentences should display complexity and logical structure. | Documents rely on word usage that is inappropriate for the context, genre, or discipline. Sentences may be overly long or short with awkward construction. Documents may also use words incorrectly. |
| MECHANICS | Papers will feature correct or error-free presentation of ideas. At the weak end of the satisfactory range, papers may contain a few spelling, punctuation, or grammatical errors that remain unobtrusive and do not obscure the paper's argument or points. | Papers contain so many mechanical or grammatical errors that they impede the reader's understanding or severely undermine the writer's credibility. |

Classroom Disruptions

Much of this class is discussion-based, so it is vital that we always respect each other's views. Students are required to silence ALL electronic devices before the beginning of each class period. Ringing phones and text messaging is a disruption of the class, which may result in your being asked to leave the classroom and being counted absent. If you have a personal emergency and must keep your phone on one day, please discuss it with the instructor before class. A zero will automatically be given for your participation grade for having your phone out during class.

Technology Use

Technology is allowed on a case-by-case basis. Students may use laptops, e-readers, and tablets to access readings during class time or to complete in-class writing, but students should avoid that Mephistophelian temptation to check e-mail, social media, or other non-class related materials during class. This course only asks for your undivided focus for 150 out of 1080 minutes of your week which is literally

less than 1.5% of your time so please be respectful and courteous of this short amount of time we spend together.

Due Dates, Make-up Policy, and In-Class Work Late Work

Students are responsible for submitting assignments by their due dates. **Papers are due at the beginning of class on the assigned date.** Late papers will NOT be accepted. Failure of technology is not an excuse. If illness or injury prevents a student from turning in a paper on time, the student should consult with the instructor to turn in the work as soon as is feasible given the situation.

Online Faculty Evaluations

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course based on 10 criteria. These evaluations are conducted online at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>.

Students with Disabilities

The University of Florida complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the Instructor when requesting accommodation.

☑ The Disability Resource Center in the Dean of Students Office provides information and support regarding accommodations for students with disabilities. For more information, see: <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/>

☑ UF provides an educational and working environment that is free from sex discrimination and sexual harassment for its students, staff, and faculty. For more about UF policies regarding harassment, see: <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/sexual/>

Course Schedule

Magic as Mythic Fantasy

Drop Add

Aug 26- Syllabus Introduction- Read Fairy Tales

Aug 28- Syllabus rehash/ Using UF Resources HW: Read (4-5) ***Grimms Fairy Tales*** and ***Defense of Fairy Tales***

Sep 2- Watch clips from Brothers Grimm, discuss fairy tale tropes “Defense of Fairy Tales”

Sep 4 Introduce Assignment 1. Freewriting narrative HW: Pick which image to use from ***The Mysteries of Harris Burdick*** and Read Goethe’s ***Faust***

Sep 9 Discuss Goethe's *Faust* and watch clips from Little Mermaid, Shrek Forever After, Pirates of the Caribbean: At World's End, Ghost Rider HW: Find another example not discussed in class of modern Faustian magical story and work on first assignment

Sep 11 Students present Faustian examples HW: Read Shakespeare's *The Tempest* and work on first assignment

Sep 16 Discuss *The Tempest* and Watch clips Pocahontas HW: Read "***Durch Wunderkraft erschienen': Affinities between Goethe's Faust and Shakespeare's The Tempest***" and continue work on first assignment

Sep 18 Discuss Pocahontas as PC version of *The Tempest*, Relationships between *Faust* and *Tempest* HW: Finish First Assignment and Read *The Story of King Arthur and His Knights*

Sep 23 Finish discussion, **First Assignment Due** – Read *The Chronicles of Harris Burdick* or student volunteers Read Goethe's *The Sorcerer's Apprentice* in class HW: Watch Fantasia (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mHTnJNGvQcA>), Read *Merlin versus Faust* selected essays (if available)

Sep 25 Discuss Merlin versus Faust and Watch clips from Sorcerer's Apprentice HW: Read *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*

Sep 30 Discuss magic fantasy popularity, HP craze, what it launched HW: Read critical essays on HP sensation <http://news.google.com/newspapers?id=9-IWAAAAIABAJ&sjid=XewDAAAAIABAJ&pg=4726%2C5478687> and "***Testing the Tastemakers***"

Oct 2 Discuss Fantasy Craze Introduce 2nd Assignment HW: Read *Discoverie of Witchcraft* Pick a Magic Trick to Perform Oct 23 and start practicing

Magic As Illusion

Oct 7 Discuss magic tricks, illusion, David Copperfield, Harry Houdini HW: Pick topic (2 works) for 2nd Assignment and write a one sentence thesis.

Oct 9 Penn & Teller In-class Writing Exercise HW: Read *Wizard of Oz* and work on 2nd assignment

October 10th- First Progress Conference Due

Oct 14 Go to Baldwin to look at adaptations of the *Wizard of Oz* HW: Write outline for 2nd Assignment and Watch Georges Melies Cinemagician "A Trip to the Moon" <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BNLZntSdyKE>

Oct 16 Discuss Wizard of Oz- layers of magic as fantasy and illusion HW: Watch the Illusionist (DVD at the Library) and the Prestige Read: *Doing It With Mirrors*

Oct 21 Discuss cultural context that both of these movies emerged in 2006 Now You See It/Me HW: Finalize magic trick to show the class and continue working on 2nd assignment

Oct 23 Magic Trick Demonstrations w/ words written in puzzle HW: Read ***Straight Magic: Houdini and the Art of Illusion***

Oct 28 Catch-up Day Discuss Houdini, Ricky Jay, “Deceptive Practice”, Magic in plays, literature, movies, comics (Pick topics from a hat) HW: Finish 2nd Assignment

Oct 30 **2nd Assignment due** Talk about Presentations HW: Read Salem Witch Trials Prepare short presentation on chosen magic (Native American, Hindu, African, Hoodoo, etc.)

Magic as Paranormal

Nov 4 Presentation on Paranormal Magic HW: Get online (or in-person) Tarot reading, write about your experience as blog post on Sakai, due Nov 13.

Nov 6 Out for Conference HW: Start preparing your proposal for your final Paper

Nov 11-Holiday (Veterans Day)

Nov 13 Submit Proposal, Watch Doctor Who Shakespeare episode: The Power of Words HW: Read excerpts from ***Anthropology of Magic, Philosophy of Enchantment***

Nov 18 – Discuss *Anthropology of Magic, Philosophy of Enchantment* HW: Read ***Cognitive Theory of Magic***

Nov 20 – Discuss *Cognitive Theory of Magic* HW: Work on Final Assignment Outline

Nov 25 Watch Gravity Falls, discuss cultural heritage (Bat boy, cryptography, etc.) HW: Work on Final Assignment

Nov 25- Second Progress Conference Due

Dec 2: Workday

Dec 4: Peer Review Final Assignment

Dec 9- **3rd Assignment Due** Last Day of Class- 2 minute Thesis

Dec 22 Grades Finalized

* For example, a chemistry major might look into the history of alchemy and explain the process of turning lead into gold. An education major might write a lesson plan on magic in literature, history, etc. A public relations major might write a press release and PR plan for an upcoming TV series, movie, or book. A psychology major might write a case study on illusion vs. delusion. A biology major could look into biological processes that have been mistaken for magic, “Egyptians urinating on grain for pregnancy test.” A music major could write a composition inspired by

magic. A Food and Resource Economics major might look into magical stories like feeding the 5000 with 5 loaves of bread and 2 fish.