



## GMST121: GERMAN FAIRY TALES & POPULAR CULTURE (ENGLISH)

This course examines selected folk and fairy tales from the German-speaking tradition, primarily those collected by the Brothers Grimm, and their adaptation in popular culture. We will locate the texts in the 18th- and 19th-century cultural contexts of their origins and then follow how they have evolved into perennial favourites internationally across various media, including film, video games, board games, and comics. Students will thus explore how fairy tales have changed over the centuries to meet new political, cultural, and social demands while adopting innovative formal and narrative strategies with the emergence of new technologies.


Course readings will be supplemented by short introductory video lectures on a variety of disciplinary approaches to fairy tales, such as feminist and critical race studies perspectives as well as media studies theory.

In addition to weekly course readings, online class discussion, group work, and short Learning Journal Entries, students will complete a Midterm Assignment (1000 words) that examines a contemporary fairy tale adaptation, a creative Group Project fracturing a classic Grimms' fairy tale, and a Research-based

Revision of the Midterm Assignment as student's Final Essay (2000 words).



**2023-2024 T1**

**GSMT 121-101**



**2023-2024 T2**

**GSMT 121-201**

## **LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

Upon successful completion of this course (i.e., with active attendance and participation, completion of reading and writing assignments, and exams), students will be individually and cooperatively able to:

- (1) define** important concepts (e.g., folk and fairy tales) and **identify** historical and cultural contexts surrounding their emergence and development;
- (2) recognize** aspects of gender, sexuality, race, social standing, and religion in the periods and cultural products discussed;
- (3) analyze** adaptations of tales and **compare** their content and cultural contexts with those of the “originals”;
- (4) respond** concisely to thematic questions in clear and concise form.

## **LEARNING MATERIALS**

All of our course readings will be available for purchase in the UBC Bookstore or be available for purchase as books or eBooks via Amazon. **All readings will also be provided in PDF form on our Canvas site.**

## **Reading & Viewing Material**

1. *Grimms' Tales for Young and Old: The Complete Stories*. Trans. Ralph

Manheim. London: Victor Gollancz, Ltd., 1978 (all Grimms' tales are taken from this source).

2. Unless otherwise stated, films will be required to be viewed outside of class. They are available online through UBC's Kanopy streaming video service for free or available for purchase through Google Play, Apple TV, or Amazon. Disney films are available through a subscription to Disney's streaming service.

**I have purchased a Disney Plus subscription for our class.**

3. Digital games will be available online for free or for purchase on various platforms, including laptop and desktop computers as well as Android and iOS devices.

## **SCHEDULE OF TOPICS\***

Week 1: Course Introduction

Week 2: The Politics of Fairy Tales

Week 3: The Frog King

Weeks 4-5: Cinderella

Week 6: Snow White

Week 7: Midterm Break

Week 8: Snow White

Week 9: Sleeping Beauty

Week 10: Little Red Riding Hood

Week 11: Race in Folk and Fairy Tales: *The Princess and the Frog* (2009)

Week 12: Decolonizing Disney: *Frozen II* (2019)

Week 14: *Once Upon a Time: The Storytelling Card Game*

## **ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING**

Coursework will include weekly readings, online and in-class class participation, and low-stakes and high-stakes assignments. Every Friday, students will produce a 150-350-word **Learning Journal Entry** to be

submitted through Canvas for peer review. Students will then review one of their peer's assignments over the course of the weekend by the following Monday at midnight. At one point during the semester, each student will **present one folk or fairy tale from another region or culture** to the class via a recorded PowerPoint presentation. In lieu of a midterm exam, this course's take-home **Midterm Assignment** will ask students to perform a content analysis of a popular adaptation of Grimms' fairy tale. The creative **Fractured Fairy Tale Group Project** will then be a collaborative adaptation of a Grimms' fairy tale to the contemporary moment, reconceptualizing the "moral of the story" in light of important themes, issues, and problems facing society today. No artistic skills are required, but creativity will be encouraged. The semester will then conclude with the submission of a **Final Essay**, which will articulate and track students' learning journeys over the course of the semester.

### **Grading:**

Attendance (5%) & Class Participation (10%) = 15%

Learning Journal Entries (due Fridays) & Peer Review (due Mondays) = 25%

Midterm Assignment: Close Reading of a Contemporary Fairy Tale Adaptation = 20%

Fractured Fairy Tale Group Project = 15%

Final Essay: Fairy Tale Adaptation in Contemporary Culture = 25%

**Contract Grading:** This class uses a grading contract for **some** of its assignments. This means that if you complete the assignment, you are guaranteed full marks.

These assignments include the following:

Learning Journal Entries (due Fridays) & Peer Review (due Mondays) = 25%

Group Project (Fractured Fairy Tale) = 15%

Following the work of Jane Danielewicz and Peter Elbow (their article, "A

Unilateral Grading Contract to Improve Learning and Teaching,” is in the “Course Information” folder of the “Files” section of our Canvas site), I believe that contract grading allows me to give more honest evaluative feedback, improves learning and teaching, and is a fuller representation of social-justice-oriented pedagogy in the classroom. Not all students have identical educational backgrounds, nor do they possess the same experience in scholarly writing in the Humanities. This is especially true for CENS and GERM courses, which draw students from diverse academic disciplines and training.

A grading contract, therefore, allows students to produce their best work (on their own terms) and learn from their mistakes and inexperience while striving to meet their own individual learning goals. Furthermore, considering every student in our class is experiencing the COVID-19 global pandemic differently and with different degrees of stress, changes in employment status, caregiving responsibilities, emotional labour and/or anxiety, I want all my students to feel like this course is prepared to meet them where they are at. I believe a grading contract is an inclusive pedagogical practice that more effectively supports the diversity of student experience we are facing today. This may be particularly true with regard to students with disabilities, international students, first-generation students, students from diverse socio-economic backgrounds, and students self-isolating. To this end, every assignment in the grading contract will receive full credit or no credit – you either participate in in-class writing or you don’t, you either complete the assignment or you don’t, you either submit a Learning Journal Entry and peer review someone else’s or you don’t.

**That said, if you need to submit work late, please email me in advance. I am always glad to accommodate students in extenuating circumstances, and I firmly believe that students should take care of their own mental health and well-being above all else.**

Attendance and Participation: In accordance with UBC Policies and Regulations, students are expected to attend class regularly. Furthermore, in

accordance with UBC and CENES's Course Policies, **students may not miss more than 40% of the course's scheduled class sessions, regardless of whether their absences are avoidable or unavoidable.** In the event that a student misses 12 or more hours of class time, they may be considered unable to meet the "learning outcomes" of the course and may therefore be excluded from final examination. Those students who are unavoidably absent from in-person or online class or miss multiple class sessions and their associated in-class assignments must report their absence to me immediately or upon their return to participating in class in order to establish how they should proceed in catching up on missed material. Students may be granted a concession for their absence either by me or, in the case of an extended absence, by the Academic Advising Services of the Faculty of Arts.

Good participation will take the form of **regular contributions to class discussion either online or in-person** and the **completion of the in-class and take-home assignments.**

Since teaching and learning during the COVID-19 Global Pandemic look different than in the BeforeTimes, with students are either learning from home or being encouraged to learn from home the moment they become ill, I've altered my attendance and participation policy accordingly. **Attendance will account for 5% of your grade and participation is being graded through Canvas "in-class" writing assignments.** These assignments will take the form of short "in-class" essays that will engage the course material, readings, and lecture of a given class session. **During class, students will have 5-7 minutes of in-class time to write 150-350 words in response to a prompt.** These short essays offer students the opportunity to reflect on the course material prior to class or group discussion or consolidate their ideas at the conclusion of class or group discussion. Moreover, these short essays afford quieter students or students that don't feel comfortable participating in in-class discussion the opportunity to share their thoughts with me. This is especially important in larger classes, since it is difficult for every student to

participate in in-class discussion in a way that I can monitor. **These short “in-class” essays will not be graded for grammar, spelling, punctuation, or syntax; instead, they will be graded for completion. They thereby function as a testament to students’ engagement with the course material and proof of their participation in class as well as often form the foundation of in-class discussion and group work.**

However, since these “in-class” essays will be assigned through Canvas and posted immediately before class along with the PDF-version of my PowerPoint lecture slides (which also function as lecture notes), these short essays can also be completed at home and, if necessary, outside of class time. This ensures that students don’t feel compelled to come to class when sick just for participation marks since participation will be gauged through in-class writing that can be accomplished at home just as easily. **That said, students will still be expected to attend class regularly when able and multiple absences without accommodation may be reflected in their final grade. Regular attendance will account for 5% of their final grade.**

**All “in-class” essays will be due Sunday at midnight the week they were assigned. Extension requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis, so please email Biz if you become sick and require additional accommodation.**

**Readings:** Our texts will be available free purchase at the UBC Bookstore, online via our course’s Canvas Site, on reserve at the UBC Library, or for purchase through Amazon as books or eBooks. Course texts, excerpts, and supplementary readings will be posted the Friday in advance of class in the “Modules” section of our course’s Canvas site.

**Handing in Homework:** I will only accept homework posted online or submitted through our course’s Canvas site. Homework submitted by email or Google Drive will not be accepted unless previously discussed with me.

**Learning Journal Entries (15%, due Fridays) & Peer Reviews (10%, due Mondays):** Students will write ten short (250-350 words) Learning Journal Entries (10 @ 1.5%) in response to texts, films, and themes over the course of the semester. These assignments require students to demonstrate understanding and engagement with course material in greater depth than in-class discussion, **responding to one particular concept, idea, or question.** Excellent responses will consist of coherent and comprehensible short texts that engage with the topic at hand, incorporate references to readings when applicable, and synthesize class discussions with individual responses and interpretations. Refer to departmental grading standards: <https://cenec.ubc.ca/research-resources/students/cenes-course-policies/>.

Learning Journal Entries will be submitted on Fridays via Canvas, whenever that due date does not coincide with another major deadline. After submitting their Learning Journal Entry by midnight (11:59 PM PT), students will perform a Peer Review (10 @ 1%) of a peer's Learning Journal Entry over the weekend (due Monday at 11:59 pm PT), commenting in **100 to 150 words** on their fellow student's summation and analysis of the previous week's course material, while adding elements of their own observations. Peer Reviews assignments will be assigned automatically by Canvas at 9 am PT on Saturday. **Please see the assignment on our course's Canvas site for more information.**

**Midterm Assignment (20%):** Students will select one contemporary fairy tale adaptation from the list below and provide a **close reading and analysis** of its adaptation from a Grimms' classic fairy tale. The resulting short essay should be between 750 and 1000 words in length (3 to 4 pages, double-spaced, 12pt. font, Times New Roman) and include a close reading of the text, relevant information on the cultural, social, and/or political context of the Grimms' tale's adaptation, its function in the story, and its position in or against the other adaptations it emerged alongside or in conversation with. It should feature only minimal summary, since students can assume that the



reader is familiar with the text. **Please see the assignment on our course's Canvas site for more information.** *No citations and bibliography are required because students are encouraged to draw from their own interpretations of the adaptation in their writing.*

This short essay will become the foundation for students' **Final Essay**, which will take the form of a **Research-Based Revision** of their Midterm Assignment. This revised version of the Midterm Assignment will explore the role of adaptation in contemporary storytelling using Midterm Assignment's selected text as a case study.

**Select one of the following texts for analysis:**

Podcast: *The Two Princes*

Television Show: *Once Upon A Time...* (select one episode/character/Grimm fairy tale narrative)

Photography Project: "Fallen Princesses" by Dina Goldstein

Comic Book Series: *Fables Vol. 1: Legends in Exile* (2012)

Video Game: *The Path* (2009) or *Cinders* (2012)

**Fractured Fairy Tale Group Project (15%):** Students will collaborate in producing a short adaptation of a popular fairy tale to the contemporary moment as their Group Project, reconceptualizing the "moral of the story" in light of important themes, issues, and problems facing society today. By incorporating a political, social, economic, or cultural critique into the core of the fairy tale's adaption, students will modernize one particular fairy or folk tale, shifting its narrative agenda to address something relevant to students' lives right now. Some potential themes include social justice and human rights issues, such as BLM, Every Child Matters or forced migration, environmental issues, such as climate change or natural resource extraction, and political themes.

These projects can take any form, but they should (if applicable) be based on scholarly research (to ensure accuracy) and be modelled after the kinds of texts we are engaging within this class. Options include **a 750-to-1000-word literary text or play, a 4-to-6-page comic book, a 5-to-7-minute media text or series of media texts (such as a short film, podcast, vlog, or series of TikToks), a short digital game or interactive narrative, 5 to 7 atemporal media texts (such as GIFS, memes, an Instagram account & posts), or a larger creative project using traditional or mixed media formats.** Depending on student interest and willingness, some or all of these creative projects may be put on display in an Omeka virtual exhibition space.

*Note: For Final Projects that are to be published online through a social media platform, such as Instagram or TikTok, please provide screenshots of the account and each post in a PDF document just in case the account is disabled or I can't access it for the purposes of reviewing and grading the Final Projects.*

**Final Essay: Research-Based Revision on Fairy Tale Adaptation in Contemporary Culture (25%):** At the end of the semester, students will submit a research-based revision of their Midterm Assignment as their Final Essay on Storytelling in Contemporary Culture. These essays (8 pages, approx. 2000 Words, double-spaced, 12pt. font, Times New Roman) will examine the adaptation of fairy tales in contemporary society through their case study of fairy-tale fracturing in the Midterm Assignment.

Students will revise their Midterm essay and thesis statement in order to make an argument about fairy tale adaptation more broadly, using the content of their Midterm Assignment as a case study. For example, some students might explore the feminist fracturing of fairy tales through the fracturing of the Evil Queen in *Once Upon A Time*... Another student, on the other hand, might look at what the television medium brings to the rewriting of these classic tales

through an argument on medium-specific qualities (visual, commercial, etc.) and conventions (drama, serial nature of storytelling, etc.) of the television format. Students will thereby push their analysis of fairy tale fracturing to the next level, setting their analysis of the adaptation of the Grimms' classics in the context of the priorities, social norms, and social justice impulses of the contemporary moment as demonstrated in their case study of fairy-tale fracturing in the Midterm Assignment.

*The goal of this assignment is to produce critical thinking on the contemporary adaptation of popular fairy tales through theories of adaptation, original research on a primary source (Once Upon A Time...), and the incorporation of other secondary sources that explore what it means to adapt fairy tales in contemporary media.*

Please cite **five scholarly sources** in drafting your Final Essay. You may choose **up to three of the below sources**, but you'll need to identify two additional sources to support your argument.

#### Possible Secondary Sources

- *A Theory of Adaptation (2014)* by Linda Hutcheon
- *The Irresistible Fairy Tale: The Cultural and Social History of a Genre (2011)* by Jack Zipes
- “The Grimmness of Contemporary Fairy Tales: Exploring the Legacy of the Brothers Grimm in the Twenty-First Century” in *Grimm Legacies: the Magic Spell of the Grimms' Folk and Fairy Tales (2015)* by Jack Zipes
- “What is Adaptation?” and/or “Other versions’ of fairy tale and folklore” in *Adaptation and Appropriation (2011)* by Julie Sanders
- Introduction to *Channeling Wonder: Fairy Tales, Television, and Intermediality* by Pauline Greenhill and Jill Terry Rudy