CIEE Berlin, Germany

Course title: German Fairy Tales: Grimm Brothers to the Present
Course code: LITT 3003 CIEE
Programs offering course: Semester Global Internship, Open Campus Block
Open Campus Track: Language, Literature, and Culture
Language of instruction: English
U.S. semester credits: 3.00
Contact hours: 45.00
Term: Fall Block II 2020

Course Description

The course is an exploration of the nature of the German fairy tale as a literary genre and institution. We examine its historical origins in the late 18th century, its cultural significance for Germany, the formalistic elements and thematic features developed in the German fairy tale over time and its dissemination in literary and pop culture in our contemporary world.

Learning Objectives

By completing this course, students will:

- Examine the genre of the fairy tale in its broader cultural and historical context.
- Critically analyze works of fiction.
- Identify intercultural connections by examining German fairy tales as world literature.
- Produce academic texts through essays on literary and historical topics.
- Critique Berlin’s role as a center of literary production in the genre of fairy tales.

Course Prerequisites

A college-level course in literature is recommended.

Methods of Instruction

Lecture / discussion: guided close readings of the material (primary and secondary). Student response papers and essays. Site visits, where possible, to illustrate and inform the readings.

Assessment and Final Grade

1. Group Presentations 25%
2. Response Papers 30%
2. Participation 20%
3. Final Research Paper 25%
TOTAL 100%

Course Requirements

Group Presentations

As part of your participation grade, you will work in peer groups during several class sessions in order to prepare class discussions, work through assigned readings, prepare the weekly assignments, and assist one another in the paper-writing process. You will work in groups of 4 or 5. Group presentations will be prepared and presented during the final week of the course.

Response Papers

Students will complete weekly response papers. These papers are approximately 450 words (double-spaced).
are asked to select one assigned reading, briefly(!) summarize it and then explain what you either liked or disliked about the reading (or both). In other words, tell me why you are responding to that particular reading.

**Final Research Paper**

Students will engage in a primary theme of the course and select readings in order to advance a critical reading/analysis. This essay should be approximately 1800-2000 words, incorporate secondary literature, and follow the style guidelines of either the Modern Language Association or the Chicago Manual of Style. Any acts of plagiarism, intentional or otherwise, will result in a grade of zero for that assignment and may lead to expulsion from the program.

Incompletes: all incomplete work will receive no credit and cannot be made up. Students with verified medical or other absences may have opportunities to make up missing work according to CIEE policies.

**Participation**

Participation is defined as meaningful contribution in the digital classroom, using the resources and materials presented to students as part of the course. Meaningful contribution requires students to prepare in advance of each recorded session and regularly engage with the resources, discussions, reflective assignments, and all other online learning activities. Students are required to demonstrate engagement with course materials, for example, through insightful, constructive comments and by using subject-appropriate terminology in: online discussion boards, peer-to-peer feedback (after viewing the presentations of others), interaction with guest speakers, where available, and submissions related to other outside-of-class activities. Students should ensure that submitted commentary balances opinions, general impressions, and specific and thoughtful criticisms or contributions. Grades are based on the content, depth, and quality of the aforementioned types of meaningful contributions as measured per the Participation grading rubric in Canvas.

Students are also expected to use the Canvas inbox for communicating any clarifying questions they may want to ask about assessments or other course requirements.

**Technology Requirements**

Participation requires access to a computer with microphone (a headset and microphone are preferred over built-in sound devices) and webcam; a stable and strong internet connection; and a quiet and well-lit environment.

**Attendance**

**Expectations:** In an asynchronous online learning format, attendance takes the form of active student engagement:

- in instructional activities, course content, course tools
- with the course instructor, other students, and
- by timely completion of all assessments.

“Attendance” is more than just logging into the course on Canvas. Students must establish a record of participation in academically related activities in order to comply with this requirement.

Academically related activities include, but are not limited to:

- submitting an academic assignment;
- taking an exam or quiz;
- attending a study group that is assigned by the instructor;
- participating in an online discussion about academic matters, designed by the instructor; or
- initiating contact in Canvas with the instructor to ask a question about the academic subject studied in the course.

Academically related activities do NOT include activities where a student may be present, but not academically engaged, such as:

- logging into an online class without active participation
First Week of Class: Online courses officially commence on the first day of the term. Students must demonstrate engagement in class by no later than day 5 of the term, or risk being administratively dropped from the course with no opportunity to re-enroll. Students administratively dropped from the course for failure to engage will be considered withdrawn from the program and subject to CIEE financial withdrawal policies and fees.

Duration of Course: Continued, regular class engagement is required throughout the scheduled duration of the course, and disengagement will result in a lower participation grade for any affected CIEE course. Due to the intensive schedules for completing courses online, consistent failure to engage in the course on a weekly basis (defined as failing to engage for two or more weeks of online learning) will result in a formal written warning from the CIEE Center Director.

CIEE instructors / staff will monitor student engagement on a weekly basis.

The weekly schedule below outlines due dates for asynchronous learning activities for this course.

N.B. Please note the class schedule is subject to change if opportunities arise to enhance the curriculum.

Weekly Schedule

Week 1
Class: 1.1 The Brothers Grimm in context [Origins]

The Grimms are well known internationally for their collections of fairy tales, but they were more than mere curators of children’s literature. This week is dedicated to the historical and cultural concept of their collection: the Romantic period’s sensibilities they shared with their peers, nascent German nationalism, the Napoleonic Wars, and the rise of Germanistik as an academic discipline.

1. Introductions: What is a fairy tale? [Define a fairy tale.] Name salient features and characteristics of the fairy tale. Who tells fairy tales? Who are they addressed to? [What are the pragmatics of the fairy tale?]
2. Group/Peer work: Tell each other your favorite fairy tales ... the role of the raconteur
3. Who were the Grimms and what was their project?

The Grimms’ Prefaces of 1812/15 and 1819


Class: 1.2 Site Excursion 1: The Brothers Grimm in Berlin

(walking tour, Berlin Mitte, Tiergarten)

Week 2
Class: 2.1 The structure of a fairy tale [Formalizations]

Using canonical fairy tales, we will explore the structure and formal composition of the fairy tale text.

1. Peer work: worksheet on formal elements of the fairy tales *HWM1*
2. Formal elements, frame

Reading:

Propp (excerpt), Luthi (excerpt), Menninghaus (optional) (excerpt), Goethe

Response paper 1 due [Brief summary, i.e. what are the main points of the story/essay, your reaction to readings from 1:1]
More on formalism, also concerning its limitations

1. Recap, formal elements
2. Peer work: Propp vs. Luthi ... Grimm/Goethe
3. Limits of formalism, Menninghaus

Reading:
The Frog-King, Mother Holle, The Seven Ravens, The Juniper Tree, King Thrushbeard, Tieck, Hoffmann, Freud (excerpt), C.G. Jung

Class: 2.3 Site Visit: Firlefanz Puppet Theater, Berlin Mitte

Week 3
Class: 3.1 Fairy tales on the couch [Psychoanalysis]

One of the reasons why the stories of the Brothers Grimm and other fairy tales have survived in culture for so many centuries is that they pack so much meaning into apparently simple stories. They are teaching tools for children, but they are also loaded with symbolic meaning for young and old alike. This week we will focus on the rich field of psychological interpretations of fairy tales, particularly as they pertain to family relationships.

1. Psychology and Literature (Freud, Jung)
2. Peer group: psychoanalyze your favorite fairy tale
3. Strengths / problems of psychological interpretation

Reading:
Bettelheim, Hansel and Gretel

Response paper 2 due (readings from class 2:2)

Class: 3.2 More on the culturation process

1. Recap previously assigned reading
2. Peer work, re-write the Hansel and Gretel story in today’s terms
3. The Fairy Tale and its audience

Reading:

Week 4
Class: 4.1 The Grimms go to Hollywood / Disneyfication [Commercialization]

Most Americans first encounter the works of the Brothers Grimm in their kinder, gentler American form. Beyond comparing how similar stories teach children differently in these two cultures, we will look at the ideological implications of Disney vs. the Grimms.

1) Peer work: Disney vs. Grimm, your preference?
2) Snow White

Reading:
Weimar Fairy Tales (Oskar Maria Graf, Bela Balzacs), Kurt Schwitters

Response paper 3 due (readings from class 3:2)

Class: 4.2 More on pedagogical impulses in the German fairytale

1. Peer work: assess the fairy tale as a pedagogical tool
2. Walter Benjamin

Reading:
Week 5
Class: 5.1 A fairy tale ending? Gender, sexuality, and autonomy

[Socio-historical perspectives/Means of production]

Fairy tales invariably imply that the peasant can become a prince or princess, or that love will arrive on a beautiful white horse. But what else do these tales tell us about our choices and possibilities? In particular, fairy tales often dictate specific limitations on autonomy in realms of sexuality, gender and class. We will examine some fairy tales for their various implications for the concept of free will.

1. Peer work
2. Focus on socio-historical differences

Reading:
Zipes Utopia; Zipes (Ch. 6, 2015).

Class: 5.2 Site Visit: Film Museum Potsdam/ Babelsberg, Viewing of Dornröschen

Response paper 4 due (from class 4:2)

Class: 5.3 More on socio-historical (class struggle) interpretations and gender trouble

1. Discuss readings from class 5:1
2. Peer work, analyze the film Dornröschens from a Zipian perspective

Reading:
J.R.R.Tolkien, The Hobbit (Ch. 5, "Riddles in the Dark"), "Fairy stories"; Gaiman, Fairy Tales in Pop Culture

Week 6
Class: 6.1 Fairy tales today [Globalization/Pop-Culture]

The fairy tale lives on today: to conclude our course, we will read or view some modern fairy tales from post-reunification Germany and discuss how or if the role of the fairy tale has changed since the Romantic period.

2. Peer work preparation: Digital Group Presentation

Response paper 5 due (from class 5:3)

Reading:
Preparation to Complete Final Research Paper

Class: 6.2 Conclusion

1. Review session / Research paper question and answer
2. Group presentations
3. Peer work: evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of this course

Final Research Paper due

Course Materials
Readings
Primary Sources:

**Secondary Sources:**


