

Topics in Literature: Imaginary Worlds

Paper #1

Readings

La Belle Dame Sans Merci (handout)
The Zebra Storyteller (handout)
Introduction (*Fantastic Worlds*)
Sources of the Fantastic (*Fantastic Worlds*)
Genesis (*Fantastic Worlds*)
Blackfoot Genesis (*Fantastic Worlds*)
The Eye of the Giant (*Fantastic Worlds*)
How I Brought Death Into the World
The Myth of Actaeon (*Fantastic Worlds*)
The Myth of Narcissus (*Fantastic Worlds*)
The Myth of Philomela (*Fantastic Worlds*)
Leaf By Niggle (*Fantastic Worlds*)
The Birthmark (*Fantastic Worlds*)

Optional: "On Fairy Stories" by J.R.R. Tolkien (online)

Directions: Develop your own specific topic based on either an expressive, objective, or persuasive approach to the readings. Your paper should engage several of the assigned readings in some depth. Research to supplement your own commentary is strictly optional, but if you do include researched material from a source other than our textbook, you are responsible for documenting it correctly using MLA style parenthetical documentation. Another option: you can work with texts not on the reading list as long as you include at least one text from the reading list.

Requirements: Three - five pages; typed; double-spaced.

Topics Due: Tuesday 2/8 or Wednesday 2/9

Workshop: Thursday 2/10 or Friday 2/11

Final Paper: Due Wednesday 2/16 or Tuesday 2/15.

Topic Approaches

These notes are meant to be suggestive, not exclusive.

EXPRESSIVE

Develop a paper that explores your own understanding of the relevance of several works on the reading list. Discuss your personal opinions, responses, and feelings about some of the broad themes you identify in the readings. Test the work's value by exploring how it relates to your own life experiences.

OBJECTIVE

Develop a paper that analyzes or interprets the meaning of one or more of the works on the reading list.

- Write a comparative analysis.
- Trace the development of a common theme through more than one work.
- Analyze one or more of the mythic stories to see how they illustrate Joseph Campbell's "four functions of myth."
- Present an interpretation of one or more of the works we studied.
- Write a critique: Establish and apply evaluative criteria to one or more of the works we studied.

PERSUASIVE

Identify the ambiguity in at least one of the works on the reading list and then argue for a particular interpretation. Acknowledge other interpretations but prove, by your close analysis of details in the text, that your interpretation is a strong one. Argue for a particular reading of one or more of the works we studied.

CREATIVE

Write a short story, a long poem, or 10 short poems about creation, imagination, fantasy, or beauty.