

Carleton University
Winter 2026 Preliminary Course Outline
Department of English

ENGL 2011A / CHST 2011A: Children's Literature
(Not just once) upon a time: Re-telling and Re-reading Fairy Tale Narratives

Prerequisites: Second-year standing or permission of the department
Preclusions: precludes additional credit for ENGL 2006 (no longer offered)

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***** This is a preliminary syllabus only—texts and assignments are subject to change.
A complete version will be available closer to the start of the term. *****

Course description: In this course we will explore the array of magical stories of wonder and enchantment that have come to be known as “fairy tales.” In examining how these stories have been told and re-told across time and across cultures, we will discover some surprising things about them: they were not always created primarily for children, they did not always originate in folk traditions of oral storytelling, and they do not always end “happily ever after”! In looking at how these tales have been taken up and transformed by generations of tellers, writers, and filmmakers and aimed at children and adults alike, we will learn about how they can be interpreted from psychological, sociohistorical, and feminist perspectives, as well as through the lenses of queer studies, disability studies, and critical race studies.

Learning Outcomes:

In this course, you are invited to:

- Become familiar with the history of the fairy tale as a genre, especially with regard to its shifting status as children's literature.
- Think deeply and critically about the how fairy-tale narratives continue to circulate in contemporary art and culture.
- Develop your skills in close textual analysis through tracing the differences among fairy-tale re-tellings and interpreting the meanings of those differences.
- Become familiar with the critical conversation about fairy tales and learn to interpret them through the lenses of various theoretical approaches.
- Develop your ability to share your ideas and questions about the stories you read through class discussion and through writing clear and concise prose.

Required Texts:

The Classic Fairy Tales, 2nd Norton Critical Edition, edited by Maria Tatar, 2017.

Other required readings will be accessible through the course reserve system on the library website (ARES).

Evaluation

- **Participation (includes attendance, engagement, and class contribution): 10%**
- **Short reflection paper: 10%**
- **In-class test: 25%**
- **Final project: 30%**
- **Final exam: 25%**