The Gallatin School of New York University: Fall 2012
First-UG 801 Transfer Student Research Seminar:
Myths and Fables in Popular Culture

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The Research Seminar focuses on developing writing and research skills needed in the academic environment. This includes learning to work with critical source material and the scholarly apparatus of footnotes, endnotes, and bibliographies. Good research requires an inquisitive mind, but the skillful researcher must also develop criteria for assessing a variety of resources and know how to evaluate critical writings. We will work collaboratively as a group to consider the relative value and usefulness of primary and secondary sources, formal and informal materials, books, articles, films, and internet sites. The move from writing to research and back to writing requires the integration of research material into our own work in ways that support and deepen our ideas but also allow our individual voices as writers to remain strong. The central writing project in this course is an in-depth research paper, and writing assignments will help prepare for that assignment and/or use skills developed in the process. The major research paper will be written in stages, and there will be incremental assignments that will help to build the paper and to clarify its components. Although the main focus is the 15-page research paper, you will actually be writing a great deal. Other assignments will include, but not be limited to informal commentaries and responses. You will also be required to keep a writer’s ideas journal during the first six weeks of class. This may be in any format that works best for you and helps you keep track of your working ideas (and flashes of inspiration).

Officially the course is “Myths and Fables in Popular Culture,” but fairy tales are equally important to our investigation, although they are not listed in the course’s title. It is expected that the major research paper will grow out of our discussions and class readings and be an in-depth critical exploration related to some aspect of this broad topic. We are concerned here with an enormous area that includes fables, myths, legends, folktales, and fairy tales, including ancient tales, as well as those invented in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and the modern revisions in theater, films, graphic novels, computer games, and comics that continue the earlier traditions.

Much of classroom discussion will focus on the sources, themes, and cultural uses of myths, and fairy tales. Many of the stories we will read, discuss, and write about over the next three-and-a-half months have their roots in the ancient world where they were preserved through oral story telling long before cultures had written languages sophisticated enough to capture the versatility of the human imagination. However, some of our stories are the work of professional writers. Story telling for the market place continues today when the screen replaces the flickering hearth as the place where stories are told. Part of the fascination of this material is watching the reappearance of themes and memes time and time again. It is worth noting that much of the exploration of fairy tales and myths has been done by psychologists and anthropologists. This seminar’s title includes “...in Popular Culture,” but the truth is that fables, myths, and fairy tales have always been a part of “popular” culture because, above all, these stories were told then – and now -- as a means of entertainment, but also as a place to speak about fundamental human concerns. Now, we will continue that discourse in our own voices.
The Gallatin School of New York University: Fall Semester 2012
First-UG801 Research Student Research Seminar:
Myths and Fables in Popular Culture

Required Texts (all are paperback editions and should be at the NYU bookstore or available to order on line)

A Short History of Myth, Karen Armstrong (Canongate)
Metamorphoses, Ovid, trans. Rolf Humphries (University of Indiana Press)
Metamorphoses, (a play) Mary Zimmerman
Aesop’s Fables, ed. Laura Gibbs (Oxford University Press)
The Golden Ass, Apuleius (any translation)
The Complete Fairy Tales: Charles Perrault, ed. Christopher Betts (Oxford World Classics)
Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm: Selected Tales, trans. & ed. Joyce Crick (Oxford World Classics)
The Bloody Chamber, Angela Carter (Penguin)
Wonder Tales: Six French Stories of Enchantment, ed. Marina Warner
Beginning Theory, Peter Barry (University of Manchester Press)

Recommended
Works of Hesiod: Theogany, Hesiod (any translation, print or electronic version)
The Fables of Jean la Fontaine (any translation, print or electronic version)

Required Films: Pan’s Labyrinth & Cocteau’s Beauty and the Beast (la Belle et la Bete)

Additional Reading assignments will be available on line or at the library

Journal: During the first six weeks of classes keep a journal in which you write your own comments on the readings. This might include summaries of points of interest or importance, links and connections, notes on possible use in the research paper. The goal is to give you material you can draw upon later in your writing. Journals will be reviewed during the first Writers Workshop class session.

NOTE THAT THE READING/WRITING IS DUE ON THE DATE GIVEN BELOW

Sept. 5 An Introduction – myths, fables, the social history of fairy tales
Starting with the Greek god
In Class Research Discussion Topic: reading books and other materials on-line. Research through your NYU Home Page: full books as electronic texts, finding 3 major search engines MLA Bibliography, JSTOR and Proquest.

Sept. 10 Read: Hesiod, Theogany (creation of the world and birth of Greek gods)
An electronic copy can be found on the NYU library site.
Write: Complete the chart on the handout as you read. Bring your completed charts to class.
In Class Research Discussion Topic: the archetype / early sources

Sept. 12 Armstrong, A Short History of Myth, pages 1-11; 79-118
Writing Due: The Two-Hour Timed Research Report on any related topic – See Assignment Guidelines, page 6, for details
In Class Research Discussion Topic: Research and Time Management.

Sept. 17
Read: Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* Book I &?? Campbell’s Hero’s Journey
*library)* &
In Class Research Discussion Topic: Checking the writer’s source &
creating an annotated bibliography of one’s own.

Sept. 19
WRITERS WORKSHOP WITH WORKING DRAFT
Write: A first draft of Formal Paper #1 See Assignment Guidelines, page 6, for details.
BRING YOUR JOURNALS TO CLASS AS OCULAR PROOF

Sept. 24
WRITING DUE: FORMAL PAPER #1

Sept. 26
Read: Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*: Book II: “Phaeton” and “The Raven.”
Book III: Actaeon, Semele, Tiresias, Narcissus & Echo; Book V: Ceres & Perserpinia, Book VI: Arachne.
Write: Translation Comparison Chart - (see Assignment Guidelines)
In Class Research Discussion Topic: dealing with translations – Who can you trust?

Oct. 1
Read: Aesop’s Animal Fables; Gibb’s Introduction and at least two
dozen fables. Try to combine the well known fables with the obscure.
Write: Take one of Aesop’s Fables and rewrite the moral to give it a 21st-
century type of ending or moral. This is not an adaptation of the entire
fable; you are only changing the moral
Write: Prepare a chart showing the title of each fable, the major
character, and key words identifying the moral. Bring to class as this
will be part of our discussion material.
In Class Research Discussion Topic: multiple editions – authority or art?

Oct. 3
French Fables: Medieval & 17th Century
Read selections of Aesop-style fables by Marie de France (12th century)
and Jean la Fontaine (17th century) (selected fables on reserve in library)
In Class Research Discussion Topic: fables/tales variations & versions

Oct. 8
Moving From Fable to Tale: The Wolf
Read: 1. versions of Little Red Riding Hood in your copies of Perrault
and Grimm, 2. versions by Thurber and Dahl (library); 3. Betterheim
“Little Red Riding Hood” (library), 4. Angela Carter’s “The Werewolf,”
“The Company of Wolves,” and “Wolf Alice” in *The Bloody Chamber.*

Oct. 10
Write: 1. on a chart list five of the key elements in the plot of LRRH
(things that must be there as definitive of the tale). 2. compare how they
are handled in each version, including Carter.
Note that film clips to be shown in class from *The Company of Wolves.*
In Class Research Topic: tracking differences – how charts help

Oct. 15
No Class NYU Fall Break
Oct. 17  Bridging Myths and Fairy Tales
Read: In *The Golden Ass* by Apuleius - Cupid & Psyche (which is found in the chapters called “the Old Woman’s Tale”)
Write – List of similarities noted between Cupid and Psyche and later fairy tales (the ones we all know)
*In Class Research Discussion Topic:* adaptations and appropriations similarities to fairy tale characters, plots or incidents & Propp’s classification of plot “functions” in folk and fairy tales. (handout)

Oct. 22  Birth of the Fairy Tale
*In Class Research Discussion Topic Research Topic:* history of fairy tales and classifications of tales and tale types
*Write: Research Paper #2 Topic Due:* a one-page abstract describing the topic you are considering for your major research paper

Oct. 24  Further Beauty and the Beast & Bluebeard
*Write:* a brief, 2-3 page, “Articulated Thoughts Response” to any aspect of this reading assignment. See Assignment Guidelines for details.  
*In Class Research Discussion Topic Research Topic:* using a key article as basis for further research

Oct. 29  Transformation Tales
Read: in Perrault “Donkey Skin,” “the Sleeping Beauty in the Woods,” “Cinderella”; in Grimm “Ashypet” (tale 16), “Briar Rose” (tale 37) “Coat o’ Skins” (tale 44). Also read. Marina Warner’s *From the Beast to the Blonde,* “Absent Mothers” and “Wicked Stepmothers” (library).
*Write:* a brief (2-3 page an “Articulated Thoughts Response” to any aspect of this reading assignment. See Assignment Guidelines for details)
*In Class Research Discussion Topic Research Topic:* developing the annotated bibliography

Oct. 31  *Write Research Paper Annotated Bibliography Due:* (minimum 8 Sources, with a mix required of books and articles. These are things you have consulted, but may or may not use. See Assignment Guidelines)
*Class Meets at Bobst Library: training session for on-line research*
Read: Barry on Psychoanalytical theory, Feminist theory and Post Modern theory.
*Write:* “Articulated Thoughts Response” and briefly identify one of the theoretical approaches discussed by Barry (either from those assigned or any of your choice) that could be useful to you in researching and writing for the topic of your research paper. Tell me why it would be useful for this topic.
Nov. 5  Class meets at Bobst for visit to Fales Collection of early print books (third floor).

Nov. 7  **WRITERS WORKSHOP & REPORTS ON WORK IN PROGRESS**  
Write: **Working Outline Due** – a 2 page- ‘sketch’ of the paper’s plan. Note this not necessarily a formal outline (unless that works for you). It is a kind of road map that shows where the paper will start and the stages it will travel through to reach its conclusion.

Nov. 12  **WRITERS WORKSHOP -- THE WORK IN PROGRESS**  
Write: a copy of the work in progress is due -- at least 6 pages written, but note that these can be sections to be used at different parts of the paper.

Nov. 14  The Fairy Tale Films. Guillermo del Toro’s film *Pan’s Labrynth* & Cocteau’s *Beauty and the Beast*. Other recent films TBA. Research techniques for films

Nov. 19  **RESEARCH PAPER IS DUE – NO EXCPTIONS**

Nov. 21  No Class, individual conferences

Nov. 26  Back to Ovid – Retold and Adapted  
**Read:** Bettelheim, “Fairy Tale vs Myth” (library); Ovid, Book VII all of the Medea stories; Book VIII Daedalus, Daedlus and Icarus; Book IV, Pyramus and Thisbe, Book X, Orpheus and Eurydice.

Nov. 28  Contemporary Retellings of Greek Myths  
Bring to Class: an image connected to one of the myths  
Write: “Articulated Thoughts Response” on how you see this myth subject being treated.

Dec. 3  Performing Adaptations  
**Read/Performing:** Mary Zimmerman’s Metamorphoses  
**Read** Julie Sanders, pages from *Adaptation and Appropriation* (library)

Dec. 5  Student Presentations: each student is asked to bring in, show and discuss a film clip from any film or tv show of your choice. The clip is to be the moment when the ‘hero’ receives “the call to action.” Time limit – 10 minutes maximum for showing and discussion  
Write: Prepare a chart of everything that happens during the first 2 minutes of your film clip. See Assignment Guidelines.

Dec. 10  Presentations, continue  
**WRITERS WORKSHOP: DISCUSSION OF THE MYTH PROJECT**

Dec. 12  **THE ‘MYTH’ PAPER/PROJECT**  
Papers and projects will be presented, discussed & performed as appropriate

Dec. 17  **LAST DATE THAT THE MYTH PROJECT MAY BE HANDED IN.**
Note: Changes may be made to the syllabus by the instructor and additional handouts may be provided.

Grades are based on the following: Formal Paper #1 is 15% of grade; the Research Paper #2 is 40% of grade; Research/prep work for Paper #2 paper is 15% of grade; Formal Paper #3 is 15% of grade; Class participation, journal, other writing is 15% of grade.

Process: Spend two hours – no more and no less – researching any subject related to our seminar theme. It is better to be specific if possible.

Restriction: At least one hour of the two-hour research time must be spent in the library.

Goal: To gain an estimate of a) how much material is available on your choice of subject; b) how much time is may take to conduct certain types of research

Writing: Write up a report of your research “adventure.” Choose your own way of telling us about this mythic confrontation with the library stacks, how you went about your search, what worked, what was a challenge, what took the least – or the most time. In other words, this is about the process of research and not, necessarily what you learned about the actual subject. Please be very clear about this: I am not looking for a report on the subject, but want, instead, a report on your personal experience with the research process. Of course, you may want to include some of the information you found, but remember that is not the central point of your report.

Resources: While in the library it is expected that you will look at books in the appropriate section of the general collection, but also, if there is time, you will check current journals covering the topic (these are in the periodicals section). Of course, part of your research may be done on-line, either from home or in the library.

The ground floor of the library has a research section. This is often the best place to start. This is where you will find the research volumes that can often send you in the right direction. AND even more important, this is where you will find the Research Librarians who are almost always very, very helpful and who can often be an invaluable aid in getting started. The library also has printed copies of information on materials in various fields of study. These are also in the reference section.

Remember, the Research Librarian is your friend.
Formal Paper I: Assignment and Guidelines

Process:  
Step 1: Writers Workshop with working drafts.  
Bring 3 copies of something your group can read. 

Step 2: Hand In Finished Paper & Schedule Individual Conference 

Step 3: Individual Conferences Held to Review the Paper 

Step 4: Revised Papers Are Due One Week After Conference – No Exceptions

Goal: This 4-page paper is an exercise in incorporating your own ideas into a discussion that also uses source material.

- In other words, you will be doing what you normally do in a research paper, except – and this is a big exception – you are discussing your own thesis about some aspect of the material, instead of simply reporting on what others have said about it.
- You will be expected to have at least 5 sources in your research. Remember, sources are important as discussion springboards, for support, to bring in differing views, and for authoritative information. They can be agreed with by you, argued against, used to give weight to your argument or ideas. Use them, but don’t let them dominate. Don’t make your paper a patchwork of other people’s ideas. Be in a conversation with your sources.

Topic: A list of possible topics will evolve from our class discussions. The topic is very open. You may want to explore some of the myths, fables or fairy tales or dig deeper into one of the critical theories. There might be a book, film, or even television series that you want to examine in critical terms, for example the traditional structure of myth archetypes, such as the hero’s journey.

Even so, the biggest difficulty with this topic is that while it is very open, a four-page paper needs to be closely focused. Although you may choose any subject related to the course material for this paper, it would be useful to stay focused tales and myths rituals. It is also helpful to avoid large, sweeping issues. For instance you might discuss a single tale or a mythic character in terms of your idea of the material in terms of someone like mythographer Joseph Campbell and/or anthropologists James Frazer’s discussions The Golden Bough (not assigned in this class, but a highly influential early twentieth study of tribal myths and rituals, full of fascinating stories and examples).

You can take as your topic any story, film, video game, comic books, songs, cultural rituals – nearly anything that might connect to our material explore it in depth. You may find your paper topic in our class discussion topics and/or the reading assignments. As with all papers, you will need to establish a thesis, which is then explored and developed in the body of the paper. Your discussion might draw upon historical context, critical approaches (i.e., psychological, feminist, popular culture – see Peter Barry’s book), and/or a close reading of the text itself that considers the method of story telling, plot structure, as well as what is included and what is left out.

Sources: your research should include at least five academically reputable secondary sources. Wikpedia may be useful, but still does not count as a legitimate reference sources at this level of academic writing (though some of the articles it links to might be). There are excellent on-line research sources, but chose carefully.

Paper Details: Maximum 4 pages in length (approximately 1,200 words), plus footnotes or endnotes, illustrations, Works Consulted and Works Cited pages. Submit electronically.
Citation & Documentation: Follow MLA (Modern Language Association) guidelines for in-text citations, footnotes/endnotes, and the MLA bibliography style for the texts listed in works cited. The preferred font is Times New Roman, 12 pt. Double Space.

After you’ve chosen your topic, here is the next hard part: I want to hear your own voice strong and clear in this writing. The paper should be a mix of research and your own analysis. Don’t just tell me what your critical sources think about the material. Tell me what you think and want to say. The other writers are not only springboards, support, or voices to argue against, they are also an important part of your writing because as a writer you are now part of a dialogue with these writers and the ideas and theories they represent.
Formal Paper Two, the Research Paper: Assignment Schedule

March 5  Research Paper Topic Due: Write a one-page abstract describing the topic.

March 21  Research Paper Annotated Bibliography Due: (minimum 8 sources)
This is a list of books and articles that you have looked at to date. The annotation is a line or two that briefly identifies the topic of the book and its usefulness (or not) for the project.

April 2   Working Outline Due – a 2 page- ‘sketch’ of the paper’s plan

April 4   Copy of the Work in Progress is Due (at least 3 written pages, but these can be for different sections of the paper).

April 9   Research Paper is Due Hand In Paper & Schedule Individual Conference

April 11–23 Individual Conference Revised Papers Due One Week After Conference

Goal: To apply the research and writing skills from Paper 1 to a longer, more involved paper with a greater depth of research. You may work on a new topic or, with the instructor’s approval, expand on the first paper.

Topic: This paper may explore any topic related to our concentration on myths, fables and fairy tales. The subject must, however, offer enough academically suitable critical material to justify in-depth research. It may also include, but not be limited to other suitable information sources.

Technical Details: This is a 15 – 17 page paper, approximately, between 4,545 and 5,151 words, plus footnotes, illustrations, Works Cited and Works Consulted pages. (12 pt. Times Roman or Times New Roman font, double spaced). Include both a Works Consulted page – and a Works Cited page. Submit electronically.

As with the first paper, this is an exercise in incorporating your own ideas into a discussion that also uses primary and secondary source material. The main difference is that you are expected to research your subject in much more depth and to expand the research. The actual process varies according to the individual writer/researcher’s project, previous experience, and topic. It is useful to research around the topic and not limit yourself to one aspect. Look at the larger picture as well as the specific topic. This includes reading/viewing other works by the author/director or works on the same theme.

Keep in mind that you are discussing your own thesis about some aspect of the material, instead of simply reporting on what others have said about it. Approach the research as though you were writing a 30 page paper and actually let your early working drafts go longer than 17 pages. It is always better to write ‘long’ and then make your writing more precise and your paper shorter. If you feel you do not have enough material to write a 15 page paper, you probably have not done enough research.

You will be expected to have a mix of sources in your research, with an emphasis on academic publications. The books you bought for this class and the handouts are part of this research material. As before, remember, sources are important as discussion springboards and can be used to support your ideas, give differing views, and provide authoritative information. They can be agreed with, argued against, used to give weight to your argument or ideas. Use them, but don’t let them dominate. Don’t make your paper a patchwork of other people’s ideas.

Citation: Follow MLA guidelines for in-text citations, footnotes/endnotes, and the MLA bibliography style for the texts listed in works cited. I still think the MLA Guide to Research is
the most useful resource, but I will also accept MLA style as presented on the Perdue Owl MLA Format site, http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/

**Guidelines for Charts**

It is recommended that all charts follow the pattern of the chart handed out in the first class. However, if you have a different format for a chart that works well for you, use it. Charts can be created by going to Table, insert table, specify the number of columns and rows, and choose auto fit to contents.

**The Translation Chart:** You will be given four or five different translations of one page from Ovid’s story of Apollo and Daphne. Your assignment is to take prepare a chart comparing the translations. The chart needs one row for each translator’s name and four columns across, one for the translator’s name and one for each of the three quotations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Translator 1</th>
<th>Leaves form</th>
<th>Her hair flew free</th>
<th>Etc.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Translator 2</td>
<td>Leaves burst forth</td>
<td>The loosely flowing hair</td>
<td>Etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Translator 3</td>
<td>Spring leaves appear</td>
<td>The unbound tresses</td>
<td>Etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Red Riding Hood Comparison Chart:** You have read a number of versions of this tale, some traditional and some not. The assignment is to prepare a comparison chart that lets you see variations in key details of description, methods of story telling or plot points. The chart needs one row for each versions and four columns across, one of the version’s author and three for the examples.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author 1</th>
<th>She takes wine to grandma</th>
<th>She follows the path of a</th>
<th>Etc.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Author 2</td>
<td>She takes cakes to grandmother</td>
<td>She follows the path of b</td>
<td>Etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Author 3</td>
<td>She takes etc. to grandmama</td>
<td>The path is not mentioned</td>
<td>Etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Film Chart:** The assignment is to not everything that happens during the first two minutes of the film clip you are showing. This includes every single technical aspect of the film: the visuals, the sound, the edit choices, camera movement & types of shots. Think about the best way to organize this for your own reference. The simplest, though not necessarily the best, is to note each thing that happens and to find a way to keep track of the time involved. The following is only a possible suggestion.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Visuals</th>
<th>Sound</th>
<th>Camera</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Blank screen 1-20 seconds</td>
<td>A lullaby is hear in background, grows louder – 1 – 45 seconds</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A child’s face appears &amp; comes slowly into focus 20-50 seconds</td>
<td>Sound of heavy breathing 30-45 seconds</td>
<td>At 40 seconds camera pans from right to left</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Formal Paper 3: Assignment and Guidelines A Myth-Related Research Paper or Project

The Assignment: This assignment is called the ‘myths project’ because it is somewhat different from a standard paper assignment. You have a choice to either do a traditional research paper on one of the Greek myths or Cupid and Psyche, either exploring the original story, variations of the story, or any adaptations of it, or even its relevance in other fields.

Research Paper: This would follow the guidelines for Paper 2, but could be between 10 and 15 pages in length. OR you may do a project as described below.

Project Assignment (Two Parts): The project assignment has two parts: your myth-related Project and a Rationale that provides an analytical discussion of that project.

Part I: The Project may be a work in any medium or genre you choose. The main requirement is that it relates to a Greek myth or myths, preferably those in Hesiod, Ovid’s Metamorphoses or Apuleius’s “Cupid and Psyche.” You can do an adaptation or use the story as springboard for your own version. This can take many forms; you can write a story, “direct” a theater adaptation, do a series of photographs, make a collage, write a song, write a screen treatment for either film or television, invent a computer game, design a children’s book – in other words rethink or retell a myth in any way you want. If it is a written project, it is something that you should be able to cover in a dozen pages or less. That is why these guidelines suggest a short story, but only a “treatment” for a film, something where you describe the plot, the general film style, things like that, but do not, necessarily, write all of the dialogue. The same is true of a computer game. You could develop the concept of the game, but not actually write the computer program. If you are in doubt, talk to me or email me at pl35@nyu.edu.

Part II: The Rationale is the theoretical component in this writing assignment. This should be a minimum of 5 pages, though could be as long as you want. For the rationale you need to step back and discuss the Project in terms of the choices you made relative to the myths. This should really be a discussion of the myth, its themes, its images and the ways they influenced your adaptation. The “voice” here can be personal, as in “I decided to do . . . .” or you can even use a more neutral voice, as in “The x and y of this story focus on . . . .” The choice is yours. Just remember to be consistent.

That is basically it. Have fun with this project and feel free to contact me if you have any questions about what you plan to do.

If the words of poets have any truth or worth, they give this hope to me, who wrote them – that I shall become them, and live. (Ovid, Metamorphoses, trans. David R. Slavitt)