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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 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 there are only three formal papers, including the final one, you will actually be writing a great deal. Other assignments will include, but not be limited to informal commentaries and response. 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).

Our theme is “Myths and Fables in Popular Culture.” 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 New Student Research Seminar:  
Myths and Fables in Popular Culture

Required Texts (all are paperback editions and should be at the NYU bookstore)

* A Short History of Myth, Karen Armstrong (Canongate)  
* Metamorphoses. Ovid, trans. Rolf Humphries (University of Indiana Press)  
* Aesop’s Fables, ed. Laura Gibbs (Oxford University Press)  
* The Golden Ass, Apuelius (any translation)  
* Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm: Selected Tales (trans. & ed. Joyce Crick (Oxford World Classics))  
* The Bloody Chamber. Angela Carter (Penguin)  
* Beginning Theory, Peter Barry (University of Manchester Press)

Recommended: Metamorphoses (a play) Mary Zimmerman

Films - Required Viewing: Pan’s Labrynth and Cocteau’s Beauty and the Beast

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 writers workshop class sessions.

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

Jan. 23 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.

Jan. 25 Hesiod, “Theogany” (creation of the world and birth of Greek gods) pp. 53-87. Read this on-line through the NYU Home Page: log on to your home page; choose academics; choose library, Bobst; type in Works of Hesiod; choose item #2, Works of Hesiod and the Homeric Hymns, translated Daryl Hine, choose e-library Academic Complete; read from page 53 – 87. Complete the chart on the handout as you read. Bring your completed charts to class on Wed.  
*In Class Research Discussion Topic:* the archetype / early sources

Jan. 30 Armstrong, A Short History of Myth, pages 1-11; 79-118  
Writing Due: The Two-Hour Timed Research Report on any related topic – See Guidelines for details  
*In Class Research Discussion Topic:* Research and Time Management.
Feb. 1  Read: Campbell’s Hero’s Journey & Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* Book I  
*In Class Research Discussion Topic:* Checking the writers’ source & creating an annotated bibliography of one’s own.

Feb. 6  Writers Workshop: Formal Paper #1  See Guidelines for details.  
*BRING YOUR JOURNALS TO CLASS AS OCULAR PROOF*

Feb. 8  Writing Due: Formal Paper #1

*Metamorphoses* Translation Comparison Chart Due - (see Assignment Guidelines for details)  
*In Class Research Discussion Topic:* dealing with translations – Who can you trust?

Feb. 15  Aesop’s Animal Fables  
Writing Due: Adapt one of Aesop’s Fables, but give it a 21st-century type of ending or moral.  
Read: introduction and at least two dozen fables. Try to combine the well known with the obscure.  
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?

Feb. 20  NO CLASS – PRESIDENTS’ DAY

Feb. 22  French Fables: Medieval & 17th Century  
Read selections TBA from Marie de France and la Fontaine (library)  
*In Class Research Discussion Topic:* fables/tales variations & versions

Feb. 27  From Fable to Tale: The Wolf  
Read: versions of Little Red Riding Hood in your copies of Perrault and Grimm, also versions by Thurber and Dahl (library); Betelheime “Little Red Riding Hood” (library), Angela Carter’s “The Werewolf,” “The Company of Wolves,” and “Wolf Alice” in *The Bloody Chamber*.  
Prepare For Class Discussion and to Hand In: 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. Film Clips to be shown from *The Company of Wolves*.  
*In Class Research Discussion Topic:* tracking differences – charts help

Feb. 29  Apuleius: Bridging Myths and Fairy Tales  
Read: Cupid & Psyche (which is found in the chapters called “the Old Woman’s Tale” in *The Golden Ass*)  
*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.
March 5  
Birth of the Fairy Tale - Fables French & Wonder Tales  
“The Green Worm” (library) & Zipes article TBA on the history of the literary fairy tale (library)  
In Class Research Discussion Topic Research Topic: history of fairy tales and classifications of tales and tale types  
Research Paper Topic Due: a one-page abstract describing the topic you are considering for your major research paper

March 7  
In Class Research Discussion Topic Research Topic: using a key article as basis for further research

March 12 & 14  
No Class: Spring Break

March 19  
Transformation Tales:  
In Class Research Discussion Topic Research Topic: developing the annotated bibliography

March 21  
Research Paper Annotated Bibliography Due: (minimum 8 research sources, with a mix required of books and articles)  
Class Meets at Bobst Library: training session for on-line research  
Read: Barry on Psychoanalytical theory, Feminist theory and Post Modern theory.  
Write – very informal: 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.

March 26  
In Class Research Discussion Topic Research Topic: evaluating sources; comparing critical agendas

March 28  
Class meets at Bobst for visit to Fales Collection of early print books (third floor).

April 2  
Working Outline Due – a 2 page- ‘sketch’ of the paper’s plan  
Writers Workshop & Reports on Work in Progress

April 4  
A Copy of the Work in Progress is Due  (there should be at least 3 pages written, but note that these can be sections to be used at different parts of the paper); Writers Workshop & Reports on Work in Progress

April 9  
Research Paper is Due
April 11  The Fairy Tale Film. Guillarmo del Toro’s film *Pan’s Labrynth* & Cocteau’s *Beauty and the Beast; Mirror, Mirror*. Research techniques for films

April 16  Back to Ovid – Retold and Adapted Read: Bettelheim, “Fairy Tale vs Myth” (library); Ovid, Book VII all of Medea stories; Book VIII Daedalus, Daedlus and Icarus; Book IV, Pyramus and Thisbe, Book X, Orpheus and Eurydice.

April 18  Contemporary Retellings of Greek Myths

April 18  Bring to Class: an image connected to one of the myths

Find: an adaptation or version of anyone of the myths

Post the information on this adaptation/version on Blackboard, Discussion Board.

April 23  Watching and Listening to Adaptations

Read: Julie Sanders, selection from *Adaptation and Appropriation* (library)

April 25  Writers Workshop – Discussing The “Myth” Paper/Project

April 30  The ‘Myth’ Paper/Project is Due

Papers and projects will be presented, discussed & performed as Appropriate

*In Class Research Discussion Topic Research Topic*: discussing films and another useful chart

May 2  Presentations continue & Film Clips (the moment when the hero receives the call to action). See Guidelines. Note the film chart needs to be done before you present your film clip.

May 7  Final Class: - Film Clips, cont.

May 14  Last date that Paper #3 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 35% of grade; Research/prep work for Paper #2 paper is 10% of grade; Formal Paper #3 is 15% of grade; Class participation, journal, other writing is 25% 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 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 Paper & Schedule Individual Conference
Step 3: Individual Conferences Held to Review the Paper
Step 4: Revised Papers Are Due One Week After Conference

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, support, differing views, 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.

Topic: A list of possible topics will evolve from our class discussions. The topic is very open. You may want to explore more about some of the fairy tales or dig deeper into one of the critical theories about them. There might be a book, film, or even television series that you want to examine in terms of 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. 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 James Frazer’s discussions. You can take 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), 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. Wikipedia may be useful, but does not count as a legitimate reference source 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. Length: Maximum 4 pages (approximately 1,132 words), plus footnotes or endnotes, illustrations, and a Works Cited page. Follow MLA guidelines for in-text citations, footnotes/endnotes, and the MLA bibliography style for the texts listed in works cited.

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 12 – 15 page paper (12 pt. Times Roman or Times New Roman
   font, double spaced). Include both a Works Consulted page – and a Works Cited page.

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 12 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 12 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.

| Translator 1 | Leaves form | Her hair flew free | Etc. |
| Translator 2 | Leaves burst forth | The loosely flowing hair | Etc. |
| Translator 3 | Spring leaves appear | The unbound tresses | Etc. |

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 for the version’s author and three for the examples.

| Author 1 | She takes wine to grandma | She follows the path of a | Etc. |
| Author 2 | She takes cakes to grandmother | She follows the path of b | Etc. |
| Author 3 | She takes etc. to grandma | The path is not mentioned | Etc. |

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 – seconds into the film</th>
<th>Sound- seconds into the film</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 Ovid’s 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. This would follow the guidelines for Paper 1, but would be between 10 and 15 pages in length. OR you may do a project as described below. The project assignment has two parts: your myth-related project and a rationale that provides an analytical discussion of that project.

Project Assignment: Part I: The Project may be a work in any medium you choose. The main requirement is that it relates to a myth or myths, preferably those in 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 approximately 5 pages, more or less. 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)