

Variations of the Fantastic: Encounters with the Other

Instructor: Ildikó Limpár; Email: limparildiko@gmail.com

Seminars on February 15: The Detective Story / The Monster Story

- Topic 1: Neil Gaiman: “A Study in Emerald”
 - Homework # 2 :read Gaiman's story
 - Homework #2: If possible, watch “A Study in Pink” (Episode I of BBC's Sherlock; 2010)
- Topic 2: Short texts to be read and discussed in class (options: Ray Bradbury: “The Last Night of the World”, Ursula Le Guin: “The Wife's Story”, Theodora Goss: “The Bear's Wife”)

Seminars on March 7: Fairy Tale Rewritings

- Topic 1: Neil Gaiman: “Snow, Glass, Apples” and Tanith Lee: “Red as Blood”
 - Homework # 1: read both stories at home
 - Homework #2: **Written task:** Choose one component of the original myth that is changed by the author in either of the stories, and explain briefly (in half a page) what effect it has on the reader.
- Topic 2 Texts to be read and discussed in class:
 - Theodora Goss: “Snow White Learns Witchcraft” (poem)
<https://theodoragoss.com/2015/06/29/snow-white-learns-witchcraft/>
 - Theodora Goss: “The Bear's Wife” (poem)
<https://theodoragosspoems.com/2018/12/06/the-bears-wife/>

Seminars on April 25: The Coming-of-Age in Fantasy

- Neil Gaiman: *Coraline* (a novella)
 - Homework #1: read the novella
 - Homework #2: **Written task:** Make a list of scary / weird elements (minimum 6 items, preferably more). Then choose three and write one paragraph of each, explaining what makes the component especially scary or weird.
 - Optional preparation: you may want to watch the animation movie *Coraline*. Please note that watching the movie does not replace reading the novella, as there are differences between the two works.
- Neil Gaiman: “The Sleeper and the Spindle” (short story as a **graphic novel**)

CLASSWORK:

- Active participation in class (three absences are allowed), reading the works to be discussed thoroughly and coming to class prepared with the texts and your notes.

WRITTEN WORK:

- Handing in **two short written tasks** and an **endterm paper**. You need to hand in the short homework assignments at the beginning of the class that they are due as a typed and printed document. If for any reasons you cannot be present in the class for which you have written your homework, email your homework to me. The deadline for the end term paper is **April 25**. You need to submit the endterm paper as an attachment of you email sent to limparildiko@gmail.com by April 25. Late submission will result in losing one point from your essay mark. I accept endterm papers no later than May 10.

- **The end term paper** should be 4-5 pages, double space, 12 pt., Times New Roman, normal margin of cc. 2 cms. You need to use **at least** two works of scholarly secondary literature, properly cited. (Preferred style is MLA.) **Plagiarism is not tolerated** and results in automatic failure. Do not forget to cite your primary sources properly, too.
- **Essay topics:** You may choose from the following works as your target of analysis, focusing on how a specific genre is used by the author:
 - You may **freely choose** a work of contemporary popular fiction that is suitable for analysis from any of the following perspectives: coming of age, monstrosity, retelling (of either a fairy tale or a classic), but **you must consult with me about your topic** before you start writing your paper. (Do not only write the author + title when you ask me; give me some details about your focus points.)
 - If you interpret a monster story, you may want to use Jeffrey Jerome Cohen's article entitled "Monster Culture. (Seven Thesis)" as secondary literature.
 - If you are looking for retellings: Neil Gaiman, Theodora Goss and Michael Cunningham offer several choices, but since this is a most popular subgenre, you may find many other authors.
- **Important information on accessing texts:** You may join the Facebook group that I created for sharing reading materials. In order to join the Facebook group, you need to mark me as friend on FB. (After I have let you in the group., you may "unfriend" me in case you don't really want to meet me on FB.)
- **Statement on plagiarism:** You can use others' ideas or words in form of literal quotes or paraphrases, but you must indicate the source of quotes, paraphrased passages, and all sorts of factual information in all cases. The failure of keeping a correct record of borrowed material, either due to ignorance or to deliberate theft of ideas, is plagiarism. Papers showing evident signs of plagiarism will fail, and thus the student fails the entire course.
- **Marking** depends on: short written homework and class work (50%) and end term paper (50%). You may not receive a mark 5 for the course if you do not contribute regularly to class discussion. Please note that **if the long essay does not meet the basic requirements either because of language quality or because of plagiarism, you may not receive a passing mark for the course.**