ENGLISH 208A (01)
Forms of Fantasy
Fall 1998

Instructor: Mark Spielmacher
Office: HH 258; mailbox located in HH229
Office hours: W 1:30 - 3:30
Phone: 838-4567, extension 2121
Meeting time: W 7:00 - 10:00 in ML 246

This course will attempt to bridge or make connections between as many concepts (escapism, magic, the journey, the power of language, good and evil, moral teaching, etc.) and forms (romance, folk tales, myth, gothic, etc.) related to the genre as possible, in order to come to a better understanding of fantasy literature. What is fantasy? What are its limits? At what point does “imagination” transcend the boundaries of what is acceptable and become “fantastic”? Where do fantasy and reality intersect? To what in human nature does fantasy appeal? Although classes will partly be lecture-oriented, I will do my utmost to prompt student responses and class discussion.

Required Texts:
1. Readings on reserve at the Dana Porter Arts Library
2. Tolkien, The Hobbit
3. Beagle, The Last Unicorn
4. Goldman, The Princess Bride
5. Lucas, Star Wars
6. Donaldson, Lord Foul’s Bane
7. McCormack, Inspecting the Vaults
8. Esquivel, Like Water for Chocolate
9. Lee, Nightshades

Recommended: McArthur, Murray, and Jane E. Aaron. The Little, Brown Compact Handbook (First Canadian Edition). All royalties derived from the sale of this text will be donated to the Department of English Scholarship fund.

Requirements:
- Reading Journal 25% due December 2
- Mid-term Examination 20% October 28
- Essay (7-10 pages) 25% due December 2
- Final Examination 30% date to be announced

Late assignments will be penalized 1% per day. See me well in advance for possible extensions.

Essays not delivered into my hands must be dated and signed by an English Department secretary and placed in my mailbox. Essays must be entirely the student’s OWN work, with all citations properly referenced. Plagiarism, “the act of presenting the ideas, words, or other intellectual property of another as one’s own” (Undergraduate Calendar 1:10), is a serious academic offense and will be dealt with according to the University of Waterloo’s disciplinary code.

My expectations are that you will come to class prepared to discuss the assigned readings. For the mid-term you will be responsible for all material covered up to that date. The final exam will cover all readings, with particular attention to those assigned after the midterm.
Schedule

September
16   Introduction: Fantasy—the genre, the conventions
23   Course readings (on reserve); related genres and conventions
30   Tolkien, *The Hobbit*

October
7    *Beagle, The Last Unicorn*
14   *Goldman, The Princess Bride*
21   *Lucas, Star Wars*
28   Midterm Examination

November
4    *Donaldson, Lord Foul's Bane*
11   *McCormack, Inspecting the Vaults*
18   *Esquivel, Like Water For Chocolate*
25   *Lee, Nightshades*

December
2    Concluding Remarks; term paper due

Reading Journal: you will hand in short (approximately one page) responses to each text examined in class. Each will be worth five marks; I will choose the best five to calculate your grade out of 25. You may choose to hand in only 5; however, I recommend doing them all. Entries are due on the date in which we discuss a particular text, and will not be accepted after that date.