



ChL 414: Fantasy and Science Fiction

A Renaissance in the Fantastic

Instructor: Deborah Kaplan, deborah.kaplan@simmons.edu

Office hours: by appointment

Fall 2016

Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| Overview | 2 |
| Learning Outcomes | 2 |
| Reading | 3 |
| Assignments and Grading | 7 |
| Accommodations | 7 |
| Participation and attendance | 7 |
| Writing and Presentation..... | 7 |
| Bibliography of reference materials in fantasy | 13 |
| ADA | 14 |
| Title IX and the Simmons College Gender-Based Misconduct Policy | 14 |



Fantasy and Science Fiction: A Renaissance in the Fantastic by [Deborah Kaplan](#) is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License](#). Permissions beyond the scope of this license may be obtained [by contacting the author](#).

Overview

This graduate seminar fulfills a major requirement toward an M.A. degree in children's literature: the study of fantasy and science fiction for young people. Key areas of inquiry include questions of genre, audience, a work's place in history, development of genre through time, and examining works through the major critical lenses of both children's/YA literature and speculative fiction.

Learning Outcomes

The Fantasy and Science Fiction for Children and Young Adults course is one that is required by both the MA in Children's Literature and the MFA in Writing for Children degrees. For that reason, it is important that you are aware of how this course will contribute to your fulfillment of this program. According to the Simmons SLIS's "Mission, Vision, & Objectives" (2015), students leave the MA-ChL and MFA-WC graduate programs with an extensive theoretical context and a broad knowledge of contemporary literature for children and young adults. By the end of this course, you will have:

- Analyzed literature for children and young adults
- Applied critical perspectives across genres in children's and young adult literature
- Understood historical works, contexts, and influences in the field
- Valued the diversities of human experiences (re)presented in literature for children and young adults and in the scholarship in the field

Reading

1. September 9

- Madeleine L'Engle, *A Wrinkle In Time* (1963)
- William Alexander, *Ambassador* (2014)

2. September 16

- Tamora Pierce, *Alanna: the First Adventure* (1983)
- Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, *The Conch Bearer* (2003)
- Barry Deutsch, *Hereville: How Mirka Got Her Sword* (2011)
 - Mohanraj, Mary Anne. "[Mary Anne Mohanraj Gets You Up to Speed, Part I.](http://whatever.scalzi.com/2009/03/12/mary-ann-mohanraj-gets-you-up-to-speed-part-i/)" *Whatever*, 2009, <http://whatever.scalzi.com/2009/03/12/mary-ann-mohanraj-gets-you-up-to-speed-part-i/>.
 - Mohanraj, Mary Anne. "[Mary Anne Mohanraj Gets You Up to Speed, Part II.](http://whatever.scalzi.com/2009/03/13/mary-ann-mohanraj-gets-you-up-to-speed-part-ii/)" *Whatever*, 2009, <http://whatever.scalzi.com/2009/03/13/mary-ann-mohanraj-gets-you-up-to-speed-part-ii/>.

3. September 23

- Laurence Yep, *Dragon of the Lost Sea* (1982)
- Diana Wynne Jones, *Dark Lord of Derkholm* (1998)
- Noelle Stevenson, *Nimona* (2015)
 - Russell, David L. "[The Comic Spirit and Cosmic Order in Children's Literature.](#)" *Children's Literature Association Quarterly*, vol. 15, no. 3, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990, pp. 117–119.

4. September 30

- Philippa Pearce, *Tom's Midnight Garden* (1959)
- Mary Norton, *The Borrowers* (1953)
- Daniel José Older, *Shadowshaper* (2015)
 - Kohl, Herbert. "[Should We Burn Babar: Questioning Power in Children's Literature.](#)" *Should We Burn Babar*, 1995, pp. 3–29.

5. October 7

- Monica Hughes, *The Game* (previously *Invitation to the Game*) (1990)
- Lois Lowry, *The Giver* (1993)
- Nnedi Okorafor-Mbachu, *The Shadow Speaker* (2007)
- Ambelin Kwaymullina, *The Interrogation of Ashala Wolf* (2014)
 - Nodelman, Perry. "[Out There in Children's Science Fiction: Forward into the Past.](#)" *Science Fiction Studies*, JSTOR, 1985, pp. 285–296.

6. October 14

- Robert C. O'Brien, *Mrs. Frisby and the Rats of NIMH* (1971)
- Nancy Farmer, *The House of the Scorpion* (2002)
- Nancy Werlin, *Double Helix* (2004)
 - Gerlach, Neil, and Sheryl N. Hamilton. "[Introduction: A history of social science fiction.](#)" *Science Fiction Studies*, vol. 30, no. 2, Depauw University-Science Fiction Studies, 2003, pp. 161–173.

7. October 21

- Margaret Mahy, *The Changeover* (1984)
- Cassandra Clare, *City of Bones* (2007)
- Alaya Dawn Johnson, *The Summer Prince* (2013)
 - Aubrey, Jennifer Stevens, et al. "[The romanticization of abstinence: Fan response to sexual restraint in the Twilight series.](#)" *Transformative Works and Cultures*, vol. 5, 2010.

8. October 28

- Robert A. Heinlein, *Podkayne of Mars, Her Life and Times* (1963)
- Adam Rex, *The True Meaning of Smekday* (2007)
- Corinne Duyvis, *On the Edge of Gone* (2016)
 - Mendlesohn, Farah. "[Is There Any Such Thing as Children's Science Fiction?: A Position Piece.](#)" *The Lion and the Unicorn*, vol. 28, no. 2, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004, pp. 284–313.

9. November 4

- Robin McKinley, *Beauty* (1978)
- Donna Jo Napoli, *Breath* (2003)
- Joseph Bruchac, *Killer of Enemies* (2013)
 - Sullivan III, CW. "[Narrative Expectations: The Folklore Connection.](#)" *Children's Literature Association Quarterly*, vol. 15, no. 2, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990, pp. 52–55.

November 11: Veteran's Day holiday**10. November 18**

- Jill Thompson, *Magic Trixie* (2008)
- Neil Gaiman, *Coraline* (2002)
- Dia Reeves, *Bleeding Violet* (2010)
- Catherine Jinks, *Living Hell* (2010)
 - Reynolds, Kimberley. "[Frightening Fiction: Beyond Horror.](#)" *New Review of Children's Literature and Librarianship*, vol. 11, no. 2, 2005, pp. 151–161, doi:10.1080/13614540500324146.

November 25: Thanksgiving holiday**11. December 2**

- Ysabeau Wilce, *Flora Segunda* (2007)
- Guadalupe Garcia McCall, *Summer of the Mariposas* (2012)
- Sarah Zettel, *Dust Girl* (2012)
 - Bradford, Clare. "Postcolonial." *Keywords for Children's Literature*. Ed. Philip Nel and Lissa Paul. NYU, 2011. 177-81.

12. December 9

- Your assigned series
 - Schmidt, Gary D. [“So here, my dears, is a new Oz story’: The Deep Structure of a Series.”](#) *Children’s Literature Association Quarterly*, vol. 14, no. 4, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989, pp. 163–165.

13. December 16

- Arnold Lobel, *Mouse Soup* (1977)
- Rubert Munsch, *Paper Bag Princess* (1980)
- Chris Raschka, *Arlene Sardine* (1998)
- Doreen Cronin, *Click Clack Moo* (2000)
- Emily Gravett, *Orange Pear Apple Bear* (2007)
- Christopher Myers, *Jabberwocky* (2007)
- Ben Hatke, *Zita the Spacegirl* (2011)
- G. Willow Wilson, *Ms. Marvel Volume 1: No Normal* (2014)
 - Cashore, Kristin. [“Humor, simplicity, and experimentation in the picture books of Jon Agee.”](#) *Children’s Literature in Education*, vol. 34, no. 2, Springer, 2003, pp. 147–181.

Assignments and Grading

Accommodations

I am very happy to work with students to help determine the accommodations which will enable you to best succeed in the course. I can do this most easily if you contact me *early*. If we work together to develop accommodations in September, you will have a much more enjoyable and successful time with the class materials than if we don't address accommodations until Thanksgiving. See below for more information about how to contact Disability Services and university policy on accommodations.

Course Content Note: Our readings for the semester, and perforce our discussions, will include topics including violence, sexual assault, racism, and all of the other sometimes painful themes that appear in children's and young adult literature. If you would like to discuss the issues raised by any of these readings or discussions in confidence, please contact me.

Participation and attendance

You are responsible for completing the reading for each week, attending every class, engaging in thoughtful, analytical, in-class discussion, and performing to the best of your ability on all written assignments. Participation is crucial to your success in the course, both contributing to the discussion and listening to your fellow students. Every student should have something of value to add to the conversation about every assigned reading.

Attendance is required. Every absence from a class meeting will influence the final course grade. In rare cases, students will have a single absence; two absences will make it difficult to excel in the course; three absences will result in a failing final grade. Should you need to miss a class, I urge you to let me know ahead of time to discuss the absence. Generally speaking, if you want to earn participation credit for a missed class, you will need to turn in an annotated bibliography for all of the required critical readings for that class. Each annotation will include two parts: first, it will offer a brief summary of the source, and then it will launch into an analysis of the required primary texts for that week, using the critical reading as a lens. Each annotation should be no less than 200 words.

25% of grade.

Writing and Presentation

The books you write about for your papers should be prose or verse fantasy or science fiction published for children or young adults. If you would like to write about something outside these guidelines (e.g. books published for adults, graphic novels, games, television, film, fan fiction, or any other media) you must clear your chosen works with me first.

Article presentation. You will be randomly assigned one article of critical theory over the course of the semester. If you've used your article for a presentation or in a major paper in another class, please let me know and I will assign another article.

1. You will be responsible, with a fellow student, for leading a *30-minute class discussion* about that article. Discuss the critical reading's relevance to the all of fiction works assigned for that week, its relevance to the subgenre under discussion, and -- if appropriate -- its relevance to previous books and subgenres discussed.
2. Each presenter is individually responsible for a *500-word essay* to be handed into the instructor covering the article and all of the week's fictional works.
3. Additionally, *before meeting with your co-presenter*, post in Moodle your reading/preparation notes that you've made while thinking about the joint discussion. These do not have to be in any particular format (a scan of handwritten notes is acceptable, even sketch notes), or any particular length. If you are uploading a scan instead of a text document, it does not need to be in RTF format; PNG, GIF, JPG and PDF are acceptable formats.

10% of grade.

Implied reader papers. Choose two books, one from group A and one from group B. For each book, write a 700-word close reading which uses the text to identify the book's implied reader. Defend your assertion from the text. As a framework for your interpretation, use:

Kertzer, Adrienne E. "Inventing the child reader: how we read children's books." *Children's Literature in Education*, vol. 15, no. 1, Springer, 1984, pp. 12–21.

List A

- Pete Hautman, *Rash* (2006)
- James Dashner, *The Maze Runner* (2009)
- Paolo Bacigalupi, *Ship Breaker* (2010)
- Marie Lu, *Legend* (2011)
- Rae Carson, *The Girl of Fire and Thorns* (2011)
- Matt de la Peña, *The Living* (2014)
- Adam Silvera, *More Happy than Not* (2015)

List B

- John Bellairs, *The House with a Clock in Its Walls* (1973)
- Daniel Pinkwater, *Lizard Music* (1976)
- Virginia Hamilton, *The Magical Adventures of Pretty Pearl* (1986)
- Suzanne Collins, *Gregor the Overlander* (2003)
- Kate DiCamillo, *The Tale of Despereaux* (2003)
- M. T. Anderson, *Whales on Stilts* (2006)
- Ursula Vernon, *Castle Hangnail* (2015)

Due: September 30

10% of grade

Series analysis. You will be assigned a science fiction or fantasy series to read through the semester. Throughout the semester, you will be expected to check in online through a private "reading journal" on Moodle to record your feelings upon finishing each book in the series, and how each book confirms or contradicts the expectations set up from the previous ones. If you have previously read the series, discuss how rereading the individual work stands given your expectations from your prior reading. These journal entries can be short and informal, but should be thoughtful considerations of how being part of a series influences each text. (If your series has only three works, then your fourth journal entry should be an analysis of the experience of reading the series as a whole.)

These journal entries (at least 250 words each, at least four journal entries) should be thoughtful considerations of how a component text and a larger series interact.

On December 9, you and two of your peers will be responsible for conducting a *30-minute discussion* about that series in front of the class.

Due: December 9
10% of grade.

Final paper. The instructor will distribute some current Calls for Papers requesting critical analysis of fiction for children and young adults. Using at least two fictional works not used in your other papers, write an essay in response to one of the CFPs. Your essay must refer to at least two pieces of critical work which must not be included on the syllabus. The fictional works may be from the syllabus, but they do not need to be.

This paper will have two written assignments to turn in.

1. The first will be a *500 word abstract* of your paper, a list of the books you plan to discuss, and an annotated bibliography of the critical work you will be using. Don't forget to list the Call for Papers to which you are responding!

Due: November 4
15% of grade.

2. The second part of this assignment will be the final paper itself. (*2000-3000 words*)

Due: December 23
30% of grade.

Research and Writing Hints

The best papers are those for which you do not know the answer before you start doing your reading and research. If you begin writing your paper with your conclusions already fully formed, it won't be a good paper. To choose a paper topic, start with a question you're interested in, for which you would like to know the answer.

Your syllabus includes a bibliography of some helpful works in fantasy and science fiction for children and young adults. It also includes a research guide on how to look for critical sources. This research guide lists many of the print and electronic resources available at Simmons, as well as some of the electronic resources available on the web. Your final paper will require that you do some outside research.

You should begin this research early enough so that if you have any trouble, you can ask me or a reference librarian for help in plenty of time. Be aware that the critical sources most useful to you might not be available electronically, and you might need to arrange time to access the resource in print.

Moodle links to two sample annotated bibliographies and abstracts which were created by prior students in this class. If you're not sure how to structure these assignments, those are a good place to begin.

- See the [grading rubric](#) for tips on writing like an expert.
- Formal, well-structured English is a must. Spellcheck is not sufficient but it is mandatory. Simmons has a writing center to help you.
- All your writing must use MLA citation styles.¹ You can find help on MLA citation styles at the Purdue OWL [MLA Formatting and Style Guide](#).
- Don't waste time with drawn out, wordy openings or conclusions which merely repeat the assertions of the introduction. Concentrate your shorter papers on content.
- Don't draw sweeping conclusions about genre, or make generalizations about children, society, readers, etc.
- Base your arguments on close readings and interpretations of the fiction and critical texts. These are literature analyses, not sociological studies. We are always grounded in text.
- Feel free to disagree with critical readings, conventional wisdom, or me--as long as you support your disagreement from the texts!

¹ *MLA Handbook*. 8th ed., Modern Language Association of America, 2016.

- Don't cherry pick. If there is evidence in the text that clearly contradicts your assertion, you need to incorporate it in your larger argument.
- Blogs, popular press articles, tweetstorms or storifys, and professional press articles (e.g. articles aimed at the practice of becoming a teacher or librarian) can be extremely useful, both professionally and in this class. However, you should also understand the difference between this kind of material and peer-reviewed theoretical work. Make sure that the majority of any critical work you incorporate is peer-reviewed academic literary analysis. In your arguments, don't treat these different kinds of analysis as if they were identical; understand the context for a blog vs. the context for a scholarly article vs. a professional press article.

Submit all papers by 12 PM (noon) on the due date, submitted via Moodle.

- If you have any problems with Moodle, you can e-mail the paper by 12:05 PM on the due date, to deborah.kaplan@simmons.edu.
- **Submit all your papers in Rich Text Format (RTF), with the file extension ".rtf".** If I cannot open your paper because it is incompatible with my word processing software, I will mark it as not received until I am sent a copy we can open. Rich Text Format is compatible with all word processing programs. For further help, please see [instructions for saving as RTF](#) or ask for help from the [Simmons Service Desk](#).
- Put your first and last name in the filename of your uploaded paper.

Bibliography of reference materials in fantasy

This bibliography just provides a brief sampling of some of the reference materials available for scholarly study of fantasy and science fiction. This is not a comprehensive list.

- [A Simmons Library guide to doing research in children's literature.](#)
- Barron, Neil, ed. *Anatomy of wonder: a critical guide to science fiction*. 2004. PN3448.S45 A52 2004
- Bettelheim, Bruno. *The Uses of Enchantment: The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales*. 1977. GR550.B47
- Clute, John. *The Illustrated Encyclopedia of Fantasy*. 1997. Reference PN3435 .E53 1997
- Clute, John. *The Illustrated Encyclopedia of Science Fantasy*. 1993. Reference PN3433.4 .E53 1995
- Egoff, Sheila. *Worlds within: Children's Fantasy from the Middle Ages to Today*. 1988. Reserves PR830.F3 E43 1988
- Goldthwaite, John. *The natural history of make-believe : a guide to the principal works of Britain, Europe, and America*. 1996. PN1009.A1 G569 1996
- Gose, Eliot. *Mere Creatures: a Study of Modern Fantasy Tales for Children*. 1988. PR888.F3 G68 1988
- Hunt, Peter and Millicent Lenz. *Alternative worlds in fantasy fiction*. 2004. PR830.F3 H867
- Manlove, C. N. *From Alice to Harry Potter: children's fantasy in England*. 2003. [E-book](#) or PR149 .F35 M36 2003
- Mendlesohn, Farah. *Rhetorics of Fantasy*. 2008. PS374.F27 M46 2008
- Mendlesohn, Farah. *The Inter-Galactic Playground: A Critical Study of Children's and Teens' Science Fiction*. 2009. Reserves PN3433.8 .M46 2009
- Salo, Dorothea, and Jen Stevens. *Fantasy authors: a research guide*. 2008.
- Sandner, David. *Fantastic literature: a critical reader*. 2004. PN56.F34 S36 2004
- Sandner, David. *The Fantastic Sublime: Romanticism and transcendence in 19th-century children's fantasy literature*. 1996. PR990.S26 1996
- Sullivan III, C. W., ed. *Young Adult Science Fiction.*, 1999.
- Swinfen, Ann. *In Defence of Fantasy: a study of the genre in English and American literature since 1945*. 1984.
- Tatar, Maria. *The classic fairy tales: texts, criticism*. 1999.
- Warner, Marina. *From the beast to the blonde: on fairy tales and their tellers*. 1995. GR550 .W38 1995
- White, Donna. *A Century of Welsh Myth in Children's Literature*. 1998.
- Zipes, Jack. *Happily ever after: fairy tales, children, and the culture industry*. 1997.
- Zipes, Jack. *Fairy tales and the art of subversion: the classical genre for children and the process of civilization*. 1991.

ADA

If you have a documented disability and anticipate needing accommodations in this course, it is your responsibility to register with the Disability Services office as soon as possible to ensure that requested accommodations may be implemented in a timely fashion. For more information or to request academic accommodations, contact the Disability Services Office located in Room E-108 of the Main College Building. They are available by phone at 617 521 2474 or you may email director Tim Rogers at timothy.rogers@simmons.edu.

Title IX and the Simmons College Gender-Based Misconduct Policy

Title IX Federal law states that all students have the right to gain an education free of gender-based discrimination. Some examples of gender-based discrimination, as defined by this law include sexual harassment or exploitation, sexual assault, domestic/dating violence, and stalking. In compliance with Title IX, Simmons College has a "Gender- Based Misconduct Policy" which defines these forms of misconduct, outlines College protocol and procedures for investigating and addressing incidences of gender-based discrimination, highlights interim safety measures, and identifies both on and off-campus resources.

Simmons College encourages all community members to report incidences of gender-based misconduct. If you or someone you know in our campus community would like to receive support or report an incident of gender-based discrimination, please contact any of the following:

- **Simmons College Title IX Coordinator, Regina Sherwood (for faculty/staff concerns):**
 - Office Location: THCS Office, Room C-210 / Phone Number: (617) 521-2082
- **Simmons College Deputy Title IX Coordinator, Sarah Neill (for student concerns):**
 - Office Location: Provost's Suite, in room C-219 / Phone Number: (617) 521-212
- **Associate Dean of Student Life and Title IX Representative, Raymond Ou:**
 - Office Location: Student Life in room C-211 / Phone Number: (617) 521-2125
- **Coordinator of Simmons Violence Prevention and Educational Outreach Program, Gina Capra:**
 - Office Location: Room W-003 / Phone Number: (617) 521-2118
- **Simmons College Public Safety**
 - Office Location: Lobby of the Palace Road Building. Phone Number: (617) 521-1111 (emergency) or (617) 521-2112 (non-emergency)

Additionally, the Gender-Based Misconduct Policy has a Consensual Relationships clause that prohibits intimate, romantic or sexual relationships between students, faculty, staff, contract employees of the College, teacher's assistants, and supervisors at internship/field placement sites. View the full [Simmons College Gender-Based Misconduct Policy](#).