# ENGL 330 Special Topics in Literature: British Fantasy Literature

**Fall 2019**

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<tr>
<th>Class time:</th>
<th>Monday, Tuesday 4:10-5:25</th>
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<tr>
<td>Name of Faculty:</td>
<td>Dr. Lloyd Davies</td>
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<tr>
<td>Contact details:</td>
<td><a href="mailto:lloyd.davies@wku.edu">lloyd.davies@wku.edu</a></td>
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<td>Office hours:</td>
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## Course Description

**Catalogue description:**
Focuses on particular writers or a particular literary movement, subject, or period. Past topics have included Fitzgerald and Hemingway, Modern Irish Literature, and JRR Tolkien. Repeatable up to three times with different subjects. Prerequisite: one ENGL course or permission of instructor.

This Harlaxton English literature course focuses on the British tradition of fantasy, of imaginary worlds such as Middle Earth and Narnia, lands of elves, dragons, witches, and fairies. We will follow the growth of this tradition from its medieval origins in Beowulf and the Arthurian legends to the great nineteenth and twentieth century authors Morris, Dunsany, Lewis, Tolkien, Peake, and Rowling. Harlaxton Manor, with its magical, fairy-tale like architecture and its hillside setting amongst English lawns and groves, will be the ideal setting in which to read and enjoy these works.

## Credit Hour Policy Statement

This class meets the federal credit hour policy of:

- **Standard lecture** – e.g. 1 hour of class with an expected 2 hours of additional student work outside of class each week for approximately 15 weeks for each hour of credit, or a total of 45-75 hours for each credit.

## General Education Objective

This course meets the General Education requirements for:

- None apply.
Learning Objectives

Listed below are the Learning Objectives for the course:

**Course objectives and goals:** the literature of the fantastic is a specific genre of serious literature. We will study that tradition and its development, reading a selection of exemplary books from Beowulf to Rowling. Our objectives will be to understand the genre’s idea of other worlds, to become familiar with that tradition, and to consider in what ways these works reflect back upon our own world.

By the end of the course you should be able to:
- **describe** British fantasy literature with reference to its cultural, thematic, and historic context;
- **analyze** and **interpret** British fantasy literature in a coherent, focused way;
- **articulate** in written essays the major themes, ideas, and concerns of these texts;
- **demonstrate** competence in proper modes of quotation, citation, and documentation, using MLA style.

Further Information about the Course

Note on Field Trips:

There is one required field trip, to Oxford, on Sept 14. we will tour C. S. Lewis’s home, *The Kilns*, and also stop off at the Oxford pub, *The Eagle and the Child*, where Lewis, Tolkien, and others in the literary group *The Inklings* regularly met.

There are two other field trips that I strongly encourage you to attend as a supplement to this class: The Oct. 18 day trip to Cambridge, and the Oct. 25-27 weekend trip to Bath and Stonehenge. Cambridge is closely associated with Lewis and provide an architectural sense of setting that should help in visualizing the worlds of Peake and Rowling. The Bath and Stonehenge trip takes you into Roman and prehistoric England. Near the standing stones of Stonehenge and Avebury there is also the barrow of Wayland’s Smithy, which may have inspired Tolkien’s Barrow-Downs in *Lord of the Rings*.
## Schedule of topics

### Provisional Schedule:

**Week 1: Aug 26-29**

*Beowulf (Trans. J. R. R. Tolkien)*

**Week 2: Sept 2-5**

*Sir Gawain and the Green Knight (Trans. J. R. R. Tolkien)*

**Week 3: Sept 9-12**

*The Poetry of Romance and Fantasy: Selected Readings in course pack*
  
  Tolkien: “On Fairy-Stories”
  Chaucer: *The Wife of Bath’s Tale*, lines 1—25;
  Coleridge: *Christabel*
  Keats: *La Belle Dame Sans Merci*
  Tennyson: *The Lady of Shalott; Blow, Bugle, Blow*

*Sept 14: Oxford (required class field trip to Lewis’ home in Oxford)*

**Week 4: Sept 16-19**

*Morris: The Wood Beyond the World*

**Week 5: Sept 23-25**

*Morris: The Wood Beyond the World*

**Week 6: Sept 30-Oct 3**

*Dunsany: The King of Elfland’s Daughter*

**Week 7: Oct 7-10**

*Dunsany: The King of Elfland’s Daughter*

**Week 8: Oct 14-17**

*Tolkien: The Hobbit*

*Oct 18: Cambridge (highly recommended for this class)*

**Week 9: Oct 21-24**

*Tolkien: The Hobbit*

*Oct 25-27: Bath & Stonehenge (highly recommended for this class)*

**Week 10: Oct 28-31**

*Lewis: The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*

**Week 11: Nov 4-7**

*Peake: The Gormenghast Trilogy: Titus Groan*

**Week 12: Nov 11-14**

*Peake: The Gormenghast Trilogy: Titus Groan*
Week 13: Nov 18-21
   Rowling: *Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone*

Week 14: Nov 25-28
   Rowling: *Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone*

Final Exams: Nov 30-Dec 3
Teaching Methods

Key Text(s):


Lewis, C. S. *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* Scholastic 2009 978-0007323128 Available to purchase at Harlaxton RRP £6.99.


Teaching Methods:

This course emphasizes the disciplines of reading and writing, skills that are particularly important in the study of literature, but also universally valuable. We will engage in a close textual study of each of our readings, so it is extremely important for you to read these works carefully and thoroughly. I will expect you to come to class having read the assigned material in advance, prepared to contribute to our communal efforts toward understanding and appreciating this literature. As is traditional in such courses, you will be asked to demonstrate your comprehension of these works by talking about them in class and writing about them in passage analyses as well as more formal essays.

My basic classroom mode is to lecture, so it is important to be attentive in class, to take notes, etc. Nevertheless, I invite active student participation. You are encouraged to answer and pose questions, make and respond to other students’ comments, and generally make your presence in the classroom known to me. Students who make a particularly valuable contribution to classroom learning will be rewarded by extra-credit points at the end of the semester. This will be a holistic and subjective decision on my part, dependent upon knowing who you are and how responsive and engaged you have been. Students who prefer not to speak in class will not be penalized, but will earn their grade chiefly through their writing.
Schedule of Assignments

Assignments

One-page commentaries on each of our texts will be due during the time it is assigned (instructions and requirements for these will be distributed in class):

1. *Beowulf*
2. *Sir Gawain*
3. *The Poetry of Romance and Fantasy*
4. *Morris: The Wood Beyond the World*
5. *Dunsany: The King of Elfland’s Daughter*
6. *Tolkien: The Hobbit*
7. *Lewis: The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*
9. *Rowling. Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone*
10. Place as text: Commentary on a fantasy setting or location

A final essay on a significant theme prominent in at least three of our texts will be due at the end of the course. This essay should be six to eight pages long.

A final, comprehensive exam will be given at the conclusion of the semester.

Assessment and Grading Criteria

Grades:

1. 10 commentaries at 10 points each: 100 points
2. Final essay: 100 points
3. Final exam: 100 points

Grade distribution:

A: 90-100
B: 80-89
C: 70-79
D: 60-69
F: 59

Attendance Policy

Harlaxton College operates a mandatory attendance policy that is binding on all faculty and students.

The number of unexcused absences that are allowed before incurring a penalty is related to the number of times a class meets during a week. This means that for courses which meet three times a week students are allowed a maximum of three unexcused absences during the semester without attracting penalty points, for courses meeting twice a week two such absences are permitted and for courses meeting just once a week a single absence is allowed.

This class meets two times a week. You are allowed a maximum of two unexcused absences before incurring a penalty. Additional unexcused absences will attract a grade penalty equivalent to two commentaries; e.g., 20 points will be subtracted from your total points for each absence.
Students are responsible for the academic consequences of their failure to attend class. If any assessment (e.g. in-class test, exam, paper, presentation, etc.) is missed, there is no expectation or requirement that a faculty member will accept the work after it is due, provide an extension to a deadline, or offer an alternative assessment opportunity for a student with an unexcused absence.

**Drop/Add and Withdrawal Policy**

There is normally about a 10 day period at the beginning of semester when a student may drop and class and/or add a class. The deadline date is published in the Semester Guidance handbook. Drop/Add forms are available from the library and completed forms should be returned to the same place. Faculty signatures are required for all classes being added.

Students may withdraw from a class, with the exception of British Studies, for a longer period of time.

Again the deadline date is published in the Semester Guidance handbook. Forms are available from the College Secretary, to whom completed forms should be returned. Forms must be signed by the faculty member of the class being withdrawn from and the Principal.

**All students must register for, and be continuously enrolled in, 12 credit hours of study to be eligible to study at Harlaxton and remain in the United Kingdom.**

**Disability Policy**

It is the policy of the University of Evansville (Harlaxton College) to make reasonable accommodations for students with properly documented disabilities. University of Evansville students should contact the Office of Counselling and Health Education to seek help with this. Students from Partner Universities/Colleges should contact their own relevant student support office. For assistance whilst at Harlaxton students should contact the College Secretary whose office is located adjacent to the Principal’s office.

Written notification to faculty from the College Secretary is required for academic accommodations to be implemented.

**Honor Code**

All students at the University of Evansville (Harlaxton College) agree to and are bound by the principles and practice of the honor code:

‘I understand that any work I submit for course credit will imply that I have adhered to this Academic Honor Code: I will neither give nor receive unauthorized aid, nor will I tolerate an environment that condones the use of unauthorized aid.’

The full Honor Code is available online: [https://www.evansville.edu/offices/deanstudents/downloads/honorcode.pdf](https://www.evansville.edu/offices/deanstudents/downloads/honorcode.pdf)