



Fairy tales: their histories and hidden meanings

Credit / award	Non-accredited		
Start date	2 nd February 2016	End date	1 st March 2016
Day and time	Tuesday at 10.00am – noon	No of meetings	5
Venue	Maddingley Hall, Maddingley, Cambridge, CB23 8AQ		
Fee	£150	Course code	1516NWR016
For further information on this course, please contact	Public Programme Co-ordinator, Clare Kerr clare.kerr@ice.cam.ac.uk or 01223 746237		
To book	See: www.ice.cam.ac.uk or telephone 01223 746262		

Tutor biography

Dr Jenny Bavidge is University Senior Lecturer and Academic Director for English at ICE and is a member of the English Faculty and a Fellow of Murray Edwards College, Cambridge. She is President of the Literary London Society and a member of the English Faculty's Contemporaries group.

Course syllabus

We use the term 'fairy tale' to suggest a simple, fanciful or romantic story and most often associate the famous tales of Cinderella or Red Riding Hood with charming children's stories. However, many of the tales have a long history and some darker roots. This course takes a close look at how the fairy tale developed from these raw origins into more 'literary' forms in the nineteenth century. With reference to work by Hans Christian Anderson, George McDonald, Oscar Wilde, Edith Nesbit, Christina Rossetti and others, we will examine the uses to which fairy tales were put in the Victorian period. We will consider the processes of censorship, bowdlerisation and adaptation for different audiences and will also place the fairy tale within the wider world of publishing for juvenile audiences in this period.

Aims

The course aims to:

- Develop students' knowledge of the history of the fairy tale from oral origins to modern incarnations;
- Develop students' skills of literary analysis and close-reading;
- Provide an enjoyable and instructive atmosphere to enable in-class discussion of the themes and meanings of the texts encountered.

Content

Session 1: Introduction: Tracing tales from the collectors to the nineteenth century

This session will begin with a lecture on the history of the fairy tale and its relation to folklore and other forms of story-telling, and will address the question of why and how nineteenth century audiences embraced stories of fairyland and fairies. We will warm up by tracing the histories of two tales: 'Rumplestiltskin' and 'The Story of the Three Bears'.

Session 2: New Tales for a new Century

This week will focus on the work of Hans Christian Andersen, whose first fairy tales appeared in 1835. We will also consider a tale or two from Dickens and consider what is at stake in the writing of original fairy tales, rather than recycling older tales from Grimm or Perrault.

Session 3: Strange Worlds: Victorian Fantasy

In this week, we will consider the meeting of fairy tale and wider variations of fantastical writing in the 19th century. Here, we will read tales by George MacDonald and John Ruskin and explore the Victorian preoccupation with fairy stories. We will also read Christina Rossetti's poem 'Goblin Market'.

Session 4: Practical Tales: Science and Imagination

The fairy tale might seem antithetical to the world of Victorian pragmatism and industry but in some of its forms it was a bridge between the world of imagination and an age of scientific experimentation. With reference to the work of E. Nesbit and Dickens, we will examine the quirky inventions of writers who used the fairy tale mode to talk to their readers about the wonders of their own world.

Session 5: The Last Days of Faery?

In this final session, we will consider the tales of Oscar Wilde and Rudyard Kipling, for whom the fairy tale was a vehicle for considering political and moral ills besetting late Victorian culture, while seeming to keep faith with the idea of magical transformation and escape.

Presentation of the course:

The course will be taught through a series of weekly lectures and seminar discussions. Students will be asked to complete some reading for every week in order that they can take a full part in class discussions but this will all be advertised before the beginning of the course and will amount to no more than one to three short stories a week. If students have time, then further recommended reading will be suggested.

Outcomes

As a result of the course, within the constraints of the time available, students should:

- Have developed their knowledge of the history and theory of fairy tales in general and of the set tales in particular
- To have encountered various methodological and theoretical ways of reading and analysing fairy tales
- Have taken part in focused academic discussion of the course topic and to have developed their powers of literary analysis and close reading
- Feel confidence in their mastery of this subject area and to feel equipped to follow courses in this subject area or others.

Reading and resources list

We will find most of our reading in one anthology: *Victorian Fairy Tales* ed. Michael Newton (Oxford World's Classics, 2015). At present this anthology is only available in hardback format, at around £15, but there are second hand or 'new' copies available on Amazon at under £10. If possible, please do buy this book and bring it to all classes, but if you have difficulty finding it, let the course tutor know.

Background reading:

Charles Perrault's stories can be found in

The Complete Fairy Tales, trans. Christopher Betts (Oxford World Classics)

There are many editions of the **Grimm's Household Tales**. There were over 200 tales in the original collection and editions rarely include them all. If you decide to buy one or find one in a library, try to find one which is not too bowdlerised (ie. edited for a child audience). A good online archive of most of the stories based on a 19th century translation by Margaret Hunt can be found here: <http://myweb.dal.ca/barkerb/fairies/grimm/>

You may also wish to look at the work of **Andrew Lang** who edited many collections of fairy tales specifically for a child audience, beginning with *The Blue Fairy Book* in 1889. You can find full versions of the fairy books and other works by Lang at:

<https://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/l/lang/andrew/>

Below is a list of suggested secondary reading

Author	Title	Publisher and date
Bettelheim, Bruno	<i>The Uses of Enchantment: The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales</i>	Vintage, 1979; repr. Penguin, 1991
Keene, Melanie	<i>Science in Wonderland: The Scientific Fairy tales of Victorian Britain</i>	OUP, 2015
Knoepfmacher, U	<i>Ventures into Childland: Victorians, Fairy Tales, And Femininity</i>	University of Chicago, 2000
Opie, Ione and Peter	<i>The Classic Fairy Tales</i>	OUP, 1980
Warner, Marina	<i>From The Beast To The Blonde: On Fairy Tales and Their Tellers</i>	Vintage, 1994
Warner, Marina	<i>No Go the Bogeyman: Scaring, Lulling and Making Mock</i>	Vintage, 2000
Warner, Marina	<i>Once Upon a Time: A Short History of Fairy Tales</i>	OUP, 2014
Zipes, Jack	<i>The Irresistible Fairy Tale: The Cultural and Social History of a Genre</i>	Princeton UP, 2012
Zipes, Jack	<i>Fairy Tales and the Art of Subversion</i>	repr. Routledge, 2011

Note Students of the Institute of Continuing Education are entitled to 20% discount on books published by Cambridge University Press (CUP) which are purchased at the Press bookshop, 1 Trinity Street, Cambridge (Mon-Sat 9am – 5:30pm, Sun 11am – 5pm). A letter or email confirming acceptance on to a current Institute course should be taken as evidence of enrolment.

Information correct as of: 22 January 2016