

Capstone Seminar: "Into the Woods"
ENGL467001, UNCP554101

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617

Bruno Bettelheim claims, in his landmark study of fairy tales, The Uses of Enchantment, that as human beings seek to find meaning in their lives, there is no better source of enrichment and enlightenment than the fairy tale. In fact, the German poet Schiller wrote, "Deeper meaning resides in the fairy tales taught to me in my childhood than in the truth taught by life." Fairy tales are a unique art form, and their deepest meanings are as varied as their readers. But all readers, young, old and in between, share the experience of wonder when confronted with them.

The splendor of the fairy tale is its ability to speak to both our pleasure in the fantastic, and to our concerns about the real world. The dimension of wonder

each student to evaluate his/her experience in the "woods," he/she will have to look backwards, as well as forwards.

Looking backwards we will ask: Who was I before I came to Boston College? What place did I come from? What does "place" even mean?

What was my connection with place? Has that changed in the last few years?

What were my expectations in coming to Boston College? Why did I choose this place for my journey? Have I been connected to the Boston College community, or is my sense of place connected to the larger city of Boston?

How have I participated in shaping my education? What does my transcript reflect about my experience here?

The metaphor of the journey through the woods is also a helpful one in our assessments of our relationships:

How have my relationships changed since coming to Boston College? How do I envision these relationships in the future?

What do I think about the idea of "going home" now?

The hero of the fairy tale leaves the woods with a renewed commitment to his community. We will ask our students how they plan to negotiate their transitions from the Boston College community into society, as well as to consider the way in which faith, or spiritual understanding is essential to negotiating any journey through the woods.

While this is a Capstone course, it is also an English course, which fulfills an English requirement for some of you. Others may have chosen this course because they were excited about the reading material. For these reasons we will be spending some time analyzing the books we read and the films we see. We will treat them as literature in addition to devices for self exploration. Along with personal reflections, there will be oral presentations and written assignments about the texts. Small groups will be assigned topics and questions to prepare and research in order to lead classroom discussions. The papers you write will vary depending on the focus of our discussions. For the most part, they will be personal responses to the assignments.

Of course, you are expected to attend **all** classes and to fulfill **all** your oral and written assignments **on time**. If, for some critical reason, you cannot, you need to contact me to discuss your problem **in advance of the due date**. In this class we are all responsible for helping each other learn and grow. Your absence not only undermines your own chance to learn, but also the opportunity of your classmates.

While this Capstone course is different from others, no student is allowed to take more than one Capstone course at Boston College, whether listed as a UN course or cross-listed in a department.

Integrity

You are expected to have high standards of integrity in this classroom. That relates to the personal information you will discover about each other, the way you treat each other, and the written work you do. Submitting work that is not your own is plagiarism. It is a violation of the nature of this course and the requirements of the University. Suspected cases of academic integrity violations will be reported to your class dean and investigated by the Academic Integrity Committee.

Grades

Your course grade will be based on **all** the work done during the semester: group reports, class discussions and participation, papers, assignments, etc. Your writing assignments may be rewritten and will be handed in again at the end of the semester in the form of a portfolio. In addition, there will be a long final paper due with the portfolio, in which you sum up your discoveries about yourself and relate your self understanding to the works you have read during the course and the papers you have written about them. There will be a midterm evaluation of your participation in the course and your writing assignments up to that time.

The quality and frequency of your class participation, including your reports on the assigned readings, will be 30% of your grade. Your written work during the semester and your final paper and portfolio will be 60% of your final grade. The final paper itself is 20% of that 60%. Your canvas reflections will be worth 10% of your grade. Please note that the posts close at 12:00AM on their end date and I have no ability to post for anyone other than myself.

Requests for Accommodations

If you are a student with a documented disability seeking reasonable accommodations in this course, please contact Kathy Duggan (617 552-8093) at the Connors Family Learning Center regarding learning disabilities or Paulette Durrett (617 552-3470) in the Disability Services Office regarding all other types of disabilities.

The **texts** will include a wide range of fairy tale materials:

Folk and Fairy Tales-fourth edition

Don't Bet on the Prince

The Alchemist

Midsummer Night's Dream

Into the Woods, by James Lapine and Stephen Sondheim

Kissing the Witch by Emma Donoghue

The basic premise for this Capstone seminar will be for all of us to explore

Weekly Schedule

This schedule is tentative. If we need more time, or even less, I will let you know in class or by email. Thanks for your patience.

August	29	Introduction- Questions: interview - F and Ft p.277- 281 What is a fairy tale? Who are we? What do those things have to do with each other? Corey Test #1
September	5	<u>Folk and Fairy Tales</u> , p.15-23, p.27-40, 67-78, 97-110,
	12	<u>F and Ft</u> - p. 139-155 ,169-191, 220-243
	19	<u>Folk and Fairy Tales</u> , Hans Christian Anderson-p.237-240,
	161, and	

Survey/Interview

Read Stopping by Woods and Goose Girl

1. What do you think "the woods" mean?
2. Think of an example of a time when you have gone into the "woods" and returned
3. What is poetic justice?
4. Cite an example of one time when you think poetic justice was achieved.
5. Cite an example of one time when you think poetic justice was not achieved.
6. What does it mean to have an epiphany?
7. Explain one epiphany that you have had.