

## An introduction to writing fantasy

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|-------------------|--|--------------------|---------------|
| <b>Start date</b> | 26 May 2018                              | <b>Time</b>        | 10:00 – 16:45 |
| <b>Venue</b>      | Madingley Hall<br>Madingley<br>Cambridge |                    |               |
| <b>Tutor</b>      | Natasha Pulley                           | <b>Course code</b> | 1718NDX032    |

**Interim Co-Directors of Public  
and Professional Programmes**

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**For further information on this  
course, please contact**

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**To book** See: [www.ice.cam.ac.uk](http://www.ice.cam.ac.uk) or telephone 01223 746262

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### Tutor biography

Natasha Pulley studied English Literature at Oxford University, and then went on to do a Masters in Creative Writing at the University of East Anglia. Her first novel, *The Watchmaker of Filigree Street*, was published in 2015 by Bloomsbury; her second, *The Bedlam Stacks*, in 2017. After research stints in Japan and Peru, she became an associate lecturer at Bath Spa and a panel tutor at ICE. She lives in Bath.

## Course programme

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|---------------|---|
| 09:30         | Terrace bar open for pre-course tea/coffee                      |
| 10:00 – 11:15 | <b>Fantasy language — where it's been and where it might go</b> |
| 11:15         | Coffee  |
| 11:45 – 13:00 | <b>Carl Jung and fantasy archetypes</b>                         |
| 13:00         | Lunch   |
| 14:00 – 15:15 | <b>Logic and magic — constructing fantasy</b>                   |
| 15:15         | Tea   |
| 15:30-16:45   | <b>Types of fantasy</b>   |
| 16:45         | Day-school ends   |

## Course syllabus

### Aims:

- To break down fantasy writing into some basic steps that help with both its early construction and later embroidery
- To encourage students to use logical frameworks in imagining fantastical ideas
- To encourage students to experiment with different kinds of language and style perhaps not usually associated with the genre

### Content:

- Fantasy language. This will focus on the stylistic options in fantasy writing, and on where 'classic' fantasy language comes from. It will include an exercise focusing on rewriting different passages in different styles, and hinge around snippets of some key texts: *Lord of the Rings* by JRR Tolkien, *Beowulf* by Seamus Heaney; *The Wake* by Paul Kingsnorth, *Everything Ravaged, Everything Burned* by Wells Tower.
- Fantasy archetypes. This will introduce Carl Jung's ideas about archetypal places and characters as a way into generating fantastical characters and settings. The key texts will be: *Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious* by Carl Jung; *Fool's Errand* by Robin Hobb, and *American Gods* by Neil Gaiman.
- Logic and Magic. This will focus on imagining fantastical concepts in a logical way, and include exercises on how to spin out one small idea into consequences that might shape a novel. We will use lots of different texts in this session, alongside some theory, in the form of *The Morphology of the Folktale* by Vladimir Propp.
- Types of fantasy. This session will introduce Farah Mendlesohn's four fantasy categories, and how style and voice often change depending on which type the story tends toward.

Note: All the texts will be provided in class. We will use only small sections of each, and all the sessions will include lots of discussion and experimental writing exercises. There is no need to read anything beforehand — only to come ready to write.

### Presentation of the course:

Class discussion, writing exercises.

**As a result of the course, within the constraints of the time available, students should be able to:**

- Understand more about where the modern fantasy genre comes from — its early roots, and its more modern influences
- Utilise ideas from different fields, like psychology and history, to inform their writing
- Construct fantasy characters, landscapes, and plots in an efficient and logical way

## Reading and resources list

Listed below are texts that might be of interest should you wish to supplement your learning on the course.

| Author            | Title  | Publisher and date  |
|-------------------|--|---|
| Gaiman, Neil      | <i>American Gods</i>                                 | Headline, 2017  |
| Gaiman, Neil      | <i>Neverwhere</i>                                    | Headline Review 2005  |
| Gilbert, Zoe      | <i>Folk</i>  | Bloomsbury 2018   |
| Heaney, Seamus    | <i>Beowulf</i>                                       | Faber & Faber 2000  |
| Hobb, Robin       | <i>Fool's Errand</i>                                 | HarperVoyager 2011  |
| Holdstock, Robert | <i>Mythago Wood</i>                                  | Gateway 2012  |
| Jung, Carl        | <i>The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious</i> | Routledge 1991  |
| Kingsnorth, Paul  | <i>The Wake</i>                                      | Unbound 2015  |
| Propp, Vladimir   | <i>The Morphology of the Folk Tale</i>               | University of Texas Press, 2009   |
| Lovecraft, HP     | <i>At the Mountains of Madness</i>                   | CreateSpace 2014  |
| Mendlesohn, Farah | <i>Toward a Taxonomy of Fantasy</i>                  | Journal of the Fantastic in the Arts Vol. 13, No. 2 (2002), pp. 169-183 |
| Tolkien, JRR      | <i>The Lord of the Rings</i>                         | HarperCollins 2009  |
| Tower, Wells      | <i>Everything Ravaged, Everything Burned</i>         | Granta Books 2010   |

## Website addresses

You can also read some of the older texts at [archive.org](https://archive.org), free of charge:

*The Lord of the Rings*:

<https://archive.org/details/TheLordOfTheRing1TheFellowshipOfTheRing>

*The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*:

<https://archive.org/details/collectedworksof91cgju>

'At the Mountains of Madness':

[https://archive.org/details/TheCompleteWorksOfHPLovecraft\\_201412](https://archive.org/details/TheCompleteWorksOfHPLovecraft_201412)

## **Additional information**

### **Venue**

Details of how to find Madingley Hall can be found on our website:  
<http://www.ice.cam.ac.uk/who-we-are/how-to-find-the-institute>

### **Refreshments**

Tea and coffee and lunch will be provided. If you have any specific dietary requirements or allergies and have not already advised us, please inform our Admissions Team on [ice.admissions@ice.cam.ac.uk](mailto:ice.admissions@ice.cam.ac.uk) or +44 (0)1223 746262.

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:* 17/05/2018