

Weekend Courses 2023-24

Fairy tales past and present

Start date 26 January 2024 **End date:** 28 January 2024

Venue: Madingley Hall
 Madingley
 Cambridge
 CB23 8AQ

Tutor: Dr Jenny Bavidge **Course Code:** 2324NRX016

Tutor biography

Jenny Bavidge is Associate Professor and Academic Director for English at ICE and is a member of the Cambridge English Faculty. Jenny took her BA in English Literature and Language at Worcester College, Oxford and then an MA and PhD at Royal Holloway, University of London. After ten years at the University of Greenwich, she joined ICE in 2011. She is a Fellow of Murray Edwards College, University of Cambridge and a Fellow of the English Academy and has published on contemporary literature, children's literature, and rats.

Jenny's approach to teaching is always to begin with close reading and to encourage students to develop and understand their own responses to the literature they encounter. Classes then aim to include a wide variety of critical, theoretical and contextual material to broaden potential approaches to literary study.

Course programme

Friday

Please plan to arrive between 16:30 and 18:30. You can meet other course members in the Terrace Bar which opens at 18:15. Tea and coffee making facilities are available in the study bedrooms.

- 19:00 Dinner
- 20:30 – 22:00 Introduction: the tangled history of the fairy tale; *Sleeping Beauty***
- 22:00 Terrace Bar open for informal discussion

Saturday

- 07:30 Breakfast (for residents only)
- 09:00 – 10:30 Into the woods: *Red Riding Hood***
- 10:30 Coffee
- 11:00 – 12:30 Beasts and bridegrooms: *Beauty and the Beast* and *Bluebeard***
- 13:00 Lunch
- 14:00 – 16:00 Free time
- 16:00 Tea
- 16:30 – 18:00 Enchantments and wishes: *Cinderella* and *Snow White***
- 18:00 – 18:30 Free time
- 18:30 Dinner
- 20:00 – 21:30 Adaptations and illustration: the visual life of the fairy tale**
- 21:30 Terrace Bar open for informal discussion

Sunday

- 07:30 Breakfast (for residents only)
- 09:00 – 10:30 The 19th century fairy tale: science and morality (Wilde and Hans Christian Andersen)**
- 10:30 Coffee
- 11:00 – 12:30 Fairy tales in the 20th and 21st centuries: Carter and Oyeyemi**
- 12:45 Lunch

The course will disperse after lunch

Course syllabus

Aims:

The course will allow you to:

- develop your knowledge of the rich history and theory of fairy tales in general and of the set tales in particular
- encounter various methodological and theoretical ways of reading and analysing fairy tales
- be involved in focused academic discussion of the course topic in order to develop powers of literary analysis and close reading

Summary of content:

Fairy tales are fluid stories, reinvented by their different tellers in different eras. This course will examine the history of the fairy tale, from its beginnings in oral traditions, through the collections of Perrault and the Brothers Grimm, to modern incarnations. We will consider how we often use the term 'fairy tale' to suggest a simple, fanciful or romantic story and 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 their darker origins have been written over or forgotten.

Our class text will be the Norton Critical Edition of *The Classic Fairy Tales* ed. by Maria Tatar, which groups together variations on some of the most famous tales. We will devote sessions to individual tales including *Red Riding Hood*, *Beauty and the Beast* and *Bluebeard*. Despite their seeming simplicity, fairy tales have invited and inspired rich analyses and critical interpretations and we will discuss various theories about fairy tale motifs, including psychoanalytic, structuralist and feminist approaches. The Norton Edition includes several modern rewritings of the tales so the course will also consider modern adaptations and rewritings of the Perrault and Grimm classics, supplemented by reference to the work of contemporary authors such as Helen Oyeyemi, whose work takes fairy tale themes and symbols out of the forest and relocates them in the modern world.

Presentation of the course:

The course will be taught in a series of informal lectures, with reference to illustration and film versions as well as the written tales which will be the main focus of our discussion.

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

- feel informed about past and current debates about fairy tales
- think and talk with confidence about methodological and theoretical approaches to the study of fairy tales
- understand the nature of close-reading and structural analysis as an approach to the study of fairy tales

Reading and resources list

Required reading: these are books / articles / sources that you must read prior to the course and are marked with an asterisk (*).

***The course text is:**

Tatar Maria (editor), *The Classic Fairy Tales*, Norton Critical Editions, 2nd Edition (2017)

Please bring a copy with you as we will refer to it throughout the course. Both paper editions of e-books are fine.

Please read everything in the section for each of the tales we're looking at but feel free to read as much of the rest as you like. Jenny will refer to the critical essays in her talks so you may find it useful to familiarise yourself with their main points as well.

Additional Primary Texts:

Carter, Angela, *The Bloody Chamber*, Virago or Vintage (first published 1979)

Oyeyemi, Helen, *Mr Fox*, Picador (2011)

Oyeyemi, Helen. *Boy, Snow, Bird*, Picador (2014)

Oyeyemi, Helen, *What Is Not Yours Is Not Yours*, Picador (2016)

You don't need to buy or read these as relevant extracts will be provided, but in our last session we will be discussing Angela Carter and Helen Oyeyemi's modern tales.

Please note, all of the works listed above contain strong adult themes.

You may also want to watch any of the **numerous adaptations and films** inspired by the classic fairy tales. Here are some suggestions:

Any of the Disney adaptations

La Belle et la Bête (Jean Cocteau, 1946)

Company of Wolves (Neil Jordan, 1984)

Enchanted (Kevin Lima, 2007)

Into the Woods (Rob Marshall, 2014)

Tale of Tales (Matteo Garrone, 2015) – an adaptation of Basile's *Pentamarone*

Cinderella (Kenneth Branagh, 2015)

Critical texts

Bettelheim, Bruno, *The Uses of Enchantment: The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales*, Vintage (1979), reprod. Penguin (1991)

Opie, Ione and Peter, *The Classic Fairy Tales*, Oxford University Press (1980)

Warner, Marina, *From The Beast To The Blonde: On Fairy Tales and Their Tellers*, Vintage (1994)

Warner, Marina, *No Go the Bogeyman: Scaring, Lulling and Making Mock*, Vintage (2000)

Warner, Marina, *Once Upon a Time: A Short History of Fairy Tales*, Oxford University Press (2014)

Zipes, Jack, *The Irresistible Fairy Tale: The Cultural and Social History of a Genre*, Princeton University Press, (2012)

Zipes, Jack, *Fairy Tales and the Art of Subversion*, reprinted Routledge (2011)

Supplementary reading

More of Charles Perrault's stories can be found in *The Complete Fairy Tales*, translated by Christopher Betts (Oxford World Classics).

There are many editions of the Grimms' *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 an edition which is not too bowdlerised (for example, edited for a child audience).

You may also wish to look at the work of British editor Andrew Lang who edited many collections of fairy tales specifically for a late 19th-century 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/lang/andrew/>

Online resources:

Sur la Lune <https://www.surlalunefairytales.com> is a brilliant resource, including many annotated versions of the tales.

Multilingual Folk Tale Database provides detailed listings of the 'family tree' of folk tales: https://sites.ualberta.ca/~urban/Projects/English/Content/ATU_Tales.htm

Note: Institute of Continuing Education (ICE) students 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 ICE course should be taken as evidence of enrolment.

(Information correct as of 15 May 2023)