

Fall 2019, TR 11-12:15, PR 101

Instructor: Christopher Chinn (christopher.chinn@pomona.edu)

Office: PR 7 **Extension:** 7-2926

Office Hours: MW 10-10:50 or by appointment. I have an open-door policy and am in my office quite a bit, but it's always best to let me know ahead of time if you intend to drop in.

Course Objective: The goal of this course is threefold: (1) to familiarize the student with some of Tolkien's works; (2) to introduce the student to various forms of literary analysis; (3) to introduce the student to some types of college-level writing. The main question with which we will be concerned is: In what ways do Tolkien's works influence recent literature, film, and culture?

Course Plan: We will read *The Lord of the Rings* and parts of *The Silmarillion*. We will consider these works from various perspectives, including style, gender, class, colonialism, ecology, and aesthetics. On Tuesdays we will discuss the readings in a more or less free form discussion. On Thursdays we will engage in in-class writing assignments utilizing various critical lenses. There will also be four formal writing assignments over the course of the term.

Texts: Please obtain an authorized and revised edition of *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Silmarillion*. I have ordered an edition that follows the pagination of the Second Edition, but pretty much any one will do, so long as it is complete and reflects the latest state of the text.

NB: I may provide additional texts during the course of the term.

Academic responsibility: I take the issues of cheating and plagiarism seriously. Please familiarize yourself with Pomona's policies and procedures regarding appropriate and inappropriate academic behavior by reading the following page: http://catalog.pomona.edu/content.php?catoid=3&navoid=80#Academic_Standards

It is your responsibility to be aware of what constitutes academic misconduct, plagiarism, and other violations of academic honesty.

Academic accommodations: Pomona College is committed to providing equal opportunity for participation in all programs, services and activities. Requests for accommodations may be made by contacting the Dean of Students Office. It is up to the student to contact the professor to fulfill the accommodations. Requests received after this date will be honored whenever possible.

Grading: Here is the breakdown of assignments. For my views on grading, participation, and classroom etiquette, please read this: <http://pages.pomona.edu/~cmc24747/policies.htm>.

Formal written work (4 assignments): 60%

In-class assignments: 20%

In-class participation and attendance: 20%*

*The participation component is based on my impression of your preparedness. If I feel you are not prepared on more than one occasion, you will lose 2 percentage points for each subsequent instance of unpreparedness. Attendance is mandatory. Your overall grade will be reduced by one-third of a letter grade for each unexcused absence. For an absence to be excused you must provide me with appropriate documentation within one day.

Course expectations: I expect you to engage in critical reading of the texts, to participate actively in class, and to produce good writing. Below I have detailed my expectations of you.

I. Reading: Expect to engage in critical reading of about 100 pages per class week. Tolkien's works can be easy to understand at times, and very difficult at others. When you encounter difficulties, do the following:

- Write down any questions or observations you have while reading. Analyze these questions and observations for patterns before coming to class and make sure to bring them up.

- Don't worry about all the details. Keep track of the thread of the narrative, and any features of the text that strike you as interesting or unusual. Write down your ideas and bring them to class. We'll work out the minor details in class.
- Try to find solutions to problems or confusions you may have by briefly reviewing a difficult section after your first attempt. Often you will be able to answer your questions yourself this way.

II. Writing: For all papers I expect good writing and complete documentation where applicable (see my "Writing guidelines" sheet: http://pages.pomona.edu/~cmc24747/writing_guidelines.htm). Paper assignments will be graduated to reflect your increased experience with the texts.

- Your papers should propose an interesting ("debatable") thesis, and should support this thesis with evidence from the text.
- State your case as simply and forcefully as you can.
- Provide citation of all evidence used. NB that modern scholarship does not in most cases constitute evidence (though if you follow a modern scholar's argument you should cite it).
- Do not use internet sources of any kind. I know this is a draconian stricture, but it seems necessary in order to cut down on plagiarism, both intentional and unintentional.
- The Writing Center offers students free, one-on-one consultations at any stage of the writing process. Consultations are available by appointment, which you can make online: <http://www.pomona.edu/administration/writing-center>.

III. Participation: Active participation in class is an extremely important part of this course. You are asked to contribute to all discussions.

- Come to class prepared to talk about the assigned texts. This means having questions, observations, and arguments *written down ahead of time*. It also means you have to bring up what you've written down during class discussion.
- If you're shy, come talk to me about strategies for you to participate. I will also try to get you involved at appropriate times during class.
- Make sure you pull your weight in group work. Collaboration with others is an important skill in the real world, so you might as well start practicing it now.

Schedule of readings: We will try to follow the course of readings below. This schedule is subject to change, depending upon the pace of our discussions. Please pay attention for email updates! Please have the assignments read BEFORE the date indicated.

Date	Reading Assignment	Activity	Writing Work
Sept 3		NO CLASS	
Sept 5		Course Introduction	
Sept 10	<i>FR</i> Prologue; I.1-5	Discussion of text	
Sept 12		Figurative language	
Sept 17	I.6-12	Discussion of text	Model Paper 1
Sept 19		“New Criticism”	In-class writing
Sept 24	II.1-5	Discussion of text	Paper 1: Stylistic Analysis
Sept 26		Narratology	Schedule draft discussions
Oct 1	II.6-III.2	Discussion of text	
Oct 3		Philology	DUE 10/4 5pm
Oct 8	III.3-7	Discussion of text	Model Paper 2
Oct 10		Genre	In-class writing
Oct 15	III.8-IV.3	Discussion of text	Paper 2: Philological Analysis
Oct 17		Gender	Schedule draft discussions
Oct 22		NO CLASS	
Oct 24	IV.4-10	Discussion of text	DUE 10/25 5pm
Oct 29	V.1-7	Discussion of text	Model Paper 3
Oct 31		Class Struggle	In-class writing
Nov 5	V.8-VI.4	Discussion of text	Paper 3: Scholarly Problem
Nov 7		The Other	
Nov 12	VI.5-9	Discussion of text	Schedule draft discussions
Nov 14		Nature	
Nov 19	<i>Ainulindalë; Valaquenta; Quenta Silmarillion</i> 1-8	Discussion of text	
Nov 21		Myth and mythmaking	DUE 11/22 5pm
Nov 26	<i>Quenta Silmarillion</i> 9-16	Discussion of text	Model Paper 4
Nov 28		NO CLASS	
Dec 3	<i>Quenta Silmarillion</i> 17-20	Discussion of text	Paper 4: Original Myth or Poem
Dec 5		Folktale motifs	
Dec 10	<i>Quenta Silmarillion</i> 21-24	Discussion of text	DUE 12/11 5pm

Select Bibliography: Below is a very brief selection of reference works on Tolkien's writings and fantasy writing generally.

- Carpenter, Humphrey (ed.). *The Letters of J.R.R. Tolkien*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2000.
- Drout, Michael D.C. (ed.). *J.R.R. Tolkien Encyclopedia: Scholarly and Critical Assessment*. New York: Routledge, 2013.
- Fonstad, Karen Wynn. *The Atlas of Middle-Earth*, revised edition. Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1991.
- Foster, Robert. *The Complete Guide to Middle-Earth: From The Hobbit Through The Lord of the Rings and Beyond*. New York: Random House, 2001.
- Hammond, Wayne G. and Christina Scull. *The Lord of the Rings: A Reader's Companion*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2005.
- James, Edward and Farah Mendlesohn (eds.). *The Cambridge Companion to Fantasy Literature*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012.
- Martin, Philip. *A Guide to Fantasy Literature*. Milwaukee, WI: Crickhollow Books, 2009.
- Shippey, Tom. *J. R. R. Tolkien: Author of the Century*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2001.
- Shippey, Tom. *The Road to Middle-Earth*. Revised Edition. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2003.
- Sibley, Brian and John Howe. *The Maps of Tolkien's Middle-Earth*. Mythopoeic Press, 2005.
- Snyder, Christopher. *The Making of Middle-Earth: A New Look Inside the World of J.R.R. Tolkien*. New York: Sterling, 2013.
- Tolkien, Christopher et al. (eds.). *The History of Middle Earth*, 12 volumes. Various Editions, 1983-1996.
- Tyler, J.E.A. *The New Tolkien Companion*. New York: St. Martin's, 1979.
- Wolfe, Gary. *Critical Terms for Science Fiction and Fantasy*. New York: Greenwood Press, 1986.