**English 480**

**Senior Seminar in Speculative Fiction**

**Dr. Donna Little**

**Fall 2023**

**Course Time: MW 1:30-2:45**

**Course Location: Scarbrough Room, Lawson Hall**

**Office Location: 124A Lawson**

**Open Office Hours: TR 12:30-3:30**

**Dr. Little’s e-mail:** [**dlc@reinhardt.edu**](mailto:dlc@reinhardt.edu)

**Texts**

*Magical Realist Fiction: An Anthology*, Ed. David Young and Keith Hollaman

Madeline L’Engle, *A Wrinkle in Time*

Angela Carter, *The Bloody Chamber*

C.S. Lewis, *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*

C.S. Lewis, *Til We Have Faces*

**Grades**

Student progress in the course will be measured by

1. Weekly journal (two-page minimum) on your assigned craft element in that week’s readings (25%)
2. Two new pages of story (minimum) due each week (you can turn in up to 5 pages per week) and Revisions of the previous week’s pages due each week (50%)
3. Attendance and Daily Report on your assigned craft element in each day’s reading (25%)

**Course Objectives**

1. Learn effective **strategies for generating** Speculative Fiction
2. Learn to recognize and use **images** in Speculative Fiction
3. Learn to recognize and use **setting** in Speculative Fiction
4. Learn to write **scene** in Speculative Fiction
5. Learn to write **exposition (background information)** in Speculative Fiction
6. Learn to use effective **diction (word choice)** and **syntax (sentence structure)** in Speculative Fiction
7. Learn to use **character**, **point of view, voice and tone** in Speculative Fiction
8. Learn to recognize and generate **tension** in Speculative Fiction
9. Learn to recognize and use **figurative language** in Speculative Fiction
10. Learn to recognize and use **structure** in Speculative Fiction
11. Learn to create effective **plot points** in Speculative Fiction
12. Learn to use **movement and development** in Speculative Fiction
13. Learn to use effective **chronology** and **structural strategies such as backstory, flashback, foreshadowing** in Speculative Fiction
14. Learn to create effective **beginnings and endings** in Speculative Fiction
15. Learn to recognize and use **insight** in Speculative Fiction
16. Learn to **comprehend and analyze** the work of other Speculative Fiction writers
17. Learn and **apply literary terms** to assigned texts and to your own work
18. Learn to **revise** your own writing.
19. Learn to effectively **critique** the writing of other students.

**Assessment of BFA Student Learning Outcomes**

**Student Learning Outcome 1:** All Reinhardt University BFA in Creative Writing majors will demonstrate sound skills in using genre-appropriate **structure** in creative writing assignments.

**Means of assessment**: stories

**Student Learning Outcome 2:** All Reinhardt University BFA in Creative Writing majors will demonstrate sound skills in using narrative and/or character-appropriate **voice** in creative writing assignments.

**Means of assessment:** stories

**Student Learning Outcome 3:** All Reinhardt University BFA in Creative Writing majors will demonstrate sound skills in using sensory **imagery** in creative writing assignments.

**Means of assessment:** stories

**Student Learning Outcome 4:** All Reinhardt University BFA in Creative Writing majors will learn to **comprehend and analyze literary texts**.

**Means of assessment:** dailyjournal

**Student Learning Outcome 5:** All Reinhardt University BFA in Creative Writing majors will learn to **revise** their own writing.

**Means of assessment:** story revisions

**Credit Hour Statement:**

This 15-week 3-credit hour course has 2250 minutes of classroom instruction over the course of the semester (75 minutes twice a week, equaling 150 minutes per week).

**Instructions and Grading Criteria for Weekly Story Pages:**

Write it in Microsoft Word and upload the file to Canvas. There is a two-page minimum. I will write comments and grade them electronically within Canvas.

* On time
* Required length (two page minimum, 5 page maximum)
* Typed, double-spaced
* Free of typos and careless errors
* Original and creative
* Demonstrates investment in writing process (time, thought, effort)
* Very descriptive in setting and characters
* Imagery is strong and concrete
* Emotions are conveyed through detailed, concrete images rather than abstract statements
* Minimal “paper speak”
* Good balance of showing and telling
* Mostly scene with some exposition
* Intriguing plot, not clichéd and predictable
* Effective chronology and structure, use of flashback, foreshadowing etc.
* Point of view is consistent and effective
* Narrator sounds like a real person
* Dialogue is realistic and moves the plot forward
* Characters are “round” and complex, not stereotypes
* Beginning grabs reader’s interest
* Ending is “return with a twist,” believable but not predictable

**Grading Criteria for REVISIONS of Stories:**

* On time
* You must make significant improvements based on ALL of our comments on the draft. The most important things are the Big Picture issues like plot and character, not picky issues like grammar or punctuation.
* A revision which is the same as the draft will receive a zero, and a revision that makes only superficial changes will receive a grade from 10 to 30 points LESS than the original Draft.

**Instructions and Grading Criteria for Analysis Journals:**

Write it in Microsoft Word and upload the file to Canvas. There is a two-page minimum. I will write comments and grade them electronically within Canvas.

* On time
* Required length (one page minimum)
* Typed, double-spaced
* Free of typos and careless errors
* Enough details to demonstrate you read the assigned pages
* Refer to both of the readings from that week
* Include at least four quotations from the texts with page numbers in parentheses. You don’t need a Works Cited Page.
* Thoughtful analysis of your assigned craft element in the texts plus anything else you want to say.

**Late Stories and Journals**

There will be a ten-point deduction for each class period that an assignment is late. Late work is an imposition on your professor’s time and patience. I understand that occasionally illness or family situations can cause you to be late with your work, but please do not be late with multiple assignments.

**Attendance and Tardiness Policy**

**College professors are now required by the federal government to take attendance and to report when students who are receiving Financial Aid, which is pretty much everybody, stop coming to class. If you have excessive absences, you could have to pay back your student loans out of your own pocket.**

Each student is allowed to miss two class meetings, no questions asked. However, serious personal or family illness should be the only reason a student would miss more than two class meetings. Three or four absences will adversely affect your participation grade. There is no way that a student who misses more than four class meetings could absorb the content of the course, and students with more than four absences will be administratively withdrawn from the class.

If you have Covid, you will be given the option to attend class on Teams or to receive audio recordings of the missed classes.

Athletes do receive excused absences for games, but I must have written documentation from the coach. It is a good idea to give each of your professors your game schedule at the beginning of the semester.

Everyone is occasionally late to class. However, it is discourteous to be late all of the time. If you are repeatedly late, I will call you into my office to discuss the problem, and your participation grade will be a C or lower.

**Academic Dishonesty Policy**

If you plagiarize any assignment, I will fail you for the class, and I may choose to refer you to Judicial for punishment. Plagiarism is defined as presenting as your own any work that is not your own, whether it is work written by another student or parent or work copied from a written source or the Internet.

**Participation**

Participation is an extremely important part of this class and can make or break your grade. In order to receive an A or B in participation, you should contribute to the class on a regular basis. However, please do not “hog” class discussion or go off on irrelevant tangents. We need to stay on task. If I feel that you are dominating class discussion or going off on tangents, I will call you into my office to discuss the problem.

**Class Behavior**

My expectations for appropriate and acceptable classroom behavior are as follows:

1. Be on time.
2. Come prepared with the appropriate books and written assignments.
3. **PHONES MUST BE TURNED OFF AND PUT AWAY, UNLESS YOU ARE ACTIVELY LOOKING AT ONE OF OUR READING ASSIGNMENTS ON THE PHONE. ABSOLUTELY NO TEXTING OR CHECKING MESSAGES.**
4. Be courteous and respectful of others during class discussion. No derogatory remarks on the basis of gender, race, religion or sexuality will be tolerated. Reinhardt University does not condone or tolerate discrimination. If any such remarks are made, I will ask you to stop and to meet with me outside of class to discuss the problem. If the problem continues, I will withdraw you from the class.
5. Raise your hand when you want to speak and wait until it’s your turn. Keep your remarks relevant to the discussion and of a reasonable length and number.
6. Be respectful to the professor inside and outside of class. If you have problems or questions regarding a grade, attendance, course expectations or late assignments, the appropriate place to discuss that is in my office.

**READING ASSIGNMENTS MUST BE COMPLETED BEFORE CLASS ON THE DAY THEY ARE LISTED.**

**Week 1**

**Mon., 8/14:** Introductions; Definition and Varieties of Speculative Fiction; Assign Craft Elements; World-Building; Fairy Tales and Legends; Archetypes and Tropes; Hero’s Journey and Heroine’s Journey

* World-Building and Setting description (image=appeals to the 5 senses)
* Character description and development (image, actions, dialogue, growth)
* Story structure (something weird happens that matters; what is the conflict? how it the story organized?)
* Point of view, voice, style, mood and tone (includes diction=word choice and syntax=sentence structure; What is the “vibe” of the piece and how does the writer create it? What is the “trademark style” of this writer?)
* Figurative language: archetypes, tropes, symbols, metaphor, simile, personification

**Wed., 8/16:** Fiction Writing Bootcamp (nothing due); Archetypes and Tropes cont.

**Week 2**

**Mon.,** **8/21:** First Two Pages; workshop

**Wed., 8/23**: Weekly Analysis Journal Due; Rilke, “Death of Chamberlian Brigge” (In *Magical Realist Fiction*)

**Week 3**

**Mon., 8/28:** Two new pages of story due; Maria Luisa Bombal, “New Islands” (In *Magical Realist Fiction*)

**Wed., 8/30:** Weekly Analysis Journal Due; Watch before class: Film *Pan’s Labyrinth*

**Week 4**

**Mon., 9/4: Labor Day, No Class**

**Wed., 9/6:** Two new pages of story plus revisions due; *A Wrinkle in Time* 1-80

**Week 5**

**Mon., 9/11:** Two new pages of story plus revisions due; *A Wrinkle in Time* 81-160

**Wed., 9/13:** Weekly Analysis Journal Due; *A Wrinkle in Time* 161-245

**Week 6**

**Mon., 9/18:** Two new pages of story plus revisions due; Angela Carter, “The Werewolf and Wolf Alice”

# Wed., 9/20: Weekly Analysis Journal Due; Angela Carter, “The Bloody Chamber”

**Week 7**

**Mon., 9/25:** Two new pages of story plus revisions due; Angela Carter, “The Courtship of Mr. Lyon”

**Wed., 9/27:** Weekly Analysis Journal Due; Angela Carter, The Tiger’s Bride”

**Week 8**

**Mon., 10/2:** Two new pages of story plus revisions due; C.S. Lewis, *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader* 1-80

**Wed., 10/4: FALL BREAK**

**Week 9**

**Mon., 10/9:** Two new pages of story plus revisions due; *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader* 81-160

**Wed., 10/11:** Weekly Analysis Journal Due; *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader* 161-248

**Week 10**

**Mon., 10/16:** Two new pages of story plus revisions due; C.S. Lewis, *Til We Have Faces* 1-60

**Wed., 10/18:** Weekly Analysis Journal Due; *Til We Have Faces* 61-120

**Week 11**

**Tues., 10/23:** Two new pages of story plus revisions due; *Til We Have Faces* 121-180

**Thurs., 10/25:** Weekly Analysis Journal Due; *Til We Have Faces* 181-240

**Week 12**

**Mon., 10/30:** Two new pages of story plus revisions due; *Til We Have Faces* 241- 309

**Wed., 11/1:** Weekly Analysis Journal Due; Carlos Funetes, “Aura” (In *Magical Realist Fiction*)

**Week 13**

**Mon., 11/6:** Two new pages of story plus revisions due; Robert Escarpit, “Cloud Maker” (In *Magical Realist Fiction*)

**Wed., 11/8:** Weekly Analysis Journal Due; Alfonso Reyes, “Major Aranda’s Hand” (In *Magical Realist Fiction*)

**Week 14**

**Mon., 11/13:** Two new pages of story plus revisions due; Vladimir Nabokov, “Visit to the Museum” (In *Magical Realist Fiction*)

**Wed., 11/15:** Weekly Analysis Journal Due; Alejo Carpentier, “Journey to the Seed” (In *Magical Realist Fiction*)

**Week 15**

**Mon., 11/20:** Upload your manuscript of all the pages you have written so far