

## CPLS W4080 Magic and Modernity

Fall 2012  
MW 10:10-11:25  
Room TBA  
Barnard GERs: LIT, CUL

Prof. Rebecca Stanton  
226A Milbank, x4-3313  
rstanton@barnard.edu  
Office hours: W 4-6 and by appt.

### Course Description

This course will examine literary treatments of magic, centering on certain key moments in European intellectual history: ancient Rome, medieval Europe, Renaissance England, the Enlightenment, and revolutionary Russia. As you can tell from this description, the “Modernity” of the course title refers not to a specific period in history but to an idea of “modernity” – characterized by a shift in the prevailing modes of scientific, political, and/or epistemological thought – that may take a variety of forms depending on the historical and cultural status quo that it challenges. One of the central questions the course will investigate concerns the relationship between the character and depiction of magic in texts of a given period and the nature of “modernity” and its attendant anxieties for writers of that period. We will also look at how texts produce and contain magical effects, and how magic functions as a way of understanding the world.

### Student Learning Outcomes

Students who successfully complete this course will be able to:

- Discuss, with some degree of subtlety and attention to historical and cultural context, the significance of “magic” as a category for understanding the world.
- Compare and contrast literary models of magic produced in different historical eras and in different cultures.
- Perform a close reading of a literary text, identifying the significant poetic or rhetorical strategies it employs.
- Employ theory judiciously as a tool for the interpretation of texts.
- Synthesize ideas presented in disparate texts in the context of a thematic essay.

### Assignments

Paper(s)*.....	50%
Final Exam .....	25%
Participation (online and in-class)†...	25%

\*One 4000-word (approx. 15 pages) paper, due on April 22; or two 2000-word (approx. 7 pages) papers, the first due on March 4, the second on April 22. Topics should be agreed with me in advance. Graduate students should plan to write the longer final paper; undergraduates may choose to write one longer paper or two shorter ones. Papers may offer a close reading of a single text, a comparative analysis of two or more texts, or a theoretical approach to one or more texts. Graduate students are expected to consult appropriate secondary sources. I will distribute suggested topics, but you are encouraged to develop your own in consultation with me.

† Both online participation (on Courseworks) and in-class participation will count toward fulfilling this requirement. Over the course of the semester, each student will be expected to make one “front page” post on the course blog (a sign-up sheet will go around in class), and to comment on the blog at least once a week. You should also plan to participate in class discussions. If you are uncomfortable speaking in class, you may compensate by commenting more often on the blog.

### Textbooks and Readings

The following required books have been ordered into Book Culture (112<sup>th</sup> St. between Broadway and Amsterdam Ave.). You are welcome to search online for cheaper used copies, or to borrow the books from the library, but please make every effort to obtain the assigned editions, as they have been chosen with care.

- Maria Tatar (ed.), *The Classic Fairy Tales: Texts, Criticism* (Norton; ISBN 9780393972771)
- Apuleius, *The Golden Ass*, trans. P. G. Walsh (Oxford University Press; ISBN 9780199540556)
- Shakespeare, *The Tempest* (Pelican; ISBN 9780140714852)
- Marlowe, *Doctor Faustus*, ed. Christopher Wootton (Hackett; ISBN 9780872207295)
- Spenser, *The Faerie Queene: Book One*, ed. Carol V. Kaske (Hackett; ISBN 0872208079)
- Goethe, *Faust: The First Part of the Tragedy, with unpublished scenarios and the Urfaust*, trans. and ed. John R. Williams (Wordsworth Classics; ISBN 9781840221152)
- Mikhail Bulgakov, *The Master and Margarita*, trans. Burgin & O'Connor (Vintage; ISBN 9780679760801)
- Lev Grossman, *The Magicians* (Plume; ISBN 9780452296299)

Recommended but not required:

- Marina Balina et al. (eds.), *Politicizing Magic: An Anthology of Russian and Soviet Fairy Tales* (Northwestern University Press; ISBN 9780810120327)

Shorter and out-of-print readings (marked with an asterisk in the schedule) will be supplied via e-reserves on Courseworks.

### Field Trip

If ticket availability allows, we will arrange a class outing to the Metropolitan Opera to see their production of Thomas Adès's *The Tempest*, based on Shakespeare's play. Possible dates: Oct 23, Nov 14.

### Schedule of Topics and Readings

<u>September</u>	
Wed 5	Introduction.
	<b>I. Ancient Magic.</b>
Mon 10	*Ovid, <i>Metamorphoses</i> : I.1-261; IV.285-388; VI.1-131; VII.1-454
Wed 12	*Ovid, <i>Metamorphoses</i> : X.305-521; XIII.623-XIV.44; brief excerpts from <i>Ars Amatoria</i> and <i>Remedia Amoris</i>
Mon 17	Apuleius, <i>The Golden Ass</i> , books 1-7 (pp. 1-137)
Wed 19	Apuleius, <i>The Golden Ass</i> , books 8-11 (pp. 138-240)
	<b>II. Medieval Magic: Merlin, alchemy, and romance.</b>
Mon 24	Magic in Arthurian Britain: *Geoffrey of Monmouth, <i>History of the Kings of Britain</i> (excerpt, ~ 30pp.) *Chretien de Troyes, "Yvain"
Wed 26	Love, fidelity, and fairies: *Chaucer, <i>Canterbury Tales</i> : "The Wife of Bath's Tale" *Marie de France, <i>Lais</i> : "Prologue," "Guigemar" * <i>Sir Orfeo</i> (Anon., trans. M. Osborn)

<u>October</u>	
Mon 1	Alchemy and the arcane sciences: *Chaucer, <i>Canterbury Tales</i> : “The Canon’s Yeoman’s Tale” and “The Franklin’s Tale”
Wed 3	Love potions: Tristan and Yseult *Malory, <i>Le Morte d’Arthur</i> (excerpts) *Marie de France, <i>Lais</i> : “Chevrefoil”
	<b>III. Renaissance Magic</b>
Mon 8	Spenser, <i>The Faerie Queen</i> , Book I, Cantos i-viii
Wed 10	Spenser, <i>The Faerie Queen</i> , Book I, Cantos ix-xii; Book III, Cantos ii, xi-xii
Mon 15	Shakespeare, <i>The Tempest</i> , Acts I-III
Wed 17	Shakespeare, <i>The Tempest</i> , Acts IV-V.
<b>Fri 19</b>	<b>Last day to turn in Essay No. 1</b>
	<b>IV. The Faust Legend</b>
Mon 22	<i>The History of the Damnable Life and Deserved Death of Doctor John Faustus</i> (in our edition of Marlowe’s <i>Doctor Faustus</i> , pp. 67-151).
Wed 24	Marlowe, <i>Doctor Faustus</i>
Mon 29	Goethe, the complete <i>Urfaust</i> (pp. 383-443 in the edition listed above), and the following excerpts from <i>Faust, The First Part of the Tragedy</i> : lines 1-807 (pp. 3-26), lines 1178-1867 (pp. 38-57).
Wed 31	*Gounod, <i>Faust</i> (sound files and PDF of libretto available on Courseworks)
<u>November</u>	
Wed 7	Bulgakov, <i>The Master and Margarita</i> , Ch. 1-13
Mon 12	Bulgakov, <i>The Master and Margarita</i> , Ch. 14-24
Wed 14	Bulgakov, <i>The Master and Margarita</i> , Ch. 25-end.
	<b>V. Utilitarian Magic: Fairy tales, theory, and politics.</b>
Mon 19	<i>The Classic Fairy Tales</i> : “Beauty and the Beast” (pp. 25-73), “Snow White” (pp. 74-100), “Hansel and Gretel” (pp. 179-211); relevant criticism (pp. 269-296, 373-388).
Wed 21	*Classic Russian fairy tales, and their Revolutionary counterparts, in <i>Politicizing Magic</i> : Foreword (pp. ix-xiv), pp. 32-41, 62-78, 85-95, 165-196, 222-229.
Mon 26	*The Strugatsky Brothers, <i>Monday Begins on Saturday</i> , Story No. 1
Wed 28	* <i>Monday Begins on Saturday</i> , Story No. 3 and Postscript
<b>Fri 30</b>	<b>Last day to turn in Essay No. 2</b>
<u>December</u>	
Mon 3	Grossman, <i>The Magicians</i> , pp. 1-165
Wed 5	Grossman, <i>The Magicians</i> , pp. 166-277
Mon 10	Grossman, <i>The Magicians</i> , pp. 281-402.