Euro 6020 Myth, Fairy Tales and European Identities
Course Outline
F 2023

Please note: This is a preliminary web course description only. The department reserves the right to change without notice any information in this description. The final, binding course outline will be distributed in the first class of the semester.

Instructor: Dr. Paola Mayer
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Office hours: tbd

Guest lecturers:
Dr. Margot Irvine (European Studies/French)
Dr. Sandra Parmegiani (European Studies/Italian)
Dr. John Walsh (Classics)

Course Description
The course will explore how myths and fairy tales have been refashioned in European literature and culture to express political, social or aesthetic concerns. Examples will be chosen from different national cultures and epochs.

In Fall 2023, the course will focus on:
1. Fairy tales and Romanticism: nature, the intersection of nature and gender
2. Myth and politics: the state vs. the individual, gender, marginalized groups, the critique of totalitarianism

Texts will be drawn from classical antiquity and from various European literatures from the early modern era to the 21st century.

Note: all texts will be available in English translation, but students are encouraged to read texts in the original where they are able to do so.

Learning Outcomes
By the end of the course, students should be able to:

• understand the complex interplay between the refashioning of myths and particular political discourses
• analyze cultural artefacts in order to extract their social, political or intellectual aims and to explain their strategies
• understand how and why folkloric material lends itself to identity-grounding endeavours or to express the concerns of marginalized groups
• construct their own arguments with appropriate proofs and present them in a sophisticated, professional manner, either orally or in written form
• learn to engage with and critique scholarly literature
• make responsible use of cultural and historical sources and present their own research in an ethical manner
Required Texts
To be purchased from the University textbook store:

- Christa Wolf. *Medea*.
- Ismail Kadaré, *Agamemnon’s Daughter*.
- Jean Anouilh, *Antigone*.
- Marina Carr. *By the Bog of Cats*.
(Note: Wolf and Kadaré are also available on Kindle).

Available electronically or on Courselink:


Shorter texts will be made available on Courselink or through the library.

Method of Presentation
One seminar-style meeting per week, Wednesdays 2:30-5:20.

Method of Evaluation
Participation – 20%
Mini presentation – 5%
Seminar presentation (ca. 15 min.) – 15%
Short Writing Assignment – 10%
Research paper proposal – 5%
Essay presentation – 10%
Research paper – 35%