**Euro 6020 Myth, Fairy Tales and European Identities**

**Course Outline**

**F 2021**

**Instructor:** Dr. Paola Mayer

**e-mail**: [pmayer@uoguelph.ca](mailto:pmayer@uoguelph.ca)

**Office hours:** remote, via Teams, by appointment; please contact me by e-mail

**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 2021, the course will focus on the following – often intersecting – themes:

1. myth, fairy tales and national identity: the collecting of fairy tales and the refashioning of myths as a way to create national identity; how the construction of the hero interplays with such notions of collective identity

2. myth, fairy tales and women’s identity: how authors both male and female have used these genres to express views on the social and political situation of women

3. myth and politics: how adaptations of myth have been used as a way to comment on themes such as war, the oppression of the individual, the totalitarian state.

Texts (including one film) 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:

* Bettina and Gisela von Arnim. *The Life of High Countess Gritta von Ratsinourhouse.*
* Christa Wolf. *Cassandra.*
* Stefan Heym. *The Wandering Jew.*
* Ismail Kadaré, *Agamemnon’s Daughter.*

(Note: Wolf and Kadaré are also available on Kindle).

Available electronically or on Courselink :

* Sophocles, Antigone. Recommended translation: *The Three Theban Plays: Antigone/Oedipus the King/Oedipus at Colonus.* Paperback – 1984 Bernard Knox (Editor, Introduction), Robert Fagles (Translator)
* Jean Anouilh. *Antigone.*
* Jean-Paul Sartre. *The Flies.*

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. We will start remotely via Teams, but will move to in-person by October, if the public health situation allows.

There will also be remote asynchronous components in the form of posting to the Discussions board on Courselink.

**Method of Evaluation**

Participation – 20%

Seminar presentation (ca. 15 min.) – 15%

Response to presentation – 5%

Short Writing Assignment – 10%

Research paper proposal – 10%

Essay presentation – 5%

Research paper –35%

**Participation**

This will consist of the following components:

* completion of all readings, attendance at all classes
* preparation and contributing of thoughtful responses to discussion questions provided
* responses to other students’ contributions (including to discussion posts on Courselink)
* posting concise answers to discussion questions on Courselink (within a week of the class in question); you may post as often as you like, but you must post a minimum of 5 responses. If you respond to another student’s post, be sure you take the discussion further and not merely repeat what was said already.

Participation will be graded based on regularity (i.e. missed postings or meetings, times when you were not prepared will detract from the grade), but mainly on quality.

**Seminar Presentation**

Each student will give a seminar presentation of 15 minutes on one of the texts/film assigned for that day. If a critical reading is assigned to accompany that text, the presentation should address that one also. Further research is required in order to provide contextual information about the author and/or relevant circumstances of the work (e.g. political events or social conditions addressed); however, the focus should be on engagement with the text or film. The main objective of the presentation is to initiate and promote class discussion and to enhance the class’s knowledge of the material.

A bibliography of all sources consulted must be submitted to me at time of presentation (MLA style).

You may use a powerpoint presentation or other visual aids but are not required to do so. If you do include a powerpoint, please ensure that it is relevant and contributes substantively to your presentation (one of the objectives being to enhance your presentation skills).

A sign-up sheet for the presentations will be posted on Courselink.

Please note: should we be forced by the pandemic situation to change to remote delivery, the presentations will be pre-recorded and made available electronically. Further instructions will be circulated if that becomes necessary.

**Response to Presentation**

Each student will respond in class to the seminar presentation by a fellow student. You must sign up for this in advance. These responses are meant to promote discussion of the text. You should speak for no more than 5 minutes, offering us your initial critical-analytical response to the presentation. You should be critical, but criticism must at all times be constructive and respectful. You may offer additional information or perspectives, but you must engage with the content of the presentation, not simply make additions or go off in another direction. It is assumed that you will have already completed each day’s assigned readings and will be prepared to speak to these from your own perspective. You are NOT required to submit any notes following these responses; to earn a mark you MUST be present on the day assigned.

**Writing Assignment: Scholarship Critique**

**Due Date:** Friday, Sept. 24 (submit through Dropbox)

**Maximum length:** 1000 words

Susan Sellers, *Myth and Fairy Tale in Contemporary Women’s Fiction*. New York: Palgrave, 2001. pp. 1-8. [Courselink, under Assignments]

and:

Robert Segal, *Myth: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford UP, 2015. pp. 1-6. [Ares Course Reserve]

In the introductory section of their respective books, Susan Sellers and Robert Segal tackle the problem of defining myth and giving an overview of how different disciplines approach the study of myth. 1. Compare their approaches to this task and assess their success. 2. What have you learned about myth and the study of it from reading their accounts?

*Note: part of the differences may be due to the different nature of their works; Segal’s entire book is devoted to discussing different theories of myth, whereas Sellers goes on to consider individual works of modern literature.*

**Research Paper Proposal**

**Due date:** Friday, Nov. 12 (submit through Dropbox)

This should be drafted like a paper proposal for a conference, i.e. a text of maximum 250 words, which aims to describe your topic and arouse interest for it. It should include: a brief description of the material and your intended approach to it, a justification of why it is of interest/what it contributes to an understanding of the material, a tentative thesis.

Include an annotated bibliography of at least 5 scholarly sources.

**Essay Presentation**

Our final meeting in week 12 will be devoted to discussion of student presentations based on their essays. Given the size of the class, we will use the *3 Minute Thesis* Competition as our model. You will have 3 minutes to present your research, using a single, static powerpoint slide. We will organize the presentations in panels and have a short discussion period after each panel. Your presentation should address: a description of your topic, contextualization of your material, your thesis and main arguments, your methodology.

Please do not go over the time limit. Consider this assignment as practice for the competition (which takes place at universities around the world, including Guelph).

You may find it helpful to look at instructions and advice for 3MT competitions:

<https://graduatestudies.uoguelph.ca/3mt>

<http://www.sussex.ac.uk/internal/doctoralschool/researcherdev/threeminthesis/preparing3mt>

http://www.sussex.ac.uk/internal/doctoralschool/researcherdev/threeminthesis/rules

Please note: should we be forced by the pandemic situation to change to remote delivery, the presentations will be pre-recorded and made available electronically. Further instructions will be circulated if that becomes necessary.

**Research Paper**

**Due date:** Monday, Dec. 13 (submit through Dropbox)

**Length:** 5000-8000 words

The research essay, on a relevant topic of your choice, must focus on comparison of two primary works, either: a) two works from the course syllabus, or b) one work from the course syllabus and one from outside the course. Note: you MUST discuss your topic in advance with the instructor. The paper and bibliography should follow MLA style and include a bibliography (not annotated). Note: you will be penalized if your citations and bibliography are not accurate or do not conform to the required style.

**Policy on late/missed coursework**

Late assignments will normally not be accepted – i.e. will receive a grade of 0% – without prior approval by the instructor. Students who find themselves unable to meet a deadline will need to contact me to discuss the possibility of an extension. Please be mindful that the granting of an extension is not an automatic process. I reserve the right to request documentation.

Due to its link with class discussion, no extension is possible for the Seminar Presentation. Students who are unable to meet their deadline due to illness or personal emergency must contact the instructor in advance, as early as possible.

**SYLLABUS**

**Week 1 (Sept. 15)**

Topic: Introduction to course, case study of a tale’s adaptations

Instructor: Mayer

Primary Readings: J.G. Herder, “Erlkönig’s Daughter”; J.W. von Goethe, “Erlkönig”; Angela Carter, “Erl-King” [Courselink]

Critical Readings: Jack Zipes, "Introduction" to The Oxford Companion to Fairy Tales, Oxford UP, 2002. [Courselink].

**Week 2 (Sept. 22)**

Topic: The archetypical dragonslayer hero in the Greek world

Instructor: Walsh

Readings:

* Daniel Ogden. *Drakōn: Dragon Myth and Serpent Cult in the Greek and Roman Worlds*: Ch. 1 Drakōn Fights: Drakontes Pure; Ch. 2 Drakōn Fights: Drakontes Composite; Ch. 3 Drakōn Gods of Healing [available through Library Course Reserves]
* S. Davis, “Argeiphontes in Homer: The Dragon-Slayer.” *Greece and Rome* 22.64 (1953): 33-38. [Courselink]
* Excerpts from primary texts [package posted on Courselink].

**Week 3 (Sept. 29)**

Topic: The Brothers Grimm fairy tale project: national identity, nature, the hero

Instructor: Mayer

Primary Readings:

* J. and W. Grimm, Prefaces to *Nursery and Household Tales* (1812), and vol. 2 (1814). In: Maria Tatar, *The Hard Facts of the Grimms’ Fairy Tales.* (Princeton UP, 1987): 204-215. [library, Course Reserve]
* From *The Complete Fairy Tales of the Brothers Grimm*, trans. Jack Zipes

(New York: Bantam, 2002):

#4 “A Tale About the Boy who Went Forth to Learn what Fear Was” (11-18);

#60 “The Two Brothers”

#21 “Cinderella”

#161 “Snow White and Rose Red” [Courselink]

* For comparison: Charles Perrault, “Cinderella” [Courselink]

Critical Readings:

* Jack Zipes. *The Brothers Grimm: From Enchanted Forests to the Modern World.* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002): pp. 25-48 [you may skip the fairy tale excerpts on pp. 33-46]. [online, library Course Reserve]

**Week 4** (Oct. 6)

Topic: Fritz Lang’s *Die Nibelungen*: a myth for the German nation

Instructor: Mayer

Primary Work: Fritz Lang, *Die Nibelungen*: watch all of *Siegfried* and Canto 2 from *Kriemhild’s Revenge* (begins at minute 20) [available online through the library Course Reserve]

Critical readings: Anton Kaes, *Shell Shock Cinema: Weimar Culture and the Wounds of War*.

Princeton: Princeton UP, 2009: Chap. 4 (pp. 132-166). [Courselink]

**Week 5 (Oct. 13)**

Topic: The Romantic literary fairy tale and a feminist (?) view of utopia

Instructor: Mayer

Primary Readings: B. and G. von Arnim, *The Life of the High Countess Gritta of*

*Ratsinourhouse*

Critical Readings: John Griffth Urang, "The “Old Wheelwork” and Its Revolutions: Precarious Authority in Gisela and Bettine von Arnim’s Das Leben der Hochgrafin Gritta von Rattenzuhausbeiuns." *The Germanic Review* 88 (2013): 165-184. [Courselink]

**Week 6 (Oct. 20)**

Topic: Antigone: the state versus the individual

Instructor: Walsh

Primary Readings: Sophocles, *Antigone;* other primary text TBA

Critical Readings: TBA

**Week 7 (Oct. 27)**

Topic: Mythology for Resistance

Instructor: Irvine

Primary Readings: J. Anouilh, *Antigone*

J.P. Sartre, *The Flies*

Critical Readings: Commentary to Anouilh’s *Antigone*; for those who read French: segment from Ingrid Galster, *Le Theatre de Jean Paul Sartre*. Those who read French will be asked to provide a brief verbal precis of this reading for the class.

**Week 8 (Nov. 3)**

Topic: Myth and Politics in Communist Europe I

Instructor: Mayer

Primary Readings: Stefan Heym, *The Wandering Jew*, chapters 1-13

Critical Readings: Peter Hutchinson, *Stefan Heym*. Cambridge UP, 1992. pp. 1-6, 188-206. [Courselink]

**Week 9 (Nov. 10)**

Topic: Myth and Politics in Communist Europe I

Instructor: Mayer

Primary Readings: Stefan Heym, *The Wandering Jew*, chapters 14-final

Critical Readings: TBA

**Week 10 (Nov. 17)**

Topic: Myth and politics in Communist Europe II

Instructor: Mayer

Primary Readings: Christa Wolf, *Cassandra*

Critical Readings: Karin Eysel, "Christa Wolf's Kassandra: Refashioning National Imagination

Beyond the Nation." *Women in German Yearbook* 9 (1993): 163-181.

**Week 11 (Nov. 24)**

Topic: Myth and politics in Communist Europe III

Instructors: Parmegiani, Walsh

Primary Readings: Ismail Kadaré, *Agamemnon’s Daughter*; ancient text TBA

Critical Readings:

* Edith Hall, “Greek Tragedy and the Politics of Subjectivity in Recent Fiction.” *Classical Receptions Journal* 1 (2009): 23-42.
* Ismail Kadare, “[Dead Storms and Literature’s New Horizon: The 2020 Neustadt Prize Lecture](https://www.worldliteraturetoday.org/2021/winter/dead-storms-and-literatures-new-horizon-2020-neustadt-prize-lecture-ismail-kadare?utm_source=Newsletter%2C+Events%2C+and+Special+Offer+Subscribers&utm_campaign=70682a167f-WLT-Jan-2018-Newsletter_COPY_02&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_1d4e297acb-70682a167f-414762233&mc_cid=70682a167f&mc_eid=%5b7ee7f28165%5d)”
* Kapka Kassabova, “[Surviving and Subverting the Totalitarian State: A Tribute to Ismail Kadare](https://www.worldliteraturetoday.org/2021/winter/surviving-and-subverting-totalitarian-state-tribute-ismail-kadare-kapka-kassabova?utm_source=Newsletter%2C+Events%2C+and+Special+Offer+Subscribers&utm_campaign=70682a167f-WLT-Jan-2018-Newsletter_COPY_02&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_1d4e297acb-70682a167f-414762233&mc_cid=70682a167f&mc_eid=%5b7ee7f28165%5d)”

**Week 12 (Dec. 1)**

Essay presentations

**University Statements**

1. **Email Communication**

As per university regulations, all students are required to check their e-mail account regularly: e-mail is the official route of communication between the University and its students.

1. **When You Cannot Meet a Course Requirement**

When you find yourself unable to meet an in-course requirement because of illness or compassionate reasons please advise the course instructor (or designated person, such as a teaching assistant) in writing, with your name, id#, and e-mail contact. The grounds for Academic Consideration are detailed in the Undergraduate and Graduate Calendars.

Undergraduate Calendar - Academic Consideration and Appeals  
https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/c08/c08-ac.shtml

Graduate Calendar - Grounds for Academic Consideration  
https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/graduate/current/genreg/index.shtml

Associate Diploma Calendar - Academic Consideration, Appeals and Petitions  
https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/diploma/current/index.shtml

1. **Drop Date**

Students will have until the last day of classes to drop courses without academic penalty. The deadline to drop two-semester courses will be the last day of classes in the second semester. This applies to all students (undergraduate, graduate and diploma) except for Doctor of Veterinary Medicine and Associate Diploma in Veterinary Technology (conventional and alternative delivery) students. The regulations and procedures for course registration are available in their respective Academic Calendars.

Undergraduate Calendar - Dropping Courses  
https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/c08/c08-drop.shtml

Graduate Calendar - Registration Changes  
https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/graduate/current/genreg/genreg-reg-regchg.shtml

Associate Diploma Calendar - Dropping Courses  
https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/diploma/current/c08/c08-drop.shtml

1. **Copies of Out-of-class Assignments**

Keep paper and/or other reliable back-up copies of all out-of-class assignments: you may be asked to resubmit work at any time.

1. **Accessibility**

The University promotes the full participation of students who experience disabilities in their academic programs. To that end, the provision of academic accommodation is a shared responsibility between the University and the student.

When accommodations are needed, the student is required to first register with Student Accessibility Services (SAS). Documentation to substantiate the existence of a disability is required; however, interim accommodations may be possible while that process is underway.

Accommodations are available for both permanent and temporary disabilities. It should be noted that common illnesses such as a cold or the flu do not constitute a disability.

Use of the SAS Exam Centre requires students to book their exams at least 7 days in advance and not later than the 40th Class Day.

For Guelph students, information can be found on the SAS website  
https://www.uoguelph.ca/sas

For Ridgetown students, information can be found on the Ridgetown SAS website  
https://www.ridgetownc.com/services/accessibilityservices.cfm

1. **Academic Integrity**

The University of Guelph is committed to upholding the highest standards of academic integrity, and it is the responsibility of all members of the University community-faculty, staff, and students-to be aware of what constitutes academic misconduct and to do as much as possible to prevent academic offences from occurring. University of Guelph students have the responsibility of abiding by the University's policy on academic misconduct regardless of their location of study; faculty, staff, and students have the responsibility of supporting an environment that encourages academic integrity. Students need to remain aware that instructors have access to and the right to use electronic and other means of detection.

Please note: Whether or not a student intended to commit academic misconduct is not relevant for a finding of guilt. Hurried or careless submission of assignments does not excuse students from responsibility for verifying the academic integrity of their work before submitting it. Students who are in any doubt as to whether an action on their part could be construed as an academic offence should consult with a faculty member or faculty advisor.

Undergraduate Calendar - Academic Misconduct  
https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/c08/c08-amisconduct.shtml

Graduate Calendar - Academic Misconduct  
https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/graduate/current/genreg/index.shtml

1. **Recording of Materials**

Presentations that are made in relation to course work - including lectures - cannot be recorded or copied without the permission of the presenter, whether the instructor, a student, or guest lecturer. Material recorded with permission is restricted to use for that course unless further permission is granted.

1. **Resources**

The Academic Calendars are the source of information about the University of Guelph’s procedures, policies, and regulations that apply to undergraduate, graduate, and diploma programs.

Academic Calendars  
https://www.uoguelph.ca/academics/calendars

1. **Disclaimer**

Please note that the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic may necessitate a revision of the format of course offerings, changes in classroom protocols, and academic schedules. Any such changes will be announced via CourseLink and/or class email.

This includes on-campus scheduling during the semester, mid-terms and final examination schedules. All University-wide decisions will be posted on the COVID-19 website (https://news.uoguelph.ca/2019-novel-coronavirus-information/) and circulated by email.

1. **Illness**

Medical notes will not normally be required for singular instances of academic consideration, although students may be required to provide supporting documentation for multiple missed assessments or when involving a large part of a course (e.g.. final exam or major assignment).

1. **Covid-19 Safety Protocols**

For information on current safety protocols, follow these links:

* https://news.uoguelph.ca/return-to-campuses/how-u-of-g-is-preparing-for-your-safe-return/
* https://news.uoguelph.ca/return-to-campuses/spaces/#ClassroomSpaces

Please note, these guidelines may be updated as required in response to evolving University, Public Health or government directives.