

## Syllabus of Record

**Program:** CET Prague

**Course Code / Title:** (PR/CEST 330) Fairytales and Society: Czech and Central European Fairytales within Historical and Cultural Context.

**Total Hours:** 45

**Recommended Credits:** 3

**Primary Discipline / Suggested Cross Listings:** Literature / Folklore, Central & Eastern European Studies, Cultural Studies

**Language of Instruction:** English

**Prerequisites / Requirements:** None

### Description

Traditional fairytales are a significant part of folklore and culture of specific region as well as of human in general. As a genre that was formed throughout centuries, they contain a lot of information about the world around us as well as about ourselves. Through their variety, diversity and colorfulness you can observe variety, diversity and colorfulness of the world whereas their specificities and peculiarities show distinction and specific nature of particular countries, peoples and cultures. Fairytales have been attracting the attention of various fields from the beginning of their literary existence and so there are also various theories searching for the disguised meanings of fairytales and the significance which they contain and refer to.

This course seeks to introduce the area of Central European fairytales as a genre within its broader historical, geographical and cultural context. It will deal with fairytale as a specific literary genre rooted in European oral tradition with connection to myths, legends and other local folklore narratives, as well as to modern film and theatre adaptations.

The course also describes and surveys various method of investigating and interpreting fairytales within the development of scholarship about them. It presents historical, psychological, anthropological or religious types of theories, but also sociobiological and gender or feminist methods of analysis. It includes topics such as ethical or moral principles in fairytales, gender and social roles presented in fairytales or historical and political influences on fairytale adaptations.

### Objectives

By completing this course, students gain:

- Ability to identify and explain fairytale as a folklore and literary genre and to articulate its main features and characteristics
- Insight into the history and development of the genre of fairytale within Central European and European context
- Awareness of historical, political and social influences that shaped Central European folklore fairytale
- Knowledge of the main theories concerning fairytales, their origin and various ways of their interpretation

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- Familiarity with the main interpretation frames and ability to use them when analyzing and interpreting the most common Central European fairytale motifs and topics
- Ability to produce a complex interpretation of one fairytale story using one or more of the theoretical frameworks introduced within the course
- Practice in leading critical discourse both in oral and written form

## Course Requirements

Active participation and continuous work are essential in this course. Students are expected to attend each class and field-based course component, as outlined in the CET Attendance Policy. Students are expected to read all assigned materials before the relevant class session and come prepared to participate thoughtfully in class discussions.

Graded assignments include:

- Homework assignments and class participation: Reading assignments are generally 20-30 pages per week. By answering the questions in advance, students should develop and organize their thoughts, ideas, and opinions so that they can more easily participate in class debate – to answer the questions, make relevant comments, pose relevant questions, discuss the topic and defend their views. For some topics, class participation will include some other forms, for example making oral report on a particular part of the study.
- Group presentation: team work of 2-3 (or more) students who share a topic. The work consists of creating of an illustrative powerpoint (6-10 slides) reporting on the main ideas of the given study and an oral performance (ca 20 minutes).
- Quizzes: written tests that examines students' knowledge and comprehension of class topics (the tests include multiple choice, matching questions and short essay questions).
- Presentation: creating of a powerpoint (6-12 slides) and presenting the topic in class (15-20 minutes + 5 minutes for class discussion). Students should demonstrate their abilities of analysis and application of covered theory; they must be also able to present the topic to the audience convincingly enough, to pose relevant questions, and defend their opinion.
- Final paper: 6-10 pages on a topic determined in consultation with the lecturer. Students should demonstrate mastery of the topics covered in the course. They must prove good organization, structure, and competence in writing. It must be well researched and referenced and must include a bibliography

## Grading

The final grade is determined as follows:

- Homework assignment and class participation: 20%
- Group presentation: 15%
- Quiz A: 15%
- Quiz B: 15%
- Presentation: 15%
- Final Paper: 20%

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### Readings

#### Secondary Sources:

- Barash, Danielle P. and Barash, Nanelle R.: *Madame Bovary's Ovaries. A Darwinian Look at Literature*, 153-182. Delacorte, 2005.
- Bettelheim, Bruno: *The Uses of Enchantment: The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales*. 30-22, 159-166. Penguin Group, 1991.
- Bottigheimer, Ruth (ed.): *Fairytales and Society. Illusion, Allusion and Paradigm*, selected parts. University of Pennsylvania Press, 1989
- Campbell, Joseph: *Hero with Thousand faces*, selected parts. New World Library, 2021
- Dworkin, Andrea: "The Fairy Tales". In *Woman Hating*, 29-49. Dutton, 1974
- Eliade, Mircea.: *Rites and Symbols of Initiation. Mysteries of Birth and Rebirth*, selected parts. Spring Publication, 1998
- Franz, Marie-Louise: *Interpretation of Fairy Tales*, 46-113. Shambhala Publications, Inc., 1996.
- Haase, Donald P.: *Fairytales and Feminism. New Approaches*, selected parts. Wayne State University Press, 2004
- Propp, Vladimir J: *Theory and History of Folklore*, 100-115. University of Minnesota, 1984.
- Röhrich, Lutz.: *Folktales and Reality*, 57-111. Indiana University Press, 1991
- Tatar, Maria.: *The Hard Facts of the Grimms' Fairy Tales*, selected parts. Princeton University Press, 1987
- Zipes, Jack.: *The Irresistible Fairy Tale. The Cultural and Social History of a Genre*, (selected parts). University Press, 2012

#### Primary Sources – books of fairytales:

- Erben, Karel Jaromír, Němcová, Božena: *Czech Fairy Tales*. Vitalis, 2012.
- *Grimms' Tales for Young and Old: The Complete Stories*, selected parts. Anchor, 1983.
- Lomová, L.: *The Greatest Czech Fairy Tales*. Práh, 2008.
- Werich, J.: *Fimfarum*, selected parts. Baset Prague, 2001

### Additional Resources

[www.worldoftales.com](http://www.worldoftales.com)

<http://www.gutenberg.org/files/2591/2591-h/2591-h.htm>

#### Films:

- *Fimfárum Jana Wericha*. Pospíšilová, Vlasta - Klimt, Aurel Klimt,. Krátký film Praha, Česká televize, 2002.
- *Fimfárum - The Third Time Lucky*. Pospíšilová, Vlasta - Dufková, Kristina - Sůkup, David. MAUR film, 2011.

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- *Krabat, the Sorcerer's Apprentice*. Zeman, Karel, Czechoslovakia – Germany, 1978.
- *Little Otik*. Švankmajer, Jan. Czech Republic, Great Britain, 2000.
- *The Seven Ravens*. Nellis, Alice. Bohemia Motion Pictures a.s. , 2015.
- *Three Nuts for Cinderella*. Vorlíček, Václav. Státní fond České republiky pro podporu a rozvoj české kinematografie, 1973.

## Outline of Course Content

Students cover approximately 1 topic every 1-2 weeks. Course content includes film screening and field visits to theatre performance and sites in Prague.

Topic 1 - What is a fairytale? What is interpretation?

- Specifics of a fairytale as folklore genre
- Oral tradition, other folklore genres
- Fairytale vs. folktale, ATU index
- Fairytale among other folk narratives

Topic 2 - Birth of the genre

- Ancient roots of European fairytale, first world collections of folk stories
- Oral vs. literary tradition
- First European fairytales collections and their specifics
- Old versions of well-known stories

Topic 3 - Fairytale in Central European context. Similarity vs. Diversity

- German tradition and brothers Grimm fairytales
- Panslavism, nationalism and other ideas behind
- Czech and Slovak fairytales in Austro-Hungarian Empire
- Historical, political, geographical and other influences on fairytales

Topic 4 - Diffusion and expansion or parallel evolution?

- Let's make some order: first catalogues, first classification of fairytales
- Migratory school vs. polygenesis theory
- 19<sup>th</sup> century research on fairytales, first theories on fairytale origin

Topic 5 - Fairytales in preliterate Europe. Historical and anthropological view of fairytales

- Magic and pre-Christian belief in fairytales
- Manners, customs, practices
- Ancient social institutions

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- Rules and breaking the rules

### Topic 6 - Fairytales and the other side. Ritualistic theory on fairytales

- Fairytale as an initiation story
- Rite of passage, a shamanic aspect of fairytales
- Hero's journey in three stages
- Realm of Death. Borders and approaching the borders

### Topic 7 - Fairytales as archetypal Experience. Jungian approach to fairytales

- C.G. Jung and his archetypal psychology on fairytales
- Archetypal figures in fairytales; collective unconscious, story of individuation
- Missing femininity as fairytale motif

### Topic 8 – Dreams, drives and desires. Freudian look at fairytales

- Separation and other childhood turbulences in fairytale stories
- Jealousy, rivalry and other family dramas
- Sexual awakening as a motif
- Freudian interpretation and its traps

### Topic 9 – Fairytale, myth and universal human topics

- The three epochs of human evolution, mythological structure of fairytales
- Christian symbolism in fairytales
- Existential, religious and spiritual relevance of fairytales

### Topic 10 – Maiden in distress. Feminist criticism on fairytales

- Traditional gender roles, gender stereotypes in fairytales
- Gender issues in contemporary perception of fairytales
- Historical and social aspects of traditional fairytales messages, modern renderings of fairytales

### Topic 11 – Nurture or Nature? Evolutionary biology on fairytales

- Literary Darwinism as opposition to feminist criticism
- Struggle for life, struggle for reproduction
- Evil stepmother as an adaptive trait
- Search for an attractive partner and other mating strategies in fairytales

### Topic 12 – Fairytale and film

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- Czech and Slovak film fairytale tradition
- Political and ideological impact on film adaptations in post-war period (1948 – 1968)
- Film and normalization (1968-1989)
- Post-revolution free film production and its pitfalls