

**English 289**  
**Popular Literature: Fantasy**  
**Fall 2020**

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Office hours: Mondays, 1:30-3:00, and  
Tuesday/Thursday, 12:30-1:30 – in Zoom (link posted in Canvas)  
Other times and face-to-face meetings available by appointment

I encourage you to drop in during office hours, or make an appointment, to ask questions, get extra help, or talk about whatever is on your mind. Contact me to make an appointment if my scheduled office hours don't fit your schedule, or you want to meet face-to-face. You are also welcome to email at any time, but be aware that I may not receive evening/weekend messages until the next weekday morning.

**Description and Goals**

“Why Are Americans Afraid of Dragons?” asked Ursula Le Guin in a 1974 essay on fantasy literature. Fantasy is often dismissed as un-literary, unsophisticated, or escapist. Yet it's enormously popular, and J. R. R. Tolkien (no slouch as a scholar himself) wrote that he “desired dragons with a profound desire.”

How can we define the genre of fantasy? What accounts for its popularity with some, and the disdain it elicits from others? How does literature that by definition is not realistic relate to the world in which its authors and readers live? These are some of the questions we will have in mind as we read a selection of fantasy, both classic and contemporary.

As we discuss these works, we will focus also on the learning outcomes for the Humanities category of the General Education Program, which strives “to help students understand and critically engage a variety of worldviews and the ideas that give them meaning.” By the time you complete this course, you should be able to

- Read closely, think critically, and write effectively about texts that reflect on perennial questions concerning the human condition; and
- Investigate and thoughtfully respond to a variety of ideas, beliefs or values held by persons in situations other than your own.

This course also counts as an elective toward the English major or minor, providing you with additional practice in the skills of literary analysis and writing.

## Texts

All of these books are available for purchase through the University Store. You are free to shop for your books elsewhere, and e-books are acceptable. Searching for them using the ISBN will ensure that we all have the same edition and can be literally on the same page, but if you already own other editions of any of these, you are welcome to use those, and there is no need to buy another. In case you need to spread out the expense of the books, they are listed in the order we will read them. Refer to the course schedule below to see when you will need to have each book.

Lewis, *Prince Caspian*, ISBN 9780064405003 (HarperCollins), \$8.99

Tolkien, *The Fellowship of the Ring*, ISBN 9780345339706 (Del Rey / Random House), list price \$8.99

Le Guin, *A Wizard of Earthsea*, ISBN-13: 9780547773742 (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt), \$8.99

Rothfuss, *The Name of the Wind*, ISBN-13: 978-0756404741 (DAW / Penguin), \$10.99

Jemisin, *The Fifth Season*, ISBN-13: 978-0316229296 (Orbit), \$15.99

Varela, *Crier's War*, ISBN 9780062823953 (HarperCollins), \$10.99

Some additional readings will be provided in Canvas in pdf files.

## Requirements Overview

Although some amount of lecture is necessary in this type of course, the active involvement of students is important and most of our time will be spent in discussion. Your work in this course will consist of

- **Weekly reading assignments, with online discussion as you go.**
- **Participation in discussions in person, via Zoom, and/or asynchronously in Canvas, followed by a written, informal reflection on the conversation.**
- **Two exams.**
- **One paper, submitted in draft for feedback before submitting a final draft.**

## Course Format

This class is scheduled to meet 6:30-9:00 on Monday evenings. Due to COVID restrictions, only one-third of the class will attend at a time, for about 40 minutes of in-person discussion. I expect that I will have web-conferencing equipment for most class meetings, and will set up a Zoom meeting for those who cannot attend in person due to health concerns. The "cohort" schedule, indicating which part of the class meeting you should plan to attend, will be posted in Canvas.

To make up for the reduced face-to-face time, there will be online activities (mostly discussions in Canvas, and some short videos from me providing background information, etc.) that you should plan on doing over the rest of the week.

Since we don't have a class meeting until Sept. 14 due to the Labor Day holiday, we'll think of our weeks as beginning Tuesday and ending with Monday's class. You will have some online work as you prepare for the upcoming class.

A typical week's schedule will look like this:

- By Thursday at midnight, post either a question (if you have any) about basic comprehension (what's happening, who's who among the characters, etc.) or an observation or question that connects to our overarching questions and can help spark discussion.
- By Sunday at midnight, return to the discussion area, read at least some of the others' posts, and reply meaningfully to at least three others. This could be answering a question, agreeing with an observation and connecting it to other evidence or ideas, or disagreeing with someone's point by explaining the basis of your disagreement.
- Before Monday's class, view any videos and any questions for discussion that I have posted.
- Following Monday's class, submit a brief reflection recording the ideas that you took away from the conversation.

## Grading

The **weekly online discussions** will earn you up to **20 points per week (260 total)**. See the schedule below for the specific assignments for each week, and check Canvas for any updates, as well as resources and suggestions for specific works.

### Grading scale:

- Outstanding: Meets or exceeds the required posts, which stand out in some way, such as particularly insightful questions or observations, consistent reference to specific details in the text, building effectively on others' posts, or otherwise extending and deepening the conversation: 20 points
- Good: Meets or exceeds the required posts, which include reference to specific details in the text and connect meaningfully to others' posts: 19 points.
- Adequate: Most of the required posts are made, possibly lacking in specifics: 15 points.
- Inadequate: Some of the required posts are made: 10 points

The **weekly reflections** are worth **15 points each (195 total)**

After each class meeting, write about 250 words recording some of the ideas that you took away from the discussion, which could include additional thinking of your own that was spurred by the conversation. Don't just record factual information about the reading (although you can include things that were clarified for you if that's helpful), but record new or deepened insights into the interpretation of the reading. Use the overarching questions for the course (posted in Canvas) or the more specific discussion questions for the reading as guidance for your reflection if they are helpful, but you are not limited to these.

Grading scale:

- Outstanding: Reflection shows careful, thoughtful attention to the discussion, and synthesizes the conversation effectively or extends it further: 15 points
- Good: Reflection shows careful, thoughtful attention to the discussion: 14 points.
- Adequate: Reflection records some points that were made in the discussion, but may focus too much on factual information (rather than interpretation through critical thinking and close reading), contain significant inaccuracies, or lack specifics: 11 points.
- Inadequate: Reflection was submitted, but is too brief, unclear, or inaccurate to demonstrate thoughtful attention to the discussion: 8 points

The **mid-term exam** (which will be taken online, more details to be provided) is worth **100 points**.

The **first draft** of your final paper is worth **45 points**. Details of this assignment, including grading criteria for the final draft, will be provided and discussed in class.

The final draft of the **paper** is worth **200 points**.

The **final exam** is worth **200 points**.

How I calculate grades: Letter grades are converted to points, and points back to a letter grade for the course, using the following scale: D, 60-66.99%; D+, 67-69.99%; C- 70-72.99%; C, 73-76.99%; C+, 77-79.99%; B-, 80-82.99%; B, 83-86.99%, B+, 87-89.99%, A-, 90-92.99%, A, 93-100%. An assignment not turned in or test essay not attempted is a 0, but an F paper/essay will earn points in the F range.

## Resources

In addition to the syllabus, assignments, and other course information, Canvas contains a number of resources to support your work in this course and your success as a student at UWSP more generally.

Word-processing software is a necessary tool for writing and revision. Be sure to save your papers (and back them up) so that you can revise without having to retype your work.

- As a UWSP student, you have access to Microsoft's OneDrive (cloud storage) and Office 365 (online versions of Word, Excel, etc.), and can download Office 2016 to your own devices. Get started here: <https://portal.office.com/Home>

The **Tutoring-Learning Center** is located in the basement of Albertson Hall. They provide a variety of services to support your learning, including a Writing Lab. Services are being provided online for the time being.

The Writing Lab consultants are successful UWSP students who can discuss any type of writing at any stage of the drafting process; including brainstorming, outlining, and research or citations. They work with experienced writers as well as struggling writers; we believe that everyone benefits from discussions about their writing.

- **Writing Lab sessions are currently being held virtually via Zoom**
- **By appointment or short notice times available**
- **You are able to send your paper for review using this online form: <https://www.uwsp.edu/tlc/Pages/online-writing-lab-request.aspx>**
- **All services in the Writing Lab are free**

If you have questions or would like to make an appointment, please contact the TLC via email ([tlctutor@uwsp.edu](mailto:tlctutor@uwsp.edu)) or phone (715-346-3568). Visit the TLC website for more information: <https://www.uwsp.edu/tlc/Pages/default.aspx>

## Policies

**Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:** If you have a condition requiring accommodations for this course, please contact the Disability and Assistive Technologies Center. Call 715 346-3365 or email [DATC@uwsp.edu](mailto:DATC@uwsp.edu) to make an appointment or get more information, or visit them on the 6th floor of Albertson Hall (a.k.a. Library). Visit their website at <http://www.uwsp.edu/disability/Pages/default.aspx>

**Attendance.** You should plan to attend the in-person class meetings, or participate via Zoom, whenever possible. If something prevents you from participating in real time, view the recording (which will be linked from Canvas). If that is ever impossible for some reason, get in touch with me to discuss options.

### **Face Coverings:**

At all UW-Stevens Point campus locations, the wearing of face coverings is mandatory in all buildings, including classrooms, laboratories, studios, and other instructional spaces. Any student with a condition that impacts their use of a face covering should contact the [Disability and Assistive Technology Center](#) to discuss accommodations in classes. Please note that unless everyone is wearing a face covering, in-person classes cannot take place. This is university policy and not up to the discretion of individual instructors. Failure to adhere to this requirement could result in formal withdrawal from the course.

### **Other Guidance for COVID-19:**

- Please monitor your own health each day using [this screening tool](#). If you are not feeling well or believe you have been exposed to COVID-19, do not come to class; email your instructor and contact Student Health Service (715-346-4646).
  - As with any type of absence, students are expected to communicate their need to be absent and complete the course requirements as outlined in the syllabus.
- Maintain a minimum of 6 feet of physical distance from others whenever possible.
- Do not congregate in groups before or after class; stagger your arrival and departure from the classroom, lab, or meeting room.
- Wash your hands or use appropriate hand sanitizer regularly and avoid touching your face.
- Please maintain these same healthy practices outside the classroom.
- If you [test positive for COVID, please fill out this form](#). If you tell me that you have tested positive and have not reported, I am required to report.
- If another student in the class is infected, and you are considered at risk, you will be contacted by health officials. You are not necessarily at risk, depending on how close you sit to the infected student. If you are required to quarantine due to exposure to COVID, continue participating in class using the online options. You may have to quarantine longer than the student who was infected, due to the incubation period of the virus.

### **Classroom Etiquette:**

- During in-person meetings, tablets and other devices can be used for taking or referring to notes, if you can resist their temptations. However,
  - Students may not make audio, video, or photographic recordings of lectures or other class activities without written permission from the instructor. Anyone violating this policy will be asked to turn off the device being used. Refusal to comply with the policy will result in the student being asked to leave the classroom, and possibly being reported to the Dean of Students. (English Department Policy)
- Zoom classes will be recorded, and the recording will be available in Canvas. This is for the benefit of students who were not able to participate in real time, and is for students in this class only. Do not share the link with anyone not in the class. This protects the privacy of all students, and helps make the classroom a safe place.

- For both in-person and online discussions, diverse perspectives are an asset to class discussions. Please treat those whose ideas or experiences are different from yours with the same respect you want for yourself. Where there is disagreement, focus on the ideas and the evidence to support or refute them; do not criticize or belittle people for having or expressing their thoughts and opinions.

**Late work.**

- Online discussions and reflections should be completed within the timeframe indicated with each assignment. You can earn partial credit by completing the assignments later; for each week the assignments are late, I will deduct 10% of the points the assignments would have earned if on time.
- Each exam will have a 48-hour window for taking it. You should plan on finishing the exam within that timeframe. If your unique circumstances warrant additional time, please get in touch with me to have an appropriate extension.
- You may earn half-credit for turning a draft of your paper late, but with enough time to give you feedback before you revise (essentially, this means by December 7).
- The final draft of the paper is due at the end of the last week of classes. I will accept late papers during finals week for a grade penalty of 1/3 letter grade if submitted on Monday, 2/3 if submitted Tuesday – Thursday, and a full letter grade if submitted Friday or later. No papers will be accepted after December 21 unless there are extraordinary circumstances that you have discussed with me in advance.

**Academic honesty:** It's normal and expected that the ideas in your papers will be influenced by our class discussions, but they should also demonstrate your own thinking and analytic skill through your support and explanation of the interpretation that you adopt. It's also appropriate to make use of the editors' introduction or similar resources, though the paper assignment will not require any research. Any ideas drawn from such sources should be acknowledged, and should assist you in developing your own interpretation, not substitute for it. Use any format for citations that you are familiar with; some resources for citation will be posted in Canvas.

Unacknowledged or inappropriate use of sources is unacceptable, as is any form of cheating on a test or any other academic dishonesty. Such behavior will be handled in accordance with the University policy on Academic Misconduct. Possible penalties include being required to redo the assignment in order to receive credit, a zero for the assignment, or an automatic F for the course. If you are ever unsure about whether or how to use sources or help appropriately, please ask. (Information about the Academic Misconduct policy is available at <http://www.uwsp.edu/dos/Documents/AcademicIntegrityBrochure.pdf>.)

**Email:** Your UWSP email account is the university's standard method of communication with you, and you should check it regularly. I often use email to contact the class as a whole or individual students.

**Assessment:** UWSP regularly assesses the General Education Program to ensure that we are providing you with the best education we can. As part of this effort, samples of student work may be shared, anonymously, with a small group of faculty members. Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns about how your work may be used in the assessment process.

<b>Schedule</b>
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### **Sept. 2 – 14**

1. Introduce yourself and begin to get to know other students in the discussion area in Canvas (by Sept. 8).
2. Participate in a warm-up conversation in Canvas about the nature of fantasy and what readers enjoy (or don't enjoy) about (Sept. 8-10)
3. Review the syllabus and ask any questions you have (or bring these to class on Monday).
4. Read C. S. Lewis, *Prince Caspian* (all of it), making an initial post by Thursday night (Sept. 10).
5. Also read Lewis, "On Three Ways of Writing for Children" (scan, posted in Canvas)
6. Return and reply to at least three posts by Sunday night (Sept. 13).
7. Come to class on Sept. 14 at your assigned cohort time (posted in Canvas) or participate via Zoom (link to be emailed and posted in Canvas).

### **Sept. 15-21**

1. Write your reflection on *Prince Caspian* (by Sept. 18).
2. Read J. R. R. Tolkien, *The Fellowship of the Ring*, Book I (to page 242, if you are using the edition on the booklist), making an initial post by Thursday night (Sept. 17).
3. Honors section: Also read J. R. R. Tolkien, "On Fairy-Stories" (scan, posted in Canvas)
4. Return and reply to at least three posts by Sunday night (Sept. 20).
5. Come to class on Sept. 21 at your assigned cohort time (posted in Canvas) or participate via Zoom (link to be emailed and posted in Canvas).

### **Sept. 22-28**

1. Write your reflection on *FR* Book I (by Sept. 25).
2. Read *FR*, Book II (to the end), making an initial post by Thursday night (Sept. 24).
3. Honors section: Also read Burton Raffel, "*The Lord of the Rings* as Literature" (scan, posted in Canvas)
4. Return and reply to at least three posts by Sunday night (Sept. 27).
5. Come to class on Sept. 28 at your assigned cohort time (posted in Canvas) or participate via Zoom (link to be emailed and posted in Canvas).



**Sept. 29-Oct. 5**

1. Write your reflection on *FR* (by Oct. 2).
2. Read Ursula K. Le Guin, *A Wizard of Earthsea* (all of it), making an initial post by Thursday night (Oct. 1).
3. Also read Le Guin, "Why Are Americans Afraid of Dragons" (scan, posted in Canvas)
4. Return and reply to at least three posts by Sunday night (Oct. 4).
5. Come to class on Oct. 5 at your assigned cohort time (posted in Canvas) or participate via Zoom (link to be emailed and posted in Canvas).

**Oct. 6-12**

1. Write your reflection on *Wizard* (by Oct. 9).
2. Take the mid-term exam, available from noon Wednesday to noon Friday, Oct. 7-9.
3. Read Patrick Rothfuss, *The Name of the Wind*, chapters 1-14 (to page 109), making an initial post by Sunday night (Oct. 11).
4. Come to class on Oct. 12 at your assigned cohort time (posted in Canvas) or participate via Zoom (link to be emailed and posted in Canvas).

**Oct. 13-19**

1. Write your reflection on the first section of *NOTW* (by Oct. 16).
2. Read *NOTW*, chapters 15-42 (to page 296), making an initial post by Thursday night (Oct. 15).
3. Return and reply to at least three posts by Sunday night (Oct. 18).
4. Come to class on Oct. 19 at your assigned cohort time (posted in Canvas) or participate via Zoom (link to be emailed and posted in Canvas).

**Oct. 20-26**

1. Write your reflection on the second section of *NOTW* (by Oct. 23).
2. Read *NOTW*, chapters 43-68 (to page 489), making an initial post by Thursday night (Oct. 22).
3. Return and reply to at least three posts by Sunday night (Oct. 25).
4. Come to class on Oct. 26 at your assigned cohort time (posted in Canvas) or participate via Zoom (link to be emailed and posted in Canvas).

**Oct. 27-Nov. 2**

1. Write your reflection on the third section of *NOTW* (by Oct. 30).
2. Read *NOTW*, chapters 69 to the end, making an initial post by Thursday night (Oct. 29).
3. Return and reply to at least three posts by Sunday night (Nov. 1).
4. Come to class on Nov. 2 at your assigned cohort time (posted in Canvas) or participate via Zoom (link to be emailed and posted in Canvas).

**Nov. 3-9**

1. Write your reflection on the final section (or all) of *NOTW* (by Nov. 6).
2. Read N. K. Jemisin, *The Fifth Season*, to p. 149, making an initial post by Thursday night (Nov. 5).
3. Return and reply to at least three posts by Sunday night (Nov. 8).
4. Come to class on Nov. 9 at your assigned cohort time (posted in Canvas) or participate via Zoom (link to be emailed and posted in Canvas).

**Nov. 10-16**

1. Write your reflection on the first section of *The Fifth Season* (by Nov. 13).
2. Read *The Fifth Season* to p. 296, making an initial post by Thursday night (Nov. 12).
3. Return and reply to at least three posts by Sunday night (Nov. 15).
4. Come to class on Nov. 16 at your assigned cohort time (posted in Canvas) or participate via Zoom (link to be emailed and posted in Canvas).

**Nov. 17-23**

1. Write your reflection on the second section of *The Fifth Season* (by Nov. 20).
2. Read *The Fifth Season* to the end, making an initial post by Thursday night (Nov. 19).
3. Return and reply to at least three posts by Sunday night (Nov. 22).
4. Come to class on Nov. 23 at your assigned cohort time (posted in Canvas) or participate via Zoom (link to be emailed and posted in Canvas).

**Nov. 24-30**

1. Write your reflection on the final section (or all) of *The Fifth Season* (by Nov. 26).
2. Submit a draft of your paper by November 26.
3. Read Nina Varela, *Crier's War*, to p. 199, making an initial post by Sunday night (Nov. 29).
4. Zoom on Nov. 30 at your assigned cohort time (link to be emailed and posted in Canvas). UWSP is fully online after Thanksgiving.

**Dec. 1-7**

1. Write your reflection on the first section of *Crier's War* (by Dec. 4).
2. Read *Crier's War* to the end, making an initial post by Thursday night (Dec. 3).
3. Return and reply to at least three posts by Sunday night (Dec. 6).
4. Zoom on Dec. 7 at your assigned cohort time (link to be emailed and posted in Canvas).

**Dec. 8-16**

1. Write your reflection on the last section (or all) of *Crier's War* (by Dec. 11).
2. Turn in the final draft of your paper by Dec. 11.
3. Take the final exam, which will be available from noon Monday to noon Wednesday (Dec. 14-16).