

Department of English, Foreign Languages, and Journalism
School of Liberal Arts and Sciences
Missouri Western State College
English 210: Approaches to Literature
 Spring, 2005

Professor: Dr. Mike Cadden

Class Time and Place: 9:30 T, Th in SS/C 210

Office: 222-F Eder Hall (SS/C)

Office Hours: 9:00 am – 2:00 pm W; and by appointment.

Office Phone: 271-4576

E-mail: cadden@missouriwestern.edu

URL: <http://www.missouriwestern.edu/eflj/faculty/cadden.asp> (This syllabus is on my website)

Course Description:

ENG 210, a general studies course, is a sophomore level literature course that introduces students to different literary genres. This section of ENG 210 focuses on versions of three basic stories: “Beauty and the Beast,” “Cinderella,” and “Little Red Riding Hood.” We’ll read different folk tale versions of each tale, discuss films, read novel versions, consider poetry based on the story, look at children’s picture book versions, and try to figure out what each version does to, with, for, and against (in the case of parody) the basic story we have in our heads as members of this culture. I look forward to exploring these three familiar tales with you this semester.

Course Objectives: <http://www.missouriwestern.edu/EFLJ/eng210.asp#Objectives>

Required Texts:

Levine, Gail Carson. Ella Enchanted.

Lowry, Lois. Number the Stars.

McKinley, Robin. Beauty.

Tatar, Maria, ed. The Classic Fairy Tales.

Evaluation:

General Class Participation: 10%

Presentation and Report: 20%

Three Unit Exams: 70%

Attendance:

The MWSC *Policy Guide* states that “each instructor will determine and make known to the class the requirement for attendance” (45). If you don’t come to class you will obviously jeopardize your class participation grade. I will not quantify how much presence equals what grade. I will be judging your total participation performance, not just your presence. I can also tell you that the exams draw heavily from class work. Also, since you are responsible for all announcements in class, you run the risk of missing important information regarding other assignments; I will not accept absence as an excuse for ignorance. In short, if you’re not here, you’re going to suffer through other assignments directly and indirectly.

Academic Dishonesty: All cases in which students pass off others’ work as their own will be referred to the Dean of Student Affairs. Students run the risk of failing the assignment as well as the course, depending on the magnitude and nature of the offense. If you are unsure about how you are using sources, please check with me.

Policy on Students with Disabilities: Any student in this course who has a disability which requires different contexts for either evaluation or expression should contact me in the first few weeks of the course so that those needs can be considered.

Calendar (Subject to Constant and Inexplicable Change):

Jan. 18 T- Introduction to the course; Arlene Sardine--an example of textual play.

20 H- Beaumont’s “Beauty & the Beast” (Tatar 32) and visual images; Disney’s *Beauty and the Beast*.

25 T- Angela Carter’s “The Tiger’s Bride” (Tatar 50) and “Urashima the Fisherman” (Tatar 66).

27 H- Grimms’ “The Frog King” (Tatar 47) and one other from Tatar of your choice.

Feb. 1 T- Robin McKinley’s Beauty.

3 H- Beauty.

8 T- Poetry and children’s versions.

10 H- **Test #1.**

15 T- Grimm's "Cinderella" (Tatar 117), "Yeh-hsien" (Tatar 107), *images*.

17 H- Perrault's "Donkeyskin" (Tatar 109); Jacobs' "Catskin" (Tatar 122), "The Story of the Black Cow" (Tatar 125).

22 T- Ella Enchanted.

24 H- Ella Enchanted.

March 1 T- Poetry.

3 H- Disney films to be viewed by today: Cinderella and Cinderella II: Dreams Do Come True.

8 T- Children's picture book versions.

10 H- **Test #2**.

Spring Break

22 T- Grimms' "Little Red Cap" (Tatar 13) and Perrault's "Little Red Riding Hood" (Tatar 11).

24 H- "The Story of Grandmother" (Tatar 10) and brief tales by Thurber and Calvino (Tatar);

29 T- Angela Carter: Handouts of "The Werewolf" and "In the Company of Wolves."

31 H- No Class: Conference.

April 5 T- Number the Stars.

7 H- Number the Stars.

12 T- Children's picture books.

14 H- **Test #3**.

19 T- Presentations.

21 H- Presentations.

26 T- Presentations.

28 H- Presentations.

Presentation Report Due: Thursday, May 5, 8:30-10:20 AM in SS/C 210

Participation (10%): This will include a few things and will be assessed at the end of the semester. "To participate" is not the same thing as "to show up." While attendance is necessary for participation, it isn't enough by itself. Nor is participation the same thing as constant talking; one might talk constantly and actually detract from the course. There are ways to participate in such a way that the course is worthwhile for everyone:

1. Be here and be on time. Constant lateness is distracting.
2. Be a courteous classmate. Respect others' time.
3. Do the reading, and read carefully. If you don't do this you can't participate well, and it's pretty obvious when someone who hasn't read the material still insists on contributing.
4. Try to answer questions, challenge positions, and offer opinions in good faith and with tact. Consider that one part of your responsibility is to be *ready* to participate—be ready with one or two points or questions each day. Don't just show up and wait for class to happen to you.
5. Be present for, attentive to, and responsive to your peers' presentations at the end of the term.

Exams (70%): You'll have **three** exams. Each exam will have a writing component; they will not be multiple choice tests. I will provide you passages from our readings for you to comment on and choices of questions for paragraph-length (or longer) responses. You should therefore take notes that aren't limited to data or facts but record the nature of our discussions and issues that we try to tackle. There may be, in addition to the written portion, some short answer questions. In any case, since the tests don't simply quiz on terms or on matters of plot and character, it will be very difficult to do well on the exams if you are not in class.

Presentation and brief accompanying report (20%): You will prepare a report that examines an example of some form of textual play and present those findings to the rest of us at the end of the term.

Your first job is to identify a likely candidate for a report. Perhaps you've stumbled upon a collection by Alan Garner called Politically Correct Bedtime Stories: Modern Tales for Our Life & Times. You notice that it "updates" many old fairy tales in politically correct ways. After determining that Garner isn't actually serious, you decide to discuss this text as an example of intertextual play. Or perhaps you've seen a film recently that, you are told, is "really" a sequel to another film--or book—that you hadn't experienced, but you enjoyed it anyway. Why? Shouldn't you have been confused? Was it really a "sequel," after all? You decide to examine that question. Perhaps you notice an advertisement that alludes to a text you know, but the ad's allusion to that other text is rather subtle. Did it really have to connect

with the audience? Why or why not? Perhaps you see a film version of a book you've read--or a printed version of a film you've seen. You notice that the experience is principally different, even though you think they are pretty true to each other in many ways? Why does that change of "genre" so affect your reception? Perhaps you see a version of a tale for one audience remade for another; how has that been accomplished if it is successful? How has it failed if it has? You get the point. In any case, you might find an instance of genre crossing, parody, imitation, allusion, or serialization. Your job will be to share it with us and explain it as well as you can.

This report will be divided between an explanation or account or **summary** of the text in question (what is it?), the **analysis** of the textual play at work (how does it work in relation to another text?), and a brief discussion of **significance** (why is it interesting or important?). To paraphrase, the report will be divided between what, how, and "so what?" **I want you to make this division clear in the written version.**

I. **Summary:** As briefly as you can, explain what you have found, exactly. Provide information that helps us understand what you've examined and what texts are involved. Who authored the texts? Where were they found? (A word or two of how you stumbled on this might be interesting.) What sorts of texts are they?

II. **Analysis:** Explain what it is that you think is going on with the texts in question. Make clear whether the texts work off of each other in one of three general ways: imitation (the version is ultimately not different in any important way), alternation (the new version takes the subtext in a new direction because of changes or redirects the same thing for a new audience context), opposition (the new version denies or mocks or challenges the original through its changes). In other words, **make your thesis crystal clear.** Once you've established a general relationship, provide very specific examples or arguments for that. What are you claiming is the relationship between the texts and what specific features can you point to in order to support this claim; in other words, marshal your evidence for what amounts to an **argument** here.

III. **Significance:** So What? What implications are there for the way we might respond to anything else? Does your example imply something about how ads work on us? How movies get more bang for the buck? How audience is determined? How different genres are limited in what they can do? What conclusions can you draw from what you've discovered across/between/in the two texts?

The written portion of the report will be *about* three pages. The in-class portion will be 8-10 minutes (Don't go over ten minutes; practice this at home). How do you present your findings to the class? You should use the three-part structure above as your guide. All media are welcome, from videotape to film to overhead to handouts to audio tape to web sites, etc. Consider what will make your job easier in the time you have allotted to you--an issue to be discussed later.

Let me know if you want to discuss what you're finding; come on by the office. I am quite interested in hearing about the possibilities for your report! I strongly discourage folks from waiting until Thanksgiving to start looking and thinking about options. I want you to collect a number of possibilities so that you might make a good, thoughtful decision.

Grading Criteria for Writing in Dr. Cadden's English Courses:

- A: 90-100 pts.
- B: 80-89 pts.
- C: 70-79 pts.
- D: 60-69 pts.
- F: 59 pts. and below

The high end of each range (~7-10) should be considered "plus"; for example, 88 is in the B+ range. The middle of each range (~4-6) should be considered a solid letter grade; for example, 75 is a solid C. The low end of each range (~0-3) should be considered "minus"; for example, 92 is in the A- range.

"A":

General Qualitative Description: Excellent, Superior, Outstanding.

Conception: Your idea should contain some new, perhaps surprising, element, some angle that is uncommonly thoughtful and insightful. You are not rehearsing other people's ideas, and you are going beyond an average reading. You expose and challenge the explicit and implicit assumptions of the text. If you are incorporating research, you will have **WORKED** your sources--using what supports your argument, and acknowledging and dealing with what challenges it.

Organization: Your organization should be flawless and should match your content. You should anticipate, address, and work through opposition to your argument and build a strong case for your own. You should employ evidence with regularity and in appropriate circumstances. If you are incorporating research, you will spend some time positioning your argument in the context of the larger conversation.

Style: Your presentation should be artful. You have obviously paid attention to the way your language sounds as well as what it says. You have found a way to make your presentation style match the content of your paper (other than a groovy font style!), perhaps through a sustained metaphor, or a particularly apt example that you carry through and refer to in the entire paper.

Grammar and Mechanics: Your paper should be absolutely clean and free of grammatical and mechanical errors of a rudimentary nature, though you may have a few problems with complex functions of grammar. You should never avoid complex language in order to avoid errors, in other words.

“B”:

General Qualitative Description: Above average, Good, Commendable.

Conception: Your idea will be better than average, but you may have overlooked or not acknowledged or interrogated the assumptions that inform it. The claim/idea is ambitious and, for that reason, may have gotten away from you. You will be rewarded for being ambitious even if you fall a bit short.

Organization: Your organization will be strong, but the signaling might still be a bit awkward; you may find yourself using a lot of directional phrases because your argument doesn't flow naturally. (Ex. "As I said earlier..." "Firstly, secondly, thirdly...") Here too the organization will match the content rather than being formulaic.

Style: It's clean, readable, there's a consistent sense of voice, and there aren't any places where a reader has to go back and reread a sentence just to understand its structure.

Grammar/Mechanics: Very few (almost no) errors of a rudimentary nature.

“C”:

General Qualitative Description: Competent, Average, Fine.

Conception: Your idea for your paper should reflect that you have read, thought about, and paid attention to the way we have talked in class about similar issues. Your main point should be clearly stated and defended with appropriate evidence. You should remain focused on your topic throughout your paper, and you should have thoroughly examined the aspects of your topic from your perspective. Your ideas should be internally consistent. There won't be anything terribly surprising, daring, or unusual here.

Organization: Your paper should have a logical, clearly identifiable organization. Each paragraph should address only one aspect of your topic, and when you change aspects, you start a new paragraph. Transitions between paragraphs should be competently handled. Your strategy, that is, how you manage the interweaving of your idea and your organization, should be standard and straightforward. For instance, if you follow a traditional pattern of an introduction that includes a flagged thesis statement ("in this paper I will..."), then proceed with evidence and close with a restatement of the initial problem. That's a standard, straightforward organization--a C strategy.

Style: Your style should be clear and readable.

Grammar and Mechanics: Your paper should not contain many distracting errors in grammar or mechanics. Minimally, you should have run a spell-check program, and you should know the difference between a complete sentence, a fragment, and a run-on.

“D”:

General Qualitative Description: Incompetent, Inadequate, Below Average.

Conception: Your idea will be immediately obvious to a casual reader--a no-brainer—yet it will be presented as news. It will likely also be not quite clear what it is that you are really saying. Split focus on more than one thesis or issue is likely.

Organization: Perhaps you split your focus (which means you start out talking about one thing and shift to another) which means that you are covering several or many issues in short paragraphs. You jump from one idea to the next with no logical strategy or transitions. If there is no plan, or if you don't stick to the plan, this is faulty organization. It may be evident that there wasn't ever really a structural strategy at all.

Style: Unclear language, usually. This may also be a matter of using the wrong words for your ideas. Simply put, the language is in bad shape.

Grammar/Mechanics: Consistent problems in sentence structure with little sign of proof-reading.

“F”:

General Qualitative Description: Unacceptable.

(The most common cause of an F is a failure to adequately address the assignment. For instance, if I specify that this assignment is to be researched, or if it is to address a certain topic in a certain way, you have to at least complete the assignment.)

Conception: No clear idea governs the words on the page.

Organization: No plan is evident, much less achieved.

Style: Incomprehensible most or all of the time.

Grammar/Mechanics: Consistent problems with rudimentary mechanical matters.

The four major areas of concern discussed above (conception, organization, style, and mechanics) will be considered separately, when that is possible. I may find that it is difficult or even impossible to assess conception if the style and mechanics are at the “F” or “D” levels. It may well be the case that your organization is a real problem while conception, style, and mechanics are all quite good. The ultimate assessment, then, will be the combined consideration of all four areas. Any challenges to my assessments need to employ the above issues in those challenges.

I cannot assess effort. Note that I do not say that I *will* not assess effort; nobody can assess effort unless, perhaps, he or she is there watching you work. I assume that you *all* work very hard on your writing. I can only assess the final product.

I do not give grades based on your perceived needs. If you need a “B” in the course to keep your GPA up for a scholarship, loans, or admittance into a program, then be sure you perform at a “B” level.

I do not give grades on the basis of your sense of identity or personal academic history. I assess each piece of work on its own merits. Just because you consider yourself an “A” student does not mean that you will do “A” work each time; just because you consider yourself a “C” student doesn’t mean that you won’t do “A” work. Try to separate your performance from your identity.