



Course Syllabus
MWSU 4433-2H1
Honors Seminar: The Grimmest of Them
Monday & Wednesday & Friday 12:00pm.-12:50 p.m.,

Spring 2026

Contact Information

Instructor: Dr. Kyung Lee Gagum
Office hours:
Mondays: 1pm-2pm
Tuesdays and Thursdays: 10am-10:50 am and 12pm-1pm, and by appointment
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Course Description

This honors literature course examines the fairy tale as a literary genre, with particular emphasis on the tales collected by the Brothers Grimm. Fairy tales are approached as complex narrative forms that engage enduring questions about the human condition, social and political power, morality, identity, and cultural values. Through close reading and sustained discussion, students will analyze both well-known and lesser-known tales in order to understand how fairy tales have circulated, evolved, and remained culturally influential over time.

A central component of the course is the study of fairy-tale adaptation across cultures and media. Alongside literary texts and film, students will read excerpts from webtoons, view selected scenes from anime, and watch episodes of K-dramas that draw on fairy-tale motifs and narrative structures, with particular attention to manga and East Asian popular culture. These materials will be examined comparatively to explore how narrative form, visual style, and cultural context shape the meaning, function, and reception of fairy tales in different settings.

The course emphasizes close reading, comparative analysis, and critical writing, and introduces four core analytical approaches. **Transcultural analysis** serves as the primary framework, guiding students in examining how fairy tales move across linguistic, cultural, and national boundaries and are reshaped in new contexts. This approach is complemented by **intertextual analysis**, which highlights relationships among texts and adaptations; **structuralist and narratological analysis**, including readings from *Morphology of the Folktale* by **Vladimir Propp**; and **critical discourse analysis**, which focuses on ideology, power, and social norms. Drawing on perspectives from literary theory, cultural studies, film studies, and gender studies, students will apply these methodologies to both traditional fairy tales and their contemporary adaptations across media.

Goals

By the end of this course, students will have read and critically examined a range of fairy tales, along with their interpretations and adaptations across different historical, cultural, and media contexts.

Students will have developed an understanding of intertextuality and transculturality, as well as knowledge of the historical conditions that shaped the collection, dissemination, and global reception of fairy tales, with particular emphasis on the Grimms' fairy tales. In addition, students will have gained broader awareness of German fairy tales and of fairy tales that originated elsewhere but have become integral to German cultural traditions and to fairy-tale cultures beyond Germany, and will be able to analyze these texts using appropriate critical methodologies introduced in the course.

Learning outcomes

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate familiarity with a broad range of fairy tales collected by the Brothers Grimm, including both well-known and lesser-studied texts.
2. Analyze key fairy tale themes, archetypes, and narrative structures, including plot development and character functions.
3. Apply the concepts of intertextuality and transculturality to the study of fairy tales and their adaptations across cultures and media.
4. Distinguish between folk fairy tales and literary fairy tales, recognizing differences in form, authorship, and historical context.
5. Examine the socio-political and historical conditions that shaped the collection, publication, and dissemination of fairy tales in German-speaking regions and beyond.
6. Critically interpret fairy tales and their adaptations using the core analytical approaches introduced in the course, including structuralist/narratological, intertextual, transcultural, and critical discourse analysis.

Throughout the semester, students will strengthen their critical thinking skills through sustained engagement with course readings, class discussions, oral presentations, and analytical response papers.

Marketable Skills Gained

- **Critical Thinking & Analytical Reasoning**
Ability to analyze complex texts and media, identify patterns and arguments, and evaluate cultural and ideological meanings.
- **Cross-Cultural & Global Competence**
Experience interpreting narratives across cultural, historical, and national contexts, with attention to transcultural exchange and adaptation.
- **Written & Oral Communication**
Development of clear, persuasive written analysis and effective oral presentation skills through discussion and coursework.
- **Comparative & Research Skills**
Capacity to synthesize multiple sources, compare texts across genres and media, and apply theoretical frameworks to new materials.
- **Media & Digital Literacy**
Proficiency in critically engaging with visual and digital media, including film, anime, webtoons, and television.

These skills prepare students for careers and graduate study in fields such as education, law, publishing, media and communications, cultural institutions, international and nonprofit work, and related interdisciplinary fields.

Textbook & Instructional Materials

No textbook required. Excerpts and texts on D2L.

Study Hours and Tutoring Assistance

Approximately one hour of study is suggested on a daily basis for success in this course. Sometimes it is more, sometimes less. You are welcome to come to my office when you have questions about topics presented in class. Tutoring offered by TASP's Learning Center (TLC) is available at the library on the first floor of Moffett Library.

Student Handbook

Refer to: [Student Handbook 2018-2019](#)

Academic Misconduct Policy & Procedures

Academic Dishonesty: Cheating, collusion, and plagiarism (the act of using source material of other persons, either published or unpublished, without following the accepted techniques of crediting, or the submission for credit of work not the individual's to whom credit is given). Additional guidelines on procedures in these matters may be found in the Office of Student Conduct.

Participation and Attendance

Attendance is taken every class meeting. Students are required to be in class for the entire period. Absences due to official university functions or documented illness will be dealt with on an individual basis and should be discussed with the instructor outside of class time. There are no excused absences from regular class periods. If a student misses an exam, he or she must present documented proof of illness or university activity to the instructor before a make-up exam will be allowed. Students will be expected to come to class prepared by completing homework and reading assignments to participate actively in all discussions and activities.

Grading

Course Grade: The following components make up the course grade. The number of quizzes and graded homework assignments will vary according to the discretion of the instructor.

Table 1:

Assignments	% of Course Grade
Homework Assignments	15%
Attendance/Participation	10%
Reflective Essays (4)	20%
Quizzes (3)	20%
Oral Presentation	10%
Final Research Project	25%

Table 2: Total percentages for final grade.

Grade	Points
A	90 - 100
B	80 - 89
C	70 - 79
D	60 - 69
F	Less than 60

Extra Credit

No extra credit assignments are given to individuals that are not offered to the entire class. All extra credit assignments will be offered at the discretion of the instructor.

Late Work

No late work is accepted.

Make-Up Work//Exams

No make-up work is accepted, and no make-up exam will be offered, unless due to documented illness or circumstances.

If you know you will miss an exam due to an official university function, please make arrangements with your instructor prior to the absence and as soon as possible. If you are absent from an exam, you must present documented proof of illness or university activity to your instructor before an early or make-up exam will be scheduled.

Important Dates

Last day for term schedule changes: January 20-23, 2026 [Academic Calendar](#).

Deadline to file for graduation: February 16, 2026 [Academic Calendar](#).

Last Day to drop with a grade of "W:" April 29, 2026 [Academic Calendar](#).

Refer to: [Drops, Withdrawals & Void](#)

Desire-to-Learn (D2L)

Extensive use of the MSU D2L program is a part of this course. Required readings will be posted on D2L. Each student is expected to be familiar with this program as it provides a primary source of communication regarding assignments, examination materials, and general course information. You can log into [D2L](#) through the MSU Homepage.

Services for Students With Disabilities

In accordance with Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Midwestern State University endeavors to make reasonable accommodations to ensure equal opportunity for qualified persons with disabilities to participate in all educational, social, and recreational programs and activities. After notification of acceptance, students requiring accommodations should make application for such assistance through Disability Support Services, located in the Clark Student Center, Room 168, (940) 397-4140. Current documentation of a disability will be required in order to provide appropriate services, and each request will be individually reviewed. For more details, please go to [Student Life Disability](#).

University Policies

Campus Carry Rules/Policies

Refer to: [Campus Carry Rules and Policies](#).

Smoking/Tobacco Policy

College policy strictly prohibits the use of tobacco products in any building owned or operated by WATC. Adult students may smoke only in the outside designated-smoking areas at each location.

Alcohol and Drug Policy

To comply with the Drug Free Schools and Communities Act of 1989 and subsequent amendments, students and employees of Midwestern State are informed that strictly enforced policies are in place which prohibits the unlawful possession, use or distribution of any illicit drugs, including alcohol, on university property or as part of any university-sponsored activity. Students and employees are also

subject to all applicable legal sanctions under local, state and federal law for any offenses involving illicit drugs on University property or at University-sponsored activities.

Active Shooter

The safety and security of our campus is the responsibility of everyone in our community. Each of us has an obligation to be prepared to appropriately respond to threats to our campus, such as an active aggressor. Please review the information provided by MSU Police Department regarding the options and strategies we can all use to stay safe during difficult situations. For more information, visit [MSUReady – Active Shooter](#). Students are encouraged to watch the video entitled “*Run. Hide. Fight.*” which may be electronically accessed via the University police department’s webpage: [“Run. Hide. Fight.”](#)

Grade Appeal Process

Students who wish to appeal a grade should consult the Midwestern State University [Undergraduate Catalog](#)

Technology Policy

Unless you have spoken with me about a specific situation regarding the use of technology in the classroom, you are asked to **refrain from using electronic devices during class time**.

Instructor Policy

Please be polite to your instructor and fellow students. Pay attention to the instructor and to your fellow students when they are speaking. No food or drinks, except for water, are allowed in our classrooms.

Email Policy

I will check email daily Monday through Friday and will make every effort to answer you within 24 hours. On the weekend, however, I might not be able to answer as quickly. Please make sure that you adhere to common rules of courtesy such as addressing me by name/title (Dr. Gagum), proofing spelling, and signing your name at the end of the email.

Name/Pronoun Policy

It is important that we strive to make the classroom a respectful and inclusive place. If you feel comfortable doing so, you are encouraged to let me know during the first week of class what name you prefer to be called and if you prefer the use of masculine, feminine, or gender neutral pronouns. These preferences can be applied just to your interactions with me or to all of your in-class interactions with your peers.

General class calendar: see the D2L page for specific assignments.

Course Schedule

Week	Dates	Topics	Homework: Readings / Viewings	Due Dates for Reflective Essays and Quizzes
1	Jan 21, 23	What is a fairy tale? Grimm & orality	The Grimm's brothers biography; Jack Zipes, <i>"What Is a Fairy Tale?"</i> (excerpt); Grimm: "Little Red Riding Hood"	
2	Jan 26, 28, 30	Narratology & structure	Vladimir Propp, <i>Morphology of the Folktale</i> (intro & function list); Grimm: "Hansel and Gretel"; The Grimm Variations- Episode 3 "Hansel" (Anime)	
3	Feb 2, 4, 6	Archetypes & disruption	Grimm: "Snow White"; reading packet; selected chapter from Webtoon or Anime	Quiz 1 (Feb 4) Reflective Essay 1 (Feb 6)
4	Feb 9, 11, 13	Intertextuality	Grimm: "Rapunzel"; reading packet; selected chapter from Webtoon or Anime or K-Drama	—
5	Feb 16, 18, 20	Retelling & revision	Grimm: "Sleeping Beauty"; reading packet; selected chapter from Webtoon or Anime or K-Drama	—
6	Feb 23, 25, 27	Dark fairy tales	Grimm: "The Robber Bridegroom"; reading packet; selected chapter from Webtoon or Anime or K-Drama	Reflective Essay 2 (Feb 27)
7	Mar 2, 4, 6	Power & ideology	Grimm: "The Frog Prince"; Michel Foucault reading packet; selected chapter from Webtoon or Anime or K-Drama	—
8	Mar 9–13	Spring Break	—	—
9	Mar 16, 18, 20	Violence & punishment	Grimm: "The Juniper Tree; reading packet; selected chapter from Webtoon or Anime or K-Drama	Quiz 2 (Mar 18) Proposal (Mar 20)

10	Mar 23, 25, 27	Transcultural theory	Grimm: “The Fisherman and His Wife”; Homi K. Bhabha reading packet; <i>Spirited Away</i> (selected scenes)	Reflective Essay 2 (Mar 27)
11	Mar 30, Apr 1	Global adaptations	Grimm: “Cinderella”; reading packet; The Grimm Variations- Episode 1 “Kiyoko Otawara” (Anime)	Research Draft (Apr 1)
	Apr 3	Holiday Break	—	—
12	Apr 6, 8, 10	Medium & meaning	Student-selected Grimm tale + adaptation aligned with research topic	Quiz 3 (Apr 8) Reflective Essay 4 (Apr 10)
13	Apr 13, 15, 17	Oral presentation	Peer presentations	Research Presentation Slides (April 13)
14	Apr 20, 22, 24	Oral presentations	Peer presentations	—
15	Apr 27, 29	Oral presentations & synthesis	Peer presentations, no new reading; revise research sources	—
15	May 1	No class meeting	Finalize Research Paper	Final Research Paper (May 1)