

Harry Potter: Magic, Myth, and Meaning



Faculty Contact Information

Name:

Email:

Office Hour information:

Course Information

Course Description

“Words are our most inexhaustible source of magic” - Dumbledore

Magic, like literature, is a way of finding meaning in the mayhem and maelstrom of life, a way of imposing order on, or even creating the world around us. Using other texts (Shakespeare, C.S. Lewis, Tolkien, Greek myth and Arthurian legend) this course will analyse how J.K. Rowling, by using an alchemy of intertextuality, conjured a world that explores our interconnected myths, magical rituals, archetypes and shared histories to make meaning of our selves.

Course Goals

Literary scholar John Granger calls the Harry Potter series of novels our “shared text” of the twenty-first century. This course allows students to engage with the ‘shared text’ of the novels and world of characters and place them in a critical context. Each week the course addresses a different approach to the works in relation to the narrative structure and content of Harry Potter, exploring and identifying the interconnections, cross-pollinations and intertextual sharing with classical mythology, Arthurian romance, gothic romance, detective, coming-of-age, hero’s quest and the British school days novel. Students are encouraged to consider issues such as character, love, friendship, truth-telling, heroism, justice, law, war, punishment, identity, meaning, death, and free will and will engage in critical close reading, discussion and assignments each week.

Student Learning Outcomes

At the end of this course, students will:

1. Summarise key texts that influenced and inspired the Harry Potter series
2. Demonstrate and illustrate knowledge through persuasive argument and critique, both orally and in effective and well-presented critical, analytical and argumentative writings about Harry Potter and connected literature.
3. Assess their own experiences as readers and writers in an intertextual landscape

Course Assignments, Grading, and Assessment

Assignment	Percentage	Grading Requirements
Attendance and Participation	20%	
Journaling	20%	Please see rubric on MyStudy

Character Study Group Presentation	30%	Please see rubric on MyStudy
Essay	30%	Please see rubric on MyStudy

Brief Assessment Overview

Assessment 1: Journaling

Due:

Students submit 10 journal entries that must show evidence of having completed the set readings and engaged with the seminar questions.

Assessment 2: Character Study Group Presentation

Due:

Choose one character in the series that seems to conform to one of the 12 Jungian archetypes and a moment when Rowling makes this character's actions especially striking, puzzling, revealing, or meaningful. Drawing on your skills of close reading and analysis, examine the scene's details for evidence of significant implications of the character's behaviour.

Assessment 3: Essay: Comparison Essay – Exploring the Alchemical Elements of Intertextuality (2,500 words)

Due:

A variety of texts explored throughout the semester may be thought of as a source for JK Rowling's Harry Potter series, Rowling seems drawn to a number of themes, plot structures, and characters from various myths, genres and legends. These range from obvious references to more subtle echoes and nuances. This essay asks that you choose one other text to compare with Rowling's texts. What does a close comparison between details in the two texts reveal?

Grading

Grade	Knowledge & Content	Methodology & Structure, Language & Style	Understanding, Reflection & Critique	Integrative thinking & demonstration of experiential learning
A (93- 100%) A- (90-92%)	Interesting topic handled with intelligence, originality, and depth; wealth of supporting material, smoothly integrated into the text; tone is evident and maintained throughout; no factual inaccuracies	Material is unified and well focused; organization is clear, logical and purposeful throughout the essay; well-chosen examples. Uses sophisticated sentences effectively; usually chooses words aptly; observes conventions of written English and manuscript format; makes few minor or technical errors	Well-chosen examples; persuasive reasoning used to develop and support thesis consistently: uses quotations and citations effectively; causal connections between ideas are evident	Gives full insight into the nature of an event, experience, or artifact; achieves complete integration of knowledge from diverse disciplines to interpret an issue. Shows clear understanding of cultural impact through appropriate examples

B+ (87-89%) B (83-86%) B- (80-82%)	Content is above average; worthwhile topic; satisfactory depth of development; supporting details for the thesis and topic sentences are specific, concrete, and plentiful; has only minor factual inaccuracies	Material is unified and well focused; pattern of organization is clear, logical, and well executed; makes an effort to organize paragraphs topically. Some mechanical difficulties or stylistic problems; may make occasional problematic word choices or awkward syntax errors; a few spelling or punctuation errors or cliché; usually presents quotations effectively	Pursues thesis consistently: develops a main argument with clear major points and appropriate textual evidence and supporting detail; makes an effort to organize paragraphs topically	Gives some insights into the nature of an event, experience, or artifact; achieves partial integration of knowledge from diverse disciplines to interpret an issue; some understanding of cultural impact through appropriate examples
C+ (77-79%) C (73-76%) C- (70-72%)	Worthwhile topic; supporting material for thesis and topic sentences is general and abstract rather than specific and concrete; most information is correct	Organization is clear, logical, and coherent; some ideas unsupported; fails to integrate quotations appropriately. More frequent wordiness; several unclear or awkward sentences; imprecise use of words or over-reliance on passive voice; one or two major grammatical errors	Only partially develops the argument; shallow analysis; some ideas and generalizations undeveloped or unsupported; makes limited use of textual evidence; fails to integrate quotations appropriately	Able to explain to a limited extent, the quality of a performance, event, or artifact; gives few insights into event, experience; discusses few qualities of an experience; a limited understanding of cultural impact with few examples
D (60-69%)	Trivial subject; very few supporting details for the thesis and topic sentences; has some correct & incorrect information	Not logically organized; digresses from one topic to another; no clear organizational pattern. Some major grammatical or proofreading errors (subject-verb agreement; sentence fragments); language marred by clichés	Frequently only narrates; digresses from one topic to another without developing ideas or terms; makes insufficient or awkward use of textual evidence	Little integration of experience and narrative; limited insight of issues and insufficient understanding of cultural impact
F (0-59%)	Consists of unsupported generalities and/or the repetition of commonplace ideas; lacks originality and insight; information is inaccurate or absent	Does not follow the instructions; rambling, disorganized and incoherent. Numerous grammatical errors	Little or no development; may list incorrect facts or misinformation; uses no quotations or fails to cite sources or plagiarizes	Little or no integration experience and narrative; lack of insight and fails to understand cultural impact

Policies specific to this course

- **Co-curricular Activities and Field Trips:** Field trips for your FIE courses have been planned to help students achieve the learning objectives of the course and are required. They take place

during class time unless otherwise notes. Details about required visits appear on the class by class schedule below. Please note that any make up for missed co-curricular activities are at the personal expense of the student.

- **Late submission of work:** Written work may be submitted later than the due date only with express permission from the faculty. Credit is not given for work received late, except in exceptional circumstances of personal illness or similar (which must be made known to FIE at the time). Documentation of exceptional circumstances from a third party, such as a doctor's note, may be required. Any extensions made beyond the last class meeting must be committed to writing and include information on the exceptional circumstances that require the extension, the nature of work yet to be submitted, and the date by which the work will be received. If said work is not received by the agreed extension date, barring further exceptional circumstances, the work will not be given credit.
- **Late arrivals to class or site visit:** Please arrive on time. Lateness, particularly on days with co-curricular visits, results in missed course material. Faculty may use their discretion to mark a student as 'Absent' if they feel the student has arrived too late or left too early to be considered 'Present' for that session.
- **Trigger Warnings:** Some topics covered in class may expose students to past traumas and evoke a negative reaction. Sensitive topics can vary, such as sexual violence, death, racism, or xenophobia. I want this to be an inclusive space where every student feels comfortable; therefore, I will provide content warnings before lectures for sensitive subject matters. Content warnings are meant to give students a forewarning so they can prepare for their emotional safety. It is important to note that anything in the environment could be a trigger for someone's trauma, such as smell, sound, or texture; it is impossible to account for all possible triggers, and ask for grace as I do my best as an educator to warn students of potentially distressing content during lectures, assignments and/or discussions.

Attendance and Participation

- Regular attendance is essential in order to pass a course. A class constitutes lectures, student presentations, discussions, seminars, co-curricular activities, tests, and examinations. In addition, under UK Home Office regulations class attendance is mandatory.
- Class attendance and participation is formally recorded and incorporated into a student's final grade.
- In addition to physical presence in class, a student's participation in a class is evaluated on the mastery of assigned course readings as reflected in a consistent, valid contribution to class discussions, in-class exercises, and in asking questions that enrich the on-going discourse. Consistency and validity in participation is expected in every class. Limited participation will have a negative impact on a student's participation score.
- When unexpected events cause students to miss a class, it is the student's responsibility to initiate contact with the faculty member to notify them in advance, or as soon as is reasonably possible.
- Absence from class does not relieve a student of responsibility for assignments. Students bear the ultimate responsibility for all missed class material and assessment.
- If a student misses 25% or more of a course, then they may be awarded a failure for the course and/or not permitted to finish the course.
- [See the full attendance policy here](#)

Required Readings

Students are expected to have read the Harry Potter series prior to the course.

Katherine Grimes's essay "Harry Potter as Fairy-Tale Prince, Real Boy, and Archetypal Hero

Extracts from:

The Hero Myth as defined by Otto Rank and Joseph Campbell, The Epic of Gilgamesh, T. H. White's The Sword in the Stone, The Fellowship of the Ring; The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe; Greek myths and The Hunger Games.

Additional Resources and Readings

Orwell, G (1993, 1999). *Down and Out in Paris and London*.

Porter, R (1996). *London: A Social History*. Penguin.

Sandhu, S. (2003). *London Calling: How Black and Asian Writers imagined a City*. HarperCollins.

MyStudy@FIE

MyStudy@FIE is FIE's virtual learning environment based on the open-source platform Moodle. Students are required to access MyStudy@FIE for course information, readings, link to resources, assignment submissions and communication with faculty.

FIE's Values in the Curriculum

A unique aspect to FIE's curriculum is our courses reflect an engagement with values of 1) knowledge and inclusivity, 2) ethics and human rights, 3) social and cultural engagement, and 4) sustainability. For information about each of these values and how each of FIE's courses aligns with them, please see [Our Values](#).

Topics

- **Intertextuality: A literary Alchemy Introduction:** How do writers interpret London and its history, architectures, people, and geography? Why is London such a source of enormous inspiration?
- **Rowling the Reader as Writer:** Why does London work so well as the setting for a Dystopian novel? We investigate how history, imagination and the hope for a better future collide.
- **Hero's Journey:** London seen through the eyes of the newly arrived, the transient, and those making London their new home.
- **Archetypes and Characters:** We explore Jung's archetypes and the characters in HP and across literary history. What is their importance? How do we deconstruct them for contemporary readers?
- **The Subaltern:** Those on the margins; using post-colonial theories we explore the characters without agency and consider class, identity and power

- **Myth:** We explore the darker side of London: The London populated by the poor, the criminal, and the forgotten.
- **Magic, Spells, Symbols and Language:** Imagining a future London- how does it change? And why? What are writers attempting to communicate with us in these texts?
- **Glorious Genre:** The detective novel, Gothic, British School days novel: what does Harry Potter have in common with these classic genre literatures?
- **Magical London:** London as the backdrop for fantasy, extraordinary happenings, and magical experiences-how does a big, bustling and impersonal city provide the elements to create a strange and uncanny literary world?

Possible co-curricular activities

- City of London walk
- Walking tours of locations that inspired Harry Potter and other literature
- The Making of Harry Potter Experience
- Film viewing Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone

Academic Integrity

By enrolling at FIE, you have joined an academic community and you are expected and required to act honestly regarding the work you submit for assessment in your courses. Academic integrity is closely related to the concept of good academic practice.

Any attempts to Cheat; Fabricate; Plagiarise; Collaborate without Authorisation; Participate in Academically Dishonest Activities; and/or Facilitate Academic Dishonesty will be viewed as a breach of this regulation.

[Please see FIE's Academic Integrity Policy in full.](#)

Most students do not have any problems understanding the rules and expectations about acting honestly at university. If you have any questions you must talk to your faculty or a member of FIE's Academic Team.

Writing and Language Support

FIE's Writing Support Tutors are available to assist students of all levels of expertise with all phases of the writing process. Available year-round and to all students. To book an appointment or for more information visit www.fie.org.uk/wst.

Please note that FIE allows the use of a foreign language/English dictionary in exam situations for students where English is not their primary language UNLESS the use of the dictionary would give the student a significant advantage (e.g. where the exam is aimed at getting the students to define terms that might be found in the dictionary).

Accommodations for Students

Students who wish to use academic accommodations at FIE can register to do so via FIE's Administration Team, by providing the appropriate supporting documentation. Students who have

approved FIE academic accommodations should discuss them directly with their faculty member(s) within or around the first few class sessions, or via email. Exams are facilitated by FIE faculty and students should give 2 weeks' notice to faculty members if use of approved exam accommodations is required. The Administration team can assist students and faculty with liaison and facilitation as needed.

Additional Policies and Resources

Mental Health and Stress Management Support

FIE's qualified and accredited counsellor is Dr Deborah Hill, who offers appointments via video call and over the phone. The first three appointments are free of charge and ongoing sessions can be arranged directly with Dr Hill. To make an appointment with Dr Hill, simply email studentlife@fie.org.uk.

If you have a counsellor from back home that you are seeing, we strongly encourage you to maintain contact with them throughout your time studying abroad with FIE.

Diversity and Inclusivity

FIE regards its housing and classroom facilities as safe spaces to live, study, and work with students, faculty, and staff who are understanding, supportive, and trustworthy. Inappropriate, derogatory comments and/or actions, harassment, bullying, victimisation and discrimination are not tolerated. Any such behaviour will be investigated and dealt with appropriately. Students must be respectful of diverse opinions and of all class members regardless of personal attribute and use inclusive language in written and oral work.