

# HL2043 Fantasy Literature

Semester I, 2022/23  
Thursday, 9:30am-12:30pm

**Week 1: No class (Aug 11)**

**Week 2: Introduction (Aug 18)**

(No primary reading)

**Week 3: Victorian Roots (Aug 25)**

George MacDonald, *Phantastes*

**Week 4: Morris and Eddison: World-Building (Sep 1)**

William Morris, *The Well at the World's End*;

E. R. Eddison, *The Worm Ouroboros*

**Week 5: Lewis and Tolkien: High Fantasy (Sep 8)**

C. S. Lewis, *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*;

J. R. R. Tolkien, *The Hobbit*

**Week 6: Lewis and Tolkien: Medievalism (Sep 15)**

C. S. Lewis, *The Silver Chair*;

J. R. R. Tolkien, *The Lord of the Rings*

**Week 7: Lewis and Tolkien: Creation and Mythopoeia (Sep 22)**

C. S. Lewis, *The Magician's Nephew*;

J. R. R. Tolkien, *The Silmarillion*

**Recess (Sep 29)**

**Week 8: Magic and Nature (Oct 6)**

Ursula K. Le Guin, *A Wizard of Earthsea*

**Week 9: Magic and Modernity (Oct 13)**

J. K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*, and  
*Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*

**Week 10: Modern Myths (Oct 20)**

Neil Gaiman, *American Gods*

**Week 11: Comic Fantasy (Oct 27)**

Jasper Fforde, *The Last Dragonslayer*

**Week 12: Fantasy Across Media (Nov 3)**

(No primary reading)

**Week 13: Fantasy and Animated Film (Nov 10)**

(No primary reading)



Illustration by Alan Lee of Treebeard the Ent,  
from J. R. R. Tolkien's *The Two Towers* (1954).



Illustration by Dave McKean of Shadow, from  
the Folio Society edition of Neil Gaiman's  
*American Gods* (2001).

The preliminary syllabus may be subject to change.  
Almost all texts will be read in excerpts.

This course seeks to instil in students an understanding of the development of the genre of modern fantasy literature, and of the generic distinctions and theoretical frameworks commonly applied to it. In addition to the predominantly nineteenth-, twentieth- and twenty-first century texts themselves, the course will explore the modern fantasy genre as a product of histories of ideas stretching from centuries past to the present day. With a syllabus spanning from medievalism to modernity via magic, the course welcomes all students interested in exploring the broad genre of fantasy, and the imaginative processes and ideological traditions thereof. In addition to exploring the farthest reaches of the literary imagination, students will also gain—paradoxical though it may seem—an understanding of how these authors and texts negotiate universal themes relating to the realities of human existence, including myth-making, modernisation and the environment.

**Assessment:**

Participation:	10%
Presentations:	10%
Essay assignment 1 (due end of Oct 17):	40%
Essay assignment 2 (due end of Nov 17):	40%

Late submissions received within twenty-four hours of the deadline will be given a reduced grade; submissions received thereafter will not be accepted without a documented reason.

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Illustration by Pauline Baynes of the Narnia lamppost, from C. S. Lewis's *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* (1950).