

WELCOME TO

**FAIRY TALES &
POPULAR CULTURE**
GMST 121



WHEN & WHERE

Winter Term 2 2023-24

Mon & Wed: 12:30 PM to 2:00 PM

Location: See SISC / Workday Student

This course examines selected folk and fairy tales from the German-speaking tradition and their adaptations in English and in English translation. It, therefore, does not require any prior knowledge of the German language. This course will also introduce and cover the pertinent historical, political, and cultural contexts as they become relevant. **There are no prerequisites.**



YOUR INSTRUCTOR

Dr. Elizabeth "Biz" Nijdam

Department of Central, Eastern, and Northern European Studies
(CENES, "seh-ness")

Office hours:

Wednesday 11 AM–12 PM in person (BuTo 905)
and online by appointment



Scan here to schedule
an virtual meeting

How best to contact me:

biz.nijdam@ubc.ca

Hi! My name is Dr. Biz Nijdam. I've taught German language, media, and popular culture at UBC since 2019. I received my PhD from the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor in 2017, where I wrote my PhD on feminist comics and graphic narrative.

My research interests include comics and graphic novels, video and analog games, and popular culture.

For more info: <https://cenes.ubc.ca/profile/biz-nijdam/>



WHAT WE'LL NEED:

1) **Canvas** will be used for accessing course materials, completing assignments and coursework, and participating in class discussions. To log in to Canvas and learn more visit: <https://students.canvas.ubc.ca>. You can direct all technical questions to the Learning Technology Hub: lt.hub@ubc.ca. **All readings will also be provided in PDF form on our Canvas site.**



2) Unless otherwise stated, films will be required to be viewed outside of class. They are available online through UBC's Kanopy streaming video service for free or available for purchase through Google Play, Apple TV, or Amazon. **Disney films are available through a subscription to Disney's streaming service.**



3) Digital games will be available online for free or for purchase on various platforms, including laptop and desktop computers as well as Android and iOS devices.

WHAT WE'LL LEARN



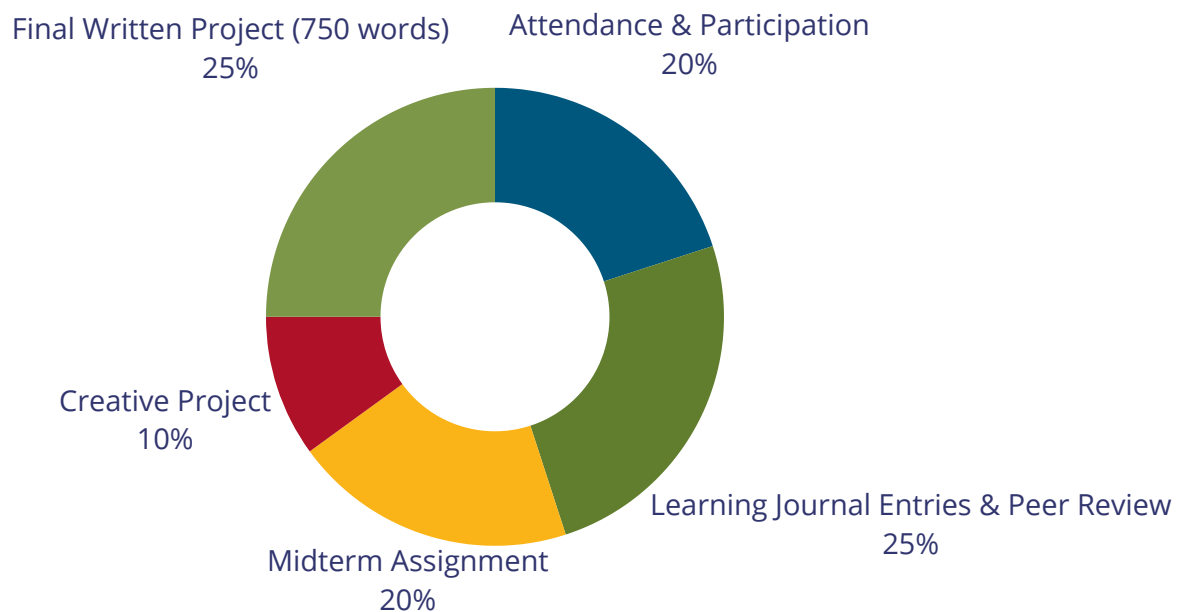
This course examines selected folk and fairy tales from the German-speaking tradition, primarily those collected by the Brothers Grimm, and their adaptation in popular culture. We will locate the texts in the 18th- and 19th-century cultural contexts of their origins and then follow how they have evolved into perennial favourites internationally across various media, including film, video games, board games, and comics. Students will thus explore how fairy tales have changed over the centuries to meet new political, cultural, and social demands while adopting innovative formal and narrative strategies with the emergence of new technologies.

Course readings will be supplemented by short introductory lectures on a variety of disciplinary approaches to fairy tales, such as feminist and critical race studies perspectives as well as media studies theory.

In addition to weekly course readings and lectures, class discussion, group work, and short Learning Journal Entries, students will complete a Midterm Assignment (1000 words) that will form the foundation of their Final Essay (2000 words) on contemporary fairy tale adaptations and a Creative Project that fractures a popular fairy tale.

WHAT ABOUT GRADING?

Coursework will include weekly readings, online and in-class class participation, and low-stakes and high-stakes assignments. Every Friday, students will produce a 350-word Learning Journal Entry to be submitted through Canvas for peer review. Students will then review one of their peer's assignments over the course of the weekend by the following Monday at midnight. In lieu of a midterm exam, this course's take-home Midterm Assignment (1000 words) will ask students to perform a content analysis of a popular adaptation of Grimms' fairy tale, which will become the foundation for their Final Essay (2000 words), a research-based revision of their Midterm Assignment. The Fractured Fairy Tale Creative Project will produce an adaptation of a Grimms' fairy tale to the contemporary moment, reconceptualizing the "moral of the story" in light of important themes, issues, and problems facing society today. No artistic skills are required, but creativity will be encouraged.



CLASS ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION (20%)

To be successful in this course, you must be prepared to attend class regularly and to participate actively in all assigned class activities. Good participation will take the form of regular contributions to class discussion and the completion of the in-class and take-home assignments.

In accordance with UBC Policies and Regulations, students are expected to attend class regularly. Furthermore, in accordance with UBC and CENES's Course Policies, students may not miss more than 40% of the course's scheduled class sessions, regardless of whether their absences are avoidable or unavoidable. In the event that a student misses 12 or more hours of class time, they may be considered unable to meet the "learning outcomes" of the course and may therefore be excluded from final examination. Those students who are unavoidably absent from in-person or online class or miss multiple class sessions and their associated in-class assignments must report their absence to me immediately or upon their return to participating in class in order to establish how they should proceed in catching up on missed material. Students may be granted a concession for their absence either by me or, in the case of an extended absence, by the Academic Advising Services of the Faculty of Arts.

CLASS ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION (CONT.): IN-CLASS ESSAYS

Attendance and participation will be graded through Canvas in-class writing assignments. These assignments will take the form of short In-Class Essays that will engage the course material, readings, and lecture of a given class session. During class, students will have 5-7 minutes of in-class time to write 150-350 words in response to a prompt. These short essays offer students the opportunity to reflect on the course material prior to class or group discussion or consolidate their ideas at the conclusion of class or group discussion. Moreover, these short essays afford quieter students or students that don't feel comfortable participating in in-class discussion the opportunity to share their thoughts with me. This is especially important in larger classes, since it is difficult for every student to participate in in-class discussion in a way that I can monitor.

These short In-Class Essays will not be graded for grammar, spelling, punctuation, or syntax; instead, they will be graded for completion. They thereby function as a testament to students' engagement with the course material and proof of their participation in class as well as often form the foundation of in-class discussion and group work. The use of AI technologies for this and other assignments is strictly forbidden.

All In-Class Essays will be due Sunday at midnight the week they were assigned. Making up In-Class Essays after the Sunday deadline will only be possible in extenuating circumstances, and extension requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis, so please email Biz (biz.nijdam@ubc.ca) if you become sick and require additional accommodation.

LEARNING JOURNAL ENTRIES (15%, DUE FRIDAYS) & PEER REVIEWS (10%, DUE MONDAYS):

Students will write weekly short (350 words) Learning Journal Entries in response to texts, films, and themes over the course of the semester. These assignments require students to demonstrate understanding and engagement with course material in greater depth than in-class discussion, responding to one particular concept, idea, or question.

Excellent responses will consist of coherent and comprehensible short texts that engage with the topic at hand, incorporate references to readings when applicable, and synthesize class discussions with individual responses and interpretations.

Learning Journal Entries will be submitted on Fridays via Canvas, whenever that due date does not coincide with another major deadline. After submitting their Learning Journal Entry by midnight (11:59 PM PT), students will perform a Peer Review of a peer's Learning Journal Entry over the weekend (due Monday at 11:59 pm PT), commenting in 150 words on their fellow student's engagement and analysis of the previous week's course material while adding elements of their own observations. Peer Reviews assignments will be assigned automatically by Canvas at 9 am PT on Saturday. Please see the assignment on our course's Canvas site for more information.

FRACTURED FAIRY TALE CREATIVE PROJECT (10%):

Students will collaborate in producing a short adaptation of a popular fairy tale to the contemporary moment as their Group Project, reconceptualizing the "moral of the story" in light of important themes, issues, and problems facing society today. By incorporating a political, social, economic, or cultural critique into the core of the fairy tale's adaption, students will modernize one particular fairy or folk tale, shifting its narrative agenda to address something relevant to students' lives right now. Some

potential themes include social justice and human rights issues, such as BLM, Every Child Matters or forced migration, environmental issues, such as climate change or natural resource extraction, and political themes.

For Creative Projects that are to be published online through a social media platform, such as Instagram or TikTok, please provide screenshots of the account and each post in a PDF document just in case the account is disabled or I can't access it for the purposes of reviewing and grading the Creative Projects.

MIDTERM ASSIGNMENT (20%):

Students will select one episode, character, or fairy tale story arc from Season 1 of the television Show *Once Upon A Time...* and provide a close reading and analysis of its adaptation from a Grimms' classic fairy tale. The resulting short essay will be between 750 and 1000 words (3 to 4 pages, double-spaced, 12pt. font, Times New Roman) and include a close reading of the text, relevant information on the cultural, social, and/or political context of the Grimms' tale's adaptation, its function in the story, and its position in or against the other adaptations it emerged alongside or in conversation with. It should feature only minimal summary, since students can assume that the reader is familiar with the text.

Please see the assignment on our course's Canvas site for more information. No citations and bibliography are required because students are encouraged to draw from their own interpretations of the adaptation in their writing.

This short essay will become the foundation for students' Final Essay, which will take the form of a Research-Based Revision of their Midterm Assignment. This revised version of the Midterm Assignment will explore the role of adaptation in contemporary storytelling using Midterm Assignment's selected text as a case study.

FINAL ESSAY: RESEARCH-BASED REVISION (25%):

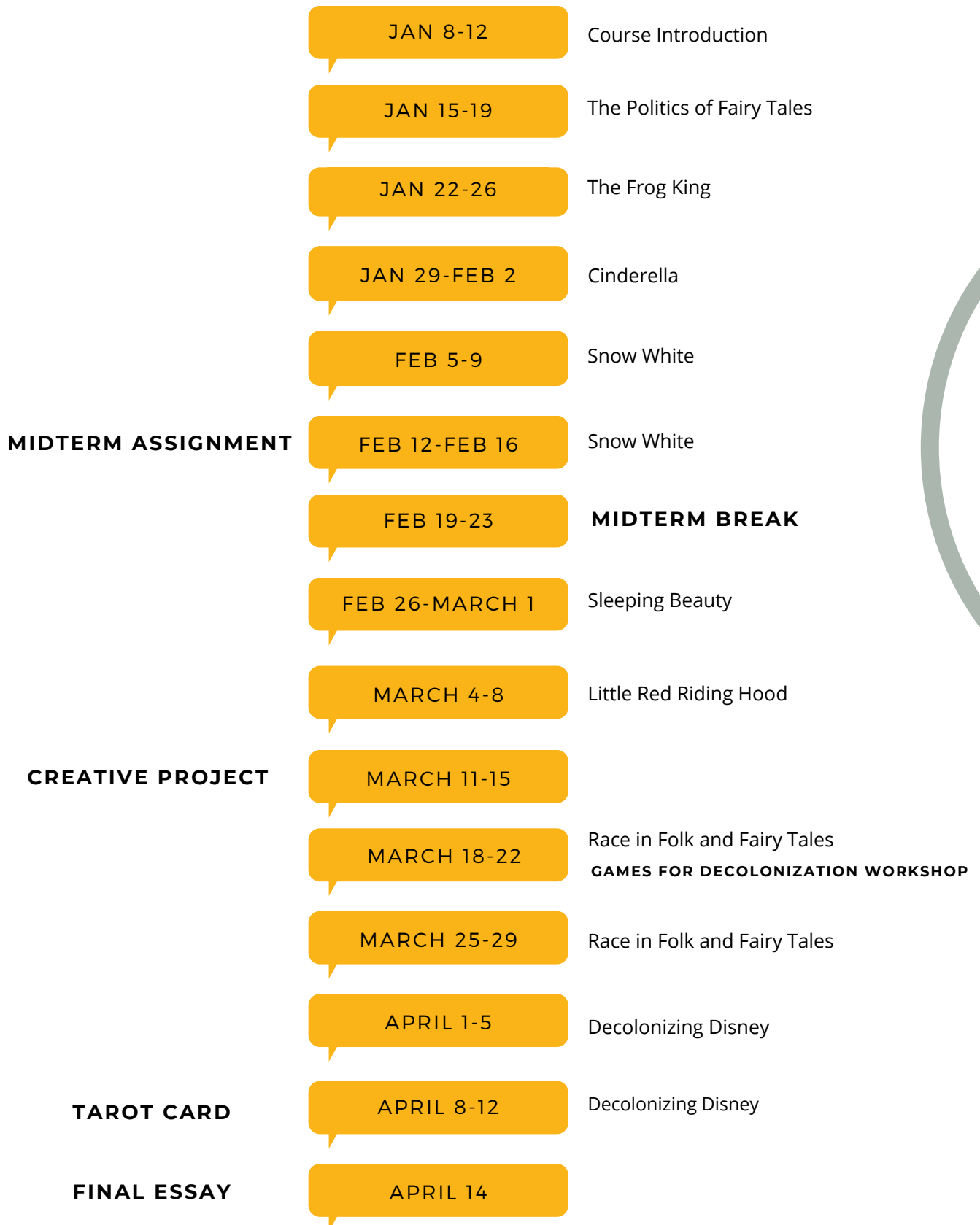
At the end of the semester, students will submit a research-based revision of their Midterm Assignment as their Final Essay on Storytelling in Contemporary Culture. These essays (8 pages, approx. 2000 Words, double-spaced, 12pt. font, Times New Roman) will examine the adaptation of fairy tales in contemporary society through their case study of fairy-tale fracturing in the Midterm Assignment.

Students will revise their Midterm Assignment and thesis statement in order to make an argument about fairy tale adaptation more broadly, using the content of their Midterm Assignment as a case study. For example, some students might explore the feminist fracturing of fairy tales through the fracturing of the Evil Queen in *Once Upon A Time...* Another student, on the other hand, might look at what the television medium brings to the rewriting of these classic tales through an argument on medium-specific qualities (visual, commercial, etc.) and conventions (drama, serial nature of storytelling, etc.) of the television format. Students will thereby push their analysis of fairy tale fracturing to the next level, setting their analysis of the adaptation of the Grimms' classics in the context of the priorities, social norms, and social justice impulses of the contemporary moment as demonstrated in their case study of fairy-tale fracturing in the Midterm Assignment.

The goal of this assignment is to produce critical thinking on the contemporary adaptation of popular fairy tales through theories of adaptation, original research on a primary source (Once Upon A Time...), and the incorporation of other secondary sources that explore what it means to adapt fairy tales in contemporary media.

There are no traditional final exams or midterms in this course.

OUR PLAN FOR THE TERM



UBC POLICIES AND HELPFUL RESOURCES:

The following policies and procedures are considered part of the class syllabus and policy. Feel free to talk them over with your instructor!

[UBC Attendance Policy](#)
[Applying for Academic Concession](#)
[UBC's Academic Code of Honour](#)
[UBC's current COVID-19 Policy](#)
[Resources to support Student Success](#)
[Accommodations for Religious Holidays and Days of Significance](#)
[Using Online Netiquette](#)
[Use of Electronic Devices at UBC](#)
[Center for Accessibility: Support for Disabled Students](#)

UBC Calendar Entry for this course:

"Competence and fluency in everyday situations; ability to report and narrate past events fluently and to express opinions; familiarity with contemporary issues in the German-speaking societies."



HMM... WHAT ABOUT A MAJOR OR MINOR IN GERMAN?

There is so much to explore after German 200! Courses range from culture and film studies, to literature and historiography, philosophy and language, sexuality and gender, media, activism, and society.

Our professors are experts in fields ranging from Comics and Games studies and Queer Studies and Critical Race Theory. Our Honours students participate in community and capstone projects, including our annual undergraduate research conference and journal.

2023/24 GMST Courses



GMST 427: **Decolonization in the German-Speaking World** (T2) (Dr. Uma Kumar & Dr. David Gramling)



GMST 345: **Germanic Horror Film** (T2) (Dr. Jason Lieblang)



GMST 274: **The Frankfurt School** (T1) (Dr. Ilinca Iurașcu)

These courses require no prerequisites. And don't worry! Many courses in UBC German (all GMST courses) are taught in English. Your new German knowledge will be a bonus!

Questions? Reach out to your instructor or to the director of undergraduate studies, Dr. Ervin Malakaj, ervin.malakaj@ubc.ca! He is a joy to be around and would love to chat with you.

You can also check out more information about courses offered this term and next on our Instagram [@ubcgermanstudies](https://www.instagram.com/ubcgermanstudies).

THE GERMAN PROGRAM HELPS YOU TO:

- Experience and contribute to our multilingual world
- Recognize how multilingual meanings impact people and processes—in complex, subtle, and profound ways
- Describe how monolingualism and linguistic nativism intersect with racism, nationalism, classism, ableism, and other forms of oppression
- Express what it means for you to be alive and human today
- Express what responsibilities you have to other people, communities, land, and ecologies
- Identify the complexities of historical, sociopolitical, and cultural processes that particularly affect German-speaking people and places

Undoing the effects of monolingualism, Anglocentrism, and linguistic nativism

- describe the means by which knowledge is made in diverse Germanophone contexts—including collaborative, historical, methodological, linguistic, social, aesthetic, creative, technological, material, and political processes
- interpret texts and narratives using various literary, linguistic, and multimodal frameworks
- help undo colonial processes of knowledge production—both those arising from Germanophone colonial modernity and in Canada's colonial past and present

Knowing—from a multilingual, Germanophone standpoint

- Speak, read, and write in German creatively and confidently, taking pride in the accents and heritage language proficiencies you came to the program with (English, German, Mandarin, Persian, Cree, etc.)
- Work across languages—through translation, interpretation, code-mixing, assistive technology, etc.
- Understand that language is constantly changing amid social and historical fluid

Enjoying using German—with confidence

Living and being alive in a volatile age

- Identify and describe how power works in the settings that matter to you and your communities
- Describe Germanophone societies' specific responsibility to redress genocide, eugenics, Nazism, colonialism, settler colonialism, and the ongoing effects of empire
- Use resources from cultural history and experiences of crisis from the 20th century and before to pursue justice and responsibility in the 21st century
- critique propaganda, linguistic deceit, obfuscation, linguistic racism, elitism, authoritarianism, hate, exclusionary purism, and various forms of fascism in linguistic, visual, and symbolic form

Aiming for planetary justice & public responsibility

- Strive to comprehend beyond your own personal experience and standpoint, through processes of listening, reflecting, conceptualization, analysis, and translation
- View knowledge and language as a commons, rather than a possession
- Identify the difference between the use of language and knowledge to manipulate or gain power over others, and the use of language to uplift and nourish others
- Identify how your experiences shape you differently than do those of a person of another gender, sexuality, race, religion, background, immigration status, ethnicity, language, accent, embodiment, age, language, and worldview

Modelling intellectual humility

