

The Lord of the Rings

Fall, 2021
IDH 2930 (Sec. 0171)
Mon. Period 5 (11:45-12:35)
Little Hall 119
1 Credit

Dr. Cory Alexander
Phone: 336-402-6605
e-mail: alexanderc@ufl.edu
Office: MUB 344
Office Hours by appointment, and:
M/W/F 8:30-9:30AM
W 11:45-12:45
F 9:30-10:30

OBJECTIVES: John Ronald Reuel Tolkien is one of the most influential and widely-read authors of the Twentieth Century. Tolkien's most significant work, *The Lord of the Rings*, undertaken as a sequel to his children's book, *The Hobbit* (1937), is estimated to have sold over 150 million copies since its initial publication in 1954. Through a close reading of Tolkien's trilogy, including the exploration of Tolkien's style, themes, and characters, this course will explore the reasons for LOTR's astounding success, despite the work's tepid critical reception. Students will participate weekly in an online forum, in which they may discuss opinions or observations about aspects of the readings, speculation about Tolkien's motivation, questions about the story, etc. Class discussion will center around reading assignments and students' forum comments.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

- Student must do all assigned readings on time in order to keep up with the class sessions.
- Students should plan to attend every class meeting. Much information must be covered in a limited number of class sessions. Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies. [Click here to read the university attendance policies.](#)
- Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. [Click here for guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner.](#) Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via ufl.bluera.com/ufl/. [Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students here.](#)

TEXT and MATERIALS:

- Tolkien, J. R. R., *The Lord of the Rings*, 50th Anniversary One-Volume Edition (2004)
- No other readings will be assigned; however, reference will be made to the following works by Tolkien: *The Hobbit*, *The Silmarillion* (ed. Christopher Tolkien), *The Book of Lost Tales* (ed. Christopher Tolkien)
- There is no material or supply fee for this course.

GRADING:

- 50% of the **final grade** will be based on participation in weekly class meetings.
- 50% of the **final grade** will be based on weekly participation in the online discussion on Canvas.
- Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found at: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>.
- UF's Grading Policy may be found here: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-grading-policies/>

Noteworthy Dates:

Monday, September 6—NO CLASS (Labor Day)
Wednesday, December 8—LAST DAY OF CLASSES

Class Schedule:

- Week 1 Who was Tolkien? What is Philology? What else did Tolkien write? Why Tolkien would still be discussed in academic circles even if he never wrote fiction. What is Tolkien's style and why did he write that way? What is a frame narrative?
- Week 2 LOTR book I, what's the deal with that first chapter (and why you shouldn't skip it)? Why you must read the poems. Maybe a tiny bit of discussion about the films. Michael Drout's "world worth saving."
- Week 3 LOTR book I, who is Tom Bombadil, what's a "wight," the character of the ring, and a bit about that Glorfindel fellow. Don't forget to read the poems!
- Week 4 LOTR book II, The Council of Elrond (and why you really, really shouldn't skip it, [including explanation of what they're talking about]).
- Week 5 LOTR book II, significance of the juxtaposition of Moria and Lothlorien, the Argonath—a gateway to the real world.
- Week 6 LOTR book III, heroic couplets (well, not really) part 1: Boromir/Aragorn, Legolas/Gimli, Merry/Pippin, everybody loves the Ents.
- Week 7 LOTR book III, the Rohirrim are Anglo-Saxons (but Tolkien said they're not?!?), what is really going on with Théoden?, heroic couplets part 2: Gandalf/Saruman.
- Week 8 LOTR book IV, heroic couplets part 3: Frodo/Sméagol.
- Week 9 LOTR book IV, Faramir's speech, the metaphorical window on the West, metafiction, the redemption of Sméagol (almost—damn it, Sam!), Shelob.
- Week 10 LOTR book V, heroic couplets part 4: Théoden/Denethor, Gondor/Rohan, the paths of the dead.
- Week 11 LOTR book V, the charge of the Rohirrim (and a reason modernist literary critics didn't like LOTR), the dangers of nostalgia in a post-WWII society, eucatastrophe, the nature of heroism in Tolkien.
- Week 12 LOTR book VI, heroic couplets part 5: Samwise/Frodo, "oft evil will shall evil mar," the nature of evil more on the nature of heroism in Tolkien.
- Week 13 LOTR book VI, Eowyn, the tree, the king, the shire, and the havens.
- Week 14 LOTR appendices: Really? Appendices? In a fantasy novel (remember that frame narrative)? Tolkien can write a love story.
- Week 15 Summary, major themes, style, character, additional writings to consider, a few words on Tolkien scholarship: Shippey, Flieger, Drout, Olsen, Nagy, Rateliff, Anderson, Croft, et al.

The schedule may change due to any number of factors. In an effort to treat all students fairly, IF there are any changes, they will be communicated clearly to the students. A certain amount of leniency may be granted regarding due dates or assignments in the event that changes are made to the schedule.

Academic integrity: UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, "We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: "On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment." The

Honor Code (<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor or TAs in this class.

Americans with Disabilities Act: Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the disability Resource Center. [Click here to get started with the Disability Resource Center](#). It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs, as early as possible in the semester.

In-person Class Policy: We will have face-to-face instructional sessions to accomplish the student learning objectives of this course. In response to COVID-19, students must follow all UF policies and requirements that are in place to maintain students' learning environment and to enhance the safety of in-classroom interactions.

- If you are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms ([Click here for guidance from the CDC on symptoms of coronavirus](#)), please use the UF Health screening system and follow the instructions on whether you are able to attend class. [Click here for UF Health guidance on what to do if you have been exposed to or are experiencing Covid-19 symptoms](#).
 - Course materials will be provided to you with an excused absence, and you will be given a reasonable amount of time to make up work. [Find more information in the university attendance policies](#).

Other Resources:

Health and Wellness

U Matter, We Care: If you or someone you know is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu, 352-392-1575, or visit [U Matter, We Care website](#) to refer or report a concern and a team member will reach out to the student in distress.

Counseling and Wellness Center: [Visit the Counseling and Wellness Center website](#) or call 352-392-1575 for information on crisis services as well as non-crisis services.

Student Health Care Center: Call 352-392-1161 for 24/7 information to help you find the care you need, or [visit the Student Health Care Center website](#).

University Police Department: [Visit UF Police Department website](#) or call 352-392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies).

UF Health Shands Emergency Room / Trauma Center: For immediate medical care call 352-733-0111 or go to the emergency room at 1515 SW Archer Road, Gainesville, FL 32608; [Visit the UF Health Emergency Room and Trauma Center website](#).

Academic Resources

E-learning technical support: Contact the [UF Computing Help Desk](#) at 352-392-4357 or via e-mail at helpdesk@ufl.edu.

Career Connections Center: Reitz Union Suite 1300, 352-392-1601. Career assistance and counseling services.

Library Support: Various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources.

Teaching Center: Broward Hall, 352-392-2010 or to make an appointment 352- 392-6420. General study skills and tutoring.

Writing Studio: 2215 Turlington Hall, 352-846-1138. Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers.

Student Complaints On-Campus: [Visit the Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code webpage for more information.](#)

On-Line Students Complaints: [View the Distance Learning Student Complaint Process.](#)