"For the past several generations we've forgotten what the psychologists call our archaic understanding, a willingness to know things in their deepest, most mythic sense. We're all born with archaic understanding, and I'd guess that the loss of it goes directly along with the loss of ourselves as creators."

~ Madeleine L'Engle, Walking on Water, pg. 98

**Course instructor/s**: Nina Stoyan-Rosenzweig [nstoyan@ufl.edu](mailto:nstoyan@ufl.edu)

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**Course Time:** T, 6 Period (3:30-4:45)

**Location:** Little 117

**Description:**

In writing the seven part series (of novels) and one play on Harry Potter and his experiences at boarding school, author J.K. Rowling created a world that enthralls millions of people- old and young- around the globe. It is a world that resonates deeply with its fans and that captures the imagination. Harry Potter’s world is almost real- or maybe really real- for many young people. Certainly, a generation grew up eagerly awaiting each new book and each film was released to lines of people camped out outside the movie theaters. Even those people who do not like to read eagerly consume 700 page books.

Why do they love the world of Harry Potter so much? Perhaps because these 700 page books precipitate them into the imaginary but infinitely believable and detailed landscapes to address great, heroic struggles. In short, Rowling beautifully combines descriptions of these epic struggles with great characters and humor as well as drawing on familiar archetypes and myths.

This course will explore the series, the great themes explicated therein, and Harry Potter’s hold on the human imagination through reading and discussion of the book, Harry Potter and Imagination: The Way Between Two Worlds by Travis Prinzi, and reference to the actual Harry Potter series- books and movies (a prerequisite for joining the class is familiarity with the series).

In addition and through Harry Potter and Imagination, the course will explore struggles between good and evil and the role of the individual in changing the world, “The great themes of Harry Potter are not communicated through textbook, theoretical, propositional statements, but are embodied in the beliefs and actions of its characters. We have already looked at the virtues extolled by J.K. Rowling, as well as the vices condemned; now we turn to an examination of her incarnations of good and evil. Along the way, readers are being called to be creative heroes in their own worlds. It is through our being shaped as creative heroes that we learn creative solutions to the problems of evil that exist in our own spheres of influence.”

If nothing else, Harry Potter is about a quest, a great quest that tests the strength of a child and his friends. We will particularly explore the nature of quests from the ordinary to the extraordinary and how the experience of college, or how each life can embody a quest.

**Course requirements:**

Students participating in the course will be required to

* Have already read the series and/or seen the films
* **\***Read, attend and participate in class discussion
* Write two reviews of the assigned reading
* Complete a personal quest during the week of July 3, 2017
* **\***Complete one of the modules at <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/exhibition/harrypottersworld/higherEducation.html> - show evidence of completion of module.
* **\***complete a project that can either **a) involve** personal or creative reflections such as exploring the impact of Harry Potter’s world on their own worlds- the way in which this literature challenged them to:

“Great imaginative literature places the readers between two worlds - the story world and the world of daily life - and challenges readers to imagine and to act for a better world.” <http://www.amazon.com/Harry-Potter-Imagination-Between-Worlds/dp/0982238517>

Or **b) complete** an academic project that explores historical, mythological, or ethical issues in the Harry Potter series.

**Grading:**

Students will be graded on the following criteria:

1. Attendance and participation in class (40 points)

2. Project (25 points)

3. Reflection/summary (half page) of readings (20 points)

4.Complete a quest… (10 points)

5. Completion of on line module (5 points)

**\*Completion of all requirements is needed for grading**

**Attendance:** Attendance in this course is mandatory. Two absences will be allowed without a deduction of points; every absence beyond two will result in a reduction of three points from the final grade. Two additional absences documented by a doctor’s note can be made up through attendance at an additional special event.

**Class schedule:**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | Topic | Discussion questions | Readings |
| June 27 | Intro to the class  Harry Potter and the Hero’s Journey | What was/is your experience with Harry Potter? | HPI Ch 1 and 2 |
| July 4 | No Class- complete a quest | | |
| July 11 | Harry Potter and Race  Harry Potter Values | What are the values of Harry Potter? What traits are extolled or demeaned in the series? | HPI Ch 5, 6, 8,9,10 |
| July 18 | Mythical creatures  And plants  Herbology and potions: what plants are real and which imaginary. Look through materials on herbal medicines and their real life uses. | What mythical creatures and ideas does JK Rowling bring to the series? How does drawing on these known figures make the world of Potter more familiar and perhaps believable?  Herbology and potions: what plants are real and which imaginary. | HPI Ch 13 14, 15 |
| July 25 | Harry Potter and history.  Stories and healing- why do we respond to stories so stongly? | How does Harry Potter draw on history to make the experience seem more realistic?  How do healers use stories in healing?  How does telling stories help heal? | HPI Ch 3, 4, and 7 |
| August 1 | Discuss projects and quests. |  | HPI Ch 11 and 12 |

**Academic Honesty:** All students sign the following statement upon registration at the University of Florida: “I understand that the University of Florida expects its students to be honest in all their academic work. I agree to adhere to this commitment to academic honesty and understand that my failure to comply with this commitment may result in disciplinary action up to and including expulsion from the University.” As instructors for this course, we fully support the intent of the above statement and will not tolerate academic dishonesty.

**Student Responsibility:** Students are responsible for understanding all course policies and for accessing all course materials on the UF E-Learning Website through the URL listed above. All assignments should be submitted through the website and in hard copy when requested. Students are also responsible for checking their UF e-mail account for course notifications and for communicating with the instructors related to any situation that may hinder his or her progress or participation in the course.

**Disabilities:** Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the instructor when students request accommodation.