



COURSE DESCRIPTION

## 2016 Winter Session (2016-2017 Academic Year)

ENGL 468A-001: Seven Ways of Thinking about Fairy Tales -  
Rick Gooding

### **Children's Literature**

#### **Term 1**

**MWF, 10:00 - 11:00 a.m.**

Children's literature is an unusual field of study. Children rarely write children's books, nor have they produced a body of research on children's literature. Instead, adult authors write for imagined child readers, and adult academics pursue research based on the foundations of consciously (or unconsciously) constructed models of childhood. Our class will grapple with this defining problem of children's literature—the difficulty of constructing the child reader—by applying a variety of critical approaches to European fairy tales and their descendants. We'll begin by reading fairy tales that were published in England, Germany, France, and Russia in the 17th to 19th century. We'll then turn to modern versions of these tales and finish by examining recent novels and films that adapt conventions of traditional fairy tales to explore the complexities of modern life. In a nod to the folklorist Max Lüthi, who saw sevens nearly everywhere he looked, I've chosen the following approaches for our class: interactions between text and image, socio-historical criticism, formalism, psychoanalytic theory, feminism, ecocriticism, and posthumanism. Readings will include a variety of traditional tales as well as modern works by Emma Donoghue, Francesca Lia Block, Donna Jo Napoli, Philip Pullman, and Neil Gaiman.