

HONR 1000-708
“One Ring to Rule Them All”: Magic Rings in the Western Tradition
Spring 2015
Prof. Christopher Weimer

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Office hours: MWF 1:45-3:00, TTh 9:30-10:20, by appt.
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Course Objective

The goal of this course is to examine the recurrent use in Western literature and philosophy of magical rings which bestow powers upon those who wear them, beginning with Plato’s *Republic* and concluding with contemporary fantasy literature and the graphic novel. What do such rings symbolize and why do authors keep returning to them? What do the specific textual treatments of the various rings show us about the cultures and eras in which they were written?

Texts

Plato, *The Republic* (D2L download)
Herodotus, *History* (D2L download)
Chrétien de Troyes, *Yvain* (D2L download)
Friedrich Heinrich Karl La Motte-Fouqué, *The Magic Ring* (not available through bookstore; check for email with links to purchase new or used)
Anon., Jesse L. Byock (trans.), *The Saga of the Volsungs*
Stewart Spencer, Barry Millington, *Wagner's Ring of the Nibelung*
J. R. R. Tolkien, *The Lord of the Rings* (50th Anniversary Edition) [One volume]
-----. *The Silmarillion* (Selections, D2L download)
Stephen R. Donaldson, *Lord Foul's Bane (The Chronicles of Thomas Covenant the Unbeliever, Book 1)*
Geoff Johns, Ivan Reis, *Green Lantern: Secret Origin*
[other D2L downloads TBA]

Essays

During the course of the semester, you will write four essays: one on either Chrétien de Troyes or La Motte-Fouqué; one on Wagner’s *Ring* or *The Saga of the Volsungs*; one on Tolkien’s *LoTR*; and finally, one on a topic of your choice, decided in conjunction with the professor. The first three papers will have a 1000-word minimum and the fourth will be longer, with a 2000-word minimum.

Exams

We will have two exams, one after we finish Wagner’s *Ring* and then the final exam (scheduled for Thursday, May 5th at 10:00 a.m.). Both will be “blue book” written exams, consisting of essays and/or short answer questions. You will need to bring your own exam booklets.

Grading

In this class, you can earn a maximum of 1000 points, divided equally between essays and exams.

Essays #1-3 @ 100 pts.	300	900 – 1000	A
Essay #4	200	800 – 899	B
Exam #1	200	700 – 799	C
Final Exam	300	600 – 699	D
		000 – 599	F

Attendance

Since this is a discussion-centered class, attendance matters. There is no penalty for valid, verifiable absences, but it is your responsibility to inform me (preferably in advance!) which of your absences might fall into that category. After three absences (either valid or unexcused), each additional unexcused absence will result in a 10-point deduction from your 1000-point total.

Class Conduct

Please try to avoid tardiness, lack of preparation, inattentiveness (reading the newspaper, working on other homework, chatting while other students are asking questions), etc. **Do not use electronic devices (today's personal rings of power – or perhaps our version of Tolkien's Palantíri!) during class to send or read text messages, tweet, update your Facebook status, etc. Or else.**

Dates to Remember

Tuesday, Jan. 20	Last day to drop a course w/ no grade and no fees charged
Friday, Jan. 23	Last day to drop a course w/ 50% fees
Friday, Apr. 10	Last day to drop the course w/ grade of W
Friday, Apr. 24	Last day to withdraw from all courses w/ assigned grades of W or F

Students with disabilities: Any student in this course who has a disability that may prevent them from fully demonstrating their abilities should contact the instructor personally so that accommodations can be made to ensure full participation and to facilitate their educational opportunities.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Oklahoma State University is committed to the maintenance of the highest standards of integrity and ethical conduct of its members. This level of ethical behavior and integrity will be maintained in this course. Participating in a behavior that violates academic integrity (e.g., unauthorized collaboration, plagiarism, multiple submissions, cheating on examinations, fabricating information, helping another person cheat, unauthorized advance access to examinations, altering or destroying the work of others, and fraudulently altering academic records) will result in your being sanctioned. Violations may subject you to disciplinary action including the following: receiving a failing grade on an assignment, examination or course, receiving a notation of a violation of academic integrity on your transcript (F!), and being suspended from the University. You have the right to appeal the charge. Contact the Office of Academic Affairs, 101 Whitehurst, 405-744-5627, academicintegrity.okstate.edu.

Course Calendar

13 Jan.	Plato, <i>Republic</i> Book 1
15 Jan.	Plato, <i>Republic</i> Book 2 pp. 35-45 (357a-368e); Book 9, pp. 251-261 (571a-580c) Herodotus, <i>History</i> pp. 1-5 (first paragraph)
20 Jan.	<i>Yvain</i> pp. 2-47 (vv. 1-3340)
22 Jan.	<i>Yvain</i> pp. 47-94 (vv. 3341-6818)
27 Jan.	<i>The Magic Ring</i> , Vol. 1
29 Jan.	<i>The Magic Ring</i> , Vol. 1 (cont'd)
3 Feb.	<i>The Magic Ring</i> , Vol. 2
5 Feb.	<i>The Magic Ring</i> , Vol. 2 (cont'd)
10 Feb.	<i>The Magic Ring</i> , Vol. 3
12 Feb.	<i>The Magic Ring</i> , Vol. 3 (cont'd)
17 Feb.	<i>Volsunga Saga</i>
19 Feb.	<i>Das Rheingold</i>
24 Feb.	<i>Das Rheingold</i>
26 Feb.	<i>Die Walküre</i>
3 March	<i>Die Walküre</i>
5 March	<i>Siegfried</i>
10 March	<i>Siegfried</i>
12 March	<i>Götterdämmerung</i>
17 March	SPRING BREAK
19 March	SPRING BREAK
24 March	<i>Götterdämmerung</i>
26 March	MIDTERM
31 March	<i>Silmarillion</i> excerpt (D2L); <i>Fellowship of the Ring</i>
2 April	<i>Fellowship of the Ring</i>
7 April	<i>The Two Towers</i>
9 April	<i>The Two Towers</i>
14 April	<i>The Return of the King</i>
16 April	<i>The Return of the King</i>
21 April	<i>Lord Foul's Bane</i>
23 April	<i>Lord Foul's Bane</i>
28 April	<i>Green Lantern</i>
30 April	Wrap-up & Review