



## REL 3095

### Religion and Fantasy

Section: U01

In Person

Fall Term 2026

### Course Meeting Information

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| Class meeting times |                      |
|---------------------|----------------------|
| Day:                | Tuesdays             |
| Time:               | 5:00 PM - 7:40<br>PM |
| Location:           | DM 164               |

### Professor Information

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Jeanette Smith

**Roles:** Primary Instructor

**Email:** [Via Canvas messages](#)

**Phone:** Please use Canvas messages for fastest response time

**Office Hours:** By appointment

**Office Location:** SIPA 1 - 507

**Department or Academic Unit:** Department of Religious Studies

## Course Prerequisites

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Course prerequisites, if any, are listed below.

## Course Description

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This seminar explores the relationship between religion and fantasy literature and adaptations through the critical study of a wide range of fantasy, including works by C.S. Lewis, J.R.R. Tolkien, George R.R. Martin, Lev Grossman, Neil Gaiman, and others. We will explore key themes in the study of religion, such as creation myths, innocence and experience, ritual, sacrifice, and redemption, as well as explore contemporary questions regarding religious diversity and the interplay of religion and culture. We will also consider how fan cultures and perhaps even the concept of fantasy itself may or may not resemble whatever it is we mean when we use the term "religion."

## Textbook and Course Materials

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**No print materials required**

**Required/Recommended:** Recommended

**Authors:** No print materials required

**Publisher:** No print materials required

**Publication Date:** No print materials required

**Copyright Date:** No print materials required

**ISBN 10:** No print materials required

**ISBN 13:** No print materials required

**Chapters/Pages:** No print materials required

## Panther Book Pack

Get all required course materials for \$22 per undergrad credit hour through Panther Book Pack. You'll be charged automatically unless you opt out within 3 days after the add/drop deadline.

For more details, to compare costs, and to learn how to access your course materials, visit the [Panther Book Pack information page on FIU OneStop](#).

## Student Learning Outcomes/Objectives

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Become familiar with the central theoretical approaches to the study of religion through the lens of fantasy literature

Practice writing in a variety of genres

Acquire general knowledge of how various religious traditions intersect with the development of fantasy literature

Think about fantasy literature and religion from a variety of perspectives, including production, consumption, and adaptation

Please see course outline for list of Global Learning Course Outcomes. (GL)

## Expectations of the Course

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### Assignments

What follows is a general summary of the assignments for this course. Further details about each will be available on Canvas and in class.

**Class Attendance and Participation:** This class is a seminar that meets only once a week, so participation and discussion is a large part of the course. Every effort should be made to attend each session but should a situation develop that will impact your performance or attendance, please inform the instructor immediately. Participation includes reading and preparing for class and participating in discussions. You'll also need to post two or three discussion questions based on that week's materials in the Canvas discussion forum by

Tuesday at 2 pm. This portion of the class will serve as an assessment of your Global Awareness, Perspective, and Engagement.

**Into the Wardrobe Essay:** This is a fun, credit/no-credit assignment that will help me and a few of your classmates get to know you. Write a two-page (typed, double-spaced) essay. At the beginning, please introduce yourself in whatever way you would like to – where you're from, what you're up to so far at FIU, and why you are taking this course. Then, help me/us get to know you even further by answering the following question: You are going through the wardrobe into Narnia (or another imaginary land of your choice), and you know that you will be there for at least a year. What three items do you take with you and why? Those three items should tell us more about you. Be creative, write clearly, and have fun!

**Blog Essay:** Your first major essay for the semester will take on the form of a blog essay for an erudite popular readership. This means that it will be 800-1,000 words, on the topic of your choice, analyzing one or several of our readings from the first month of the semester. You can include information from other readings that you may have done on the same authors if you would like. You don't actually have to post a public blog; the idea is to learn the format of writing a thoughtful piece suitable for an online format.

**Studies in Fandom and Adaptations:** All of the series that we are studying this semester have vibrant fan communities; most of these series also have been adapted into some non-literary medium, such as a film or a television series. For this second paper, you will have a choice between writing a sophisticated review of a film or television adaptation or doing a micro-ethnography of a fan community or fan discourse. Either choice will help you learn how to think about how texts circulate in the world.

**Imagined Dialogue:** For your final writing project, you'll write an imagined dialogue (or larger conversation) between two or more characters from at least two *different fantasy series* we have studied this semester. You will use this exercise in order to demonstrate your knowledge of the major themes of the course, including making connections between these works of fantasy and the cultures upon which they are built and the different styles and perspectives of each author. This assignment serves as an assessment of your Global Perspective.

## Assignments & Assessments

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Please see assignments above under course expectations.

## Course Communication

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Please use Canvas messages.

## Policies & Resources

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Before starting this course, please review the Policies & Resources Page in

Canvas which includes comprehensive information on various University and Course Level Policies such as:

- University Policies
- Accessibility and Accommodations
- Online Etiquette
- Technical Requirements and Skills
- Computer & Digital Literacy Skills
- Course Technology Accessibility Statements and Privacy Policies
- Academic Integrity
- Copyright Statement
- Core Principles of This Course
- Nondiscrimination Statement
- Panthers Care & Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)
- Fair Use Policy

## Grading

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Attendance & Participation - 28%

--includes the Into the Wardrobe essay

Writing Assignment 1 - 24%

Writing Assignment 2 - 24%

Writing Assignment 3 - 24%

## Schedule of Topics

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## **Schedule of Readings/Viewings – to be updated with more details as we determine our baseline with all information shared within Canvas**

- Introductions! Determining our baseline.
- C.S. Lewis, *The Magician's Nephew*
- C.S. Lewis, *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe; The Last Battle*
- J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Lord of the Rings*

## **Nondiscrimination Statement**

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The **Office of Civil Rights (OCR)** is responsible for ensuring that FIU maintains a workplace and learning environment free from discrimination, where current and prospective faculty, staff, and students are treated equitably. If any student, employee, or applicant has a sincere and reasonable belief that they have been discriminated against or harassed based on age, color, disability, marital status, ethnic or national origin, race, religion, retaliation, sex, or any other protected category, they can report their concerns to the OCR team through [report.fiu.edu](https://report.fiu.edu).