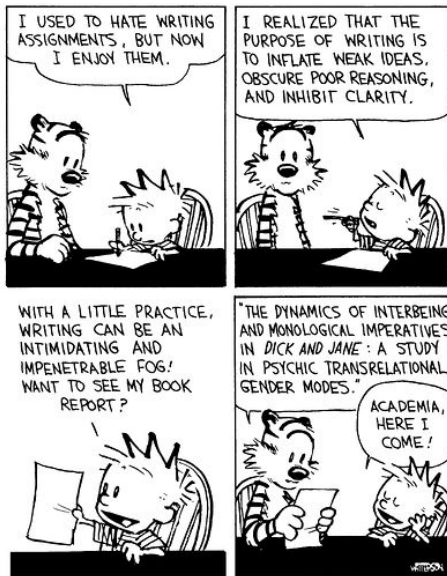


Keyword for Tolkien Studies Major Paper(s)

engl 307 / sec. C / spring quarter 2013 / chang



You will be required to write **up to three** formal papers over the course of the quarter that engage the novels and theoretical texts of the class. Papers will be due and collected three times during the quarter, approximately in Week 5, Week 8, and Finals Week. **You must complete a minimum of two papers.** Each paper will be graded and the average of the number completed will constitute 50% of your final grade.

Goals and Outcomes

One of the crucial goals in academic writing (perhaps all writing) is the ability to define and to provide definitions that are developed, detailed, relevant, and appropriate for a discipline or audience. So, how do you define something? Most would reply to go look up the definition in a dictionary or on a website. And most people would treat that definition as fact, as fixed, even commonly agreed upon. In fact, it is a common strategy to begin academic papers with a quote from a dictionary but find the definitions either not useful or too obvious or too numerous to choose from. Unless a specific history or etymology or

usage of a word or term is in question, a dictionary will rarely provide much more than overly generalized information. However, the impulse to look up a term's definition is a good one and reveals that the writer knows he or she needs a way to focus, to use background information, to determine what is necessary in order to define a term.

Definitions are a common genre, a common practice across many different disciplines: defining specialized terminology or neologisms, defining a process or a function, defining a theoretical or methodological perspective, defining a project's goals, target audience, or impact. Definitions are arguments. They argue that this is the way something should be seen, described, done, presented, used, and so on. The best definitions are about this process, about inquiry, about exploration, and about analysis. It is as the editors of the *Keywords for American Cultural Studies* say, a way to "clear a conceptual space" (6), and it is in that space where agreements, contradictions, arguments, counterarguments, elaboration, and change can happen.

Your major paper assignment is to write an academic definition paper, to define a term relevant to Tolkien and fantasy literature studies, to write in essence a keyword. You will write 4 to 6 page extended definition of a Tolkien studies keyword drawing on your own definitional claim, on the course readings and outside research, and on detailed close readings of the novels or films. Keep in mind that this is more than just a description or summary of your term or "finding" or "bird watching" your term in Tolkien'. Remember that definitions are arguments and one scholar's definition of "fantasy" might focus on or challenge different things than another scholar's definition. Use the *Keywords* texts as models for your paper, as if you were writing an entry for a *Keywords for Tolkien Studies* vocabulary collection.

Here are possible keywords to choose from (some are more challenging than others, some seem deceptively easy):

body	identity	other
class	ideology	power
fandom	language	queer
fantasy	masculinity	race
femininity	medieval	sex
gender	modern	sexuality
hero	myth	space
history	nation	technology
	nature	time

These formal, academic writings serve as close readings, analyses, and articulations of the texts and connections you see, read, and talk about in class. These papers are more than just summaries or personal

reactions or rehashing of our discussions and will be graded on clarity, focus, coherence, critique, argument, support, and your ability to formulate a precise claim, close read both novel and theory, and substantively use academic research.

Guidelines and Due Dates

Audience: Because this paper requires an understanding of cultural studies and Tolkien's texts, you will write for an audience that is part of an academic community, which can include your instructor, your classmates, and the authors of the essays we have read. Keep in mind that your audience is varied in many ways, including academic experience and familiarity with the texts, so you'll need to consider of what information each type of reader will need to make sense of your essay. Another good way to think about your audience is to imagine the publication in which your essay could appear such as for a Tolkien studies journal or a *Keywords* type book.

Format: Formal, academic paper, 4-6 pages, typed, single-sided, no title page, 1" margins, doubled-spaced body, proper heading & title
MLA in-text, parenthetical citation & bibliography (which includes at least 3 recent, relevant, academic outside sources)

Due: Major Paper #1 due Monday, April 29, at the start of class
Major Paper #2 due Monday, May 20, at the start of class
Major Paper #3 due Monday, June 10, at _____

Each paper must be on a different term. If you are looking to receive W Credit in the course, you must complete all three papers.