

First-Year Seminar 101
Sections 3 & 6
The Lord of the Rings: Three Journeys
Fall 2016

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Office hours: Mondays 1-2:30
Tuesdays/Thursdays 1:00-1:50
Wednesdays 1-1:50
Fridays 10-10:50, and by appointment

Description and Goals

As you begin your journey through college, why not draw inspiration from the characters in *The Lord of the Rings*, or from their creator? There is no university in Middle-earth, but there is plenty of decision-making, planning, learning, and growing (and problems caused by not doing those things), as well as dealing with unexpected obstacles and opportunities. Much of that is true for the writing of the book as well; Tolkien didn't have everything figured out at the beginning either. In this First-Year Seminar you'll learn about J. R. R. Tolkien's personal life and professional career, how those shaped his fiction, and how *The Lord of the Rings* came to be.

This First-Year Seminar shares with all other FYS sections the important goal of helping you make the transition from high school to college successfully and to give you a good start on your college career. By the end of the course you should be able to

- Describe the key components and purpose of a liberal education and explain how a liberal education will shape your college studies, career, and life.
- Identify key components of critical thinking and information literacy and apply the associated skills within course assignments.
- Identify and apply appropriate skills for college success, as well as appropriate UW-Stevens Point programs, resources, and services designed to support your academic studies.
- Develop an educational plan that demonstrates the responsibility you will take for your own education, including co-curricular experiences.

As much as possible, we will connect these goals to *The Lord of the Rings*. For example, you will practice study skills and critical thinking through reading, lectures, and discussions of the novel and Tolkien's life and works.

Class activities will consist primarily of discussion and other hands-on activities, with occasional lectures. Expect to have some kind of assignment—reading, writing, research, etc.—to do for almost every class.

Text

Required purchase: *The Lord of the Rings*. The University Bookstore has stocked the one-volume 50th Anniversary edition, ISBN 978-0-618-64015, \$20

Grading Rubric for Attendance, Preparation, and Participation

	Plusses – at least a few things here needed for an A	Expectation – meeting this in all categories necessary for a B	Minuses – these will lead to grades lower than B
Attendance	Is present for all of every class meeting, or (rarely) is absent for a compelling reason, which is shared with the instructor promptly.	Attends consistently (at least 90% of the time). May miss class occasionally (or arrive late / leave early), but always or almost always has a good reason and shares this with the instructor.	Missing class, arriving late, or leaving early, more than 10% of the time, or less often but without explanation.
Attentiveness and engagement	Consistently comes equipped (book, notebook, etc.) to class. Is always listening actively when not speaking.	Usually comes equipped and is listening actively when not speaking.	Attends to something other than class activities (e.g. texting, Facebook, studying for another class).
Quality of participation	Makes comments that stand out for the level of careful thought they demonstrate: about the material and about the unfolding conversation.		Makes comments that reflect inattentiveness to others' contributions or lack of preparation, are irrelevant, or otherwise tend to derail the conversation.
Classroom community	Improves the conversation in a significant way. (E.g. helps draw others out, makes extra effort to contribute if shy, etc.)		Impairs the conversation in a significant way. (E.g. dominates discussion, talks while others are talking, treats other students or their ideas with disrespect)
Activity Reports	Reports on activities stand out for thoughtful reflection on the experience.	Reports a different activity on each of three reporting days.	

How I calculate grades: Letter grades are converted to points, and points back to a letter grade for the course, using the following scale: D, 60-66.99%; D+, 67-69.99%; C- 70-72.99%; C, 73-76.99%; C+, 77-79.99%; B-, 80-82.99%; B, 83-86.99%, B+, 87-89.99%, A-, 90-92.99%, A, 93-100%. An assignment not turned in is recorded as 0, but an F paper gets points in the F range.

Classroom Etiquette:

- Tablets and other devices can be used for taking or referring to notes, *if* you can resist their temptations. However,
 - Students may not make audio, video, or photographic recordings of lectures or other class activities without written permission from the instructor. Anyone violating this policy will be asked to turn off the device being used. Refusal to comply with the policy will result in the student being asked to leave the classroom, and possibly being reported to the Dean of Students. (English Department Policy)
- Diverse perspectives are an asset to class discussions. Please treat those whose ideas or experiences are different from yours with the same respect you want for yourself.

Assessment: UWSP regularly assesses the General Education Program (including the First-Year Seminars) to ensure that we are providing you with the best education we can. As part of this effort, samples of student work may be shared, anonymously, with a small group of faculty members. If you have any questions about the assessment process or concerns about how your work may be used, please come talk to me.

Email: Your UWSP email account is the university's standard method of communication with you, and you should check it regularly. I may at times use email to contact the class as a whole or individual students; I will routinely use the course home page in D2L for reminders and announcements.

Any change to the syllabus will be announced in class and posted in D2L.

Other Useful Information

Copies of all course documents and additional resources will be available in **Desire2Learn** (<http://www.uwsp.edu/d2l/Pages/default.aspx>) and on my **website** (www4.uwsp.edu/english/mbowman/fys/).

As a UWSP student, you have access to Microsoft's OneDrive (cloud storage) and Office 365 (online versions of Word, Excel, etc.), and can download Office 2016 to your own devices. Get started here: <https://portal.office.com/Home>

Oct. 31 Introduction to Critical Thinking and Information Literacy	Nov. 2 Read Book III, chs. 9-11 and Book IV, chs. 1-3 (560-647) Journal 5	Nov. 4 Report to class on co-curricular activities / resources
Nov. 7 (No assignment – continuing work with Critical Thinking and Information Literacy)	Nov. 9 Read Book IV, chs. 4-10 (648-742) Journal 6	Nov. 11 (No assignment – continuation of Monday/Wednesday material)
Nov. 14 (No assignment)	Nov. 16 Read Book V, chs. 1-3 (747-805). Also read or skim Appendix A.I.iv (1044-1057); focus on 1049-53 and 1055-top of 1056. Make-up opportunity for journals 4-6	Nov. 18 Read Verlyn Flieger, "Taking the Part of Trees," posted in D2L.
Nov. 21 Read Book V, chs. 4-8 (806-871) Paper topic due	Nov. 23 (No assignment – continuation of Monday material)	Nov. 25 HOLIDAY
Nov. 28 (No assignment)	Nov. 30 Read Book V, chs. 9-10, Book VI, chs. 1-3 (872-947) and Appendix A.III, beginning at the bottom of page 1077 to the end (p. 1081)	Dec. 2 (No assignment)
Dec. 5 (No assignment)	Dec. 7 Read Book VI, chs. 4-9 (948-1031)	Dec. 9 Due: Draft of "Believing and Doubting" paper
Dec. 12 Report to class on co-curricular activities / resources Read paper drafts and give feedback (guidelines to be provided)	Dec. 14 Due: "Believing and Doubting" paper	No class meeting Dec. 16 – finals begin
Dec. 19, Monday. Final Reflection due for section 3 (11:00 class) by 12:15.	Dec. 20, Tuesday. Final Reflection due for section 6 (12:00 class) by 4:45.	