

# CMPL 23000 / GER 23000 / ENGL 23200

## “Fables and Parables”

Spring 2009 --MWF 1:30-2:20pm

in Stanley Coulter Hall 108

Prof. Beate Allert

[allert@purdue.edu](mailto:allert@purdue.edu)

### **Course Description**

This course fulfills the Western Heritage Requirement for the College of Liberal Arts at Purdue University and serves as an introduction to German Literature in English translation and to studying Comparative Literature while exploring fables, parables, and related texts and films. No German language required, taught in English. While focusing on the genres of fables and parables in the German and in the Western traditions, it is cross-listed with “Introduction to Comparative Literature” and will help students to read and research well, to make consistent arguments, to present in class, and to develop writing skills. Known for their apparent simplicity yet depth of meaning, fables and parables are wonderful genres of literature to get started with. Why is switching to the animal world, to a remote place, to an apparently timeless realm, to humor and to comics, shaped into sketches and images and formulated into brief verbal sketches often so appealing? It may be that truth is then at its sharpest.

### **Grading**

Oral work counts for 50% and written work 50%. The oral grade consists of 50% active class participation and 50% presentations. Regular attendance is mandatory and will be excused only on the basis of an emergency or illness with documentation. Missing classes is therefore not a good idea! Grade on the written work consists of essays 20%, quizzes 20%, Midterm 20%, and one Final Paper 40%. Honor code expected.

### **Readings & Films (see at Vons)**

masterpieces by Aesop, Jean de Lafontaine, Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, Hans Christian Anderson, George Ade, E.T.A. Hoffmann, Bertolt Brecht, Franz Kafka, Kurt Schwitters, Oskar Maria Graf, Hermynia zur Mühlen, and others. The texts will be supported also by films in which these genres play key roles including Wim Wenders *Far Away so Close*, Werner Herzog’s fable on frogs in *Kaspar Hauser*, Walt Disney’s version of *Uncle Remus*, and Josh Straub’s, *The Mantis Parable*, among other films.

### **Required Readings/Viewings**

1. *Aesop's Fables. A New Translation by Laura Gibbs.* Oxford World's Classics. Oxford University Press, 2002 (ISBN 978-0-19-954075-4).
2. Jean de La Fontaine, *Fables* (ISBN-13: 978-0140455243) (<http://oaks.nvg.org/fontal.html>)
3. Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, *Nathan the Wise* (Ringparable), fables (online)
4. *Hans Anderson Fairy Tales: a Selection.* Translated from the Danish by L.W. Kingsland. Oxford World's Classics. Introduction and Bibliography by Naomi Lewis. Oxford UP, 1984. (ISBN -13: 978-0-19-283507-9).
5. E.T.A. Hoffman, *The Nutcracker and The Golden Pot.* Publisher: Dover, 1993 (ISBN-13: 9780486278063).
6. Bertolt Brecht, *Collected Stories* (get any edition or in library).
7. Franz Kafka, *The Imperial Message* and other stories (online or handout)
8. *Fairy Tales and fables from Weimar Days*, edited and translated by Jack Zipes. Hanover and London: University Press of New England, 1989. (ISBN 0-87451-501-7) This volume contains fables by Kurt Schwitters, Carl Ewald, Berta Lask, Anna Mosegard, Joachim Ringelnatz, Hermynia zur Mühlen, if out of print some Xeroxes will be provided.
9. Joel Chandler Harris, *Uncle Remus.* Penguin Classics. New York: Penguin, 1986 (ISBN 0 14 03. 9014 6).
10. George Orwell, *Animal Farm.* From the George Orwell's Classic Novel 1954 color film 72 minutes. A film by John Halas and Joy Batchelor produced by Halas & Batchelor for the Rochemont Films Inc, BBC: 1995, 2004 Public Media, Inc.( ISBN 0-7800-2905-4).
11. George Ade, *Ade's Fables.* Charleston, SC: BiblioBazar: 2007 (ISBN 978-1-4346-3272-20) and George Ade, *More Fable.* Biblio Bazar 2006 (ISBN 1-4264-0832-3).
12. Josh Straub, *The Mantis Parable.* Jubilee Studios. DVD 8 minutes, color. 2006. ([www.themantisparable.com](http://www.themantisparable.com), film shown in class).
13. Wim Wenders, *Far Away so Close* (film, DVD, 146 min, to be shown only a clip)
14. Werner Herzog, *Kaspar Hauser* (DVD, clip of the frog fable)

### **ADA Statement**

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), all qualified students enrolled in this course are entitled to "reasonable accommodations." It is the student's responsibility to inform the instructor of any special needs before the end of the second week of class.

### **In case of an emergency**

requiring cancellation of any classes as scheduled on this syllabus, the grading system considering the proportions of the written and the oral work could change for all students in class consistently, so that the written work may become more important than the oral class work. Normally regular class attendance is required and active participation expected throughout.

### **Tentative Syllabus --some changes are likely**

#### **1. Week:**

1/12 Definitions & Introduction  
1/14 Aesop's *Fables*  
1/16 Aesop's *Fables*: reception history

#### **2. Week:**

1/19 Martin Luther King Day: No class!  
1/21 History of the Fable  
1/23 La Fontaine

#### **3. Week:**

1/26 La Fontaine  
1/28 Lessing's *Fables* **First Essay Due!**  
1/30: Lessing's *Parables*

#### **4. Week:**

2/2 Lessing's *Parables*  
2/4 Film clips & How to write a good paper  
2/6 **Quiz 1**

#### **5. Week:**

2/9 Hans Christian Andersen  
2/11 *The Ugly Duckling*, among others  
2/13 *The Mermaid* and Film

#### **6. Week:**

2/16 **Second Essay Due!** Student Presentations  
2/18 George Ade  
2/20 Fables by George Ade & film clips

#### **7. Week:**

2/23 E.T.A. Hoffmann, *Nutcracker*  
2/25 E.T.A. Hoffmann, *Golden Pot*  
2/27 E.T.A. Hoffmann **Third Essay Due!**

#### **8. Week:**

3/2 Bertolt Brecht (from Collected Stories)  
3/4 Bertolt Brecht  
3/6 Franz Kafka, *An Imperial Message*, *The Doorkeeper*

#### **9. Week:**

3/9 Franz Kafka  
3/11 Kurt Schwitters & Berta Lask  
3/13 **Quiz 2**

#### **10. Week:**

- 3/16 Spring Break!  
 3/18 Spring Break!  
 3/20 Spring Break!
- 11. Week:**  
 3/23 Joachim Ringelnatz  
 3/25 Oskar Maria Graf  
 3/27 Hermynia zur Mühlen **Fourth Essay Due!**
- 12. Week:**  
 3/30 George Orwell, *Animal Farm*  
 4/1 George Orwell, *Animal Farm*  
 4/4 Library Day (will be out of town to give paper at ASECS/ISECS)
- 13. Week:**  
 4/6 Review of Wim Wenders, *Far Away so close* (film)  
 4/8 Presentations & Review  
 4/10 Presentations & Review
- 14. Week:**  
 4/13 **Midterm**  
 4/15 Joel Chandler Harris, *Uncle Remus*  
 4/17 *Uncle Remus* (film & discussion)
- 15. Week:**  
 4/20 Josh Straub, *The Mantis Parable* (film and handout)  
 4/22 Student Presentations  
 4/24 Student Presentations
- 16. Week:**  
 4/27 The frogs in Werner Herzog (film clip) & presentation/discussion  
 4/29 Review & Conclusions  
 5/1 **Final papers due in class today! Thank you.**