

Pelt, Honors 2210

HON 2210: IMAGINARY FRIENDS in Fiction & FILM

Course Information

Instructor: April Pelt

Email: apelt@clemson.edu (<mailto:apelt@clemson.edu>)

Office Hours: By appointment

Classroom: Core Campus 162

Course Description

In this course, we will examine a variety of texts that feature imaginary friends in order to understand why the imaginary friend has proven such an enduring and endearing figure for artists and filmmakers. In so doing, we will not only identify the tropes and themes that recur in cultural representations of imaginary friends, but we will also discuss how cultural representations of imaginary friends influence public perceptions of individuals with imaginary companions. More broadly, we will discuss the roles that the imagination plays in the continuing development of the self.

Learning Outcomes

In this course, you will learn to:

- Perform close textual analysis of literary works in formal writing assignments and informal class discussions (including, but not limited to, identifying major themes and motifs in each work under discussion).
- Draw connections among literary works from different genres, cultures, and historical eras.
- Craft multimodal (aural, visual, and/or written) and analytical responses to assigned novels and plays.

In addition to the outcomes listed above, this course will provide you with the opportunity to meet the following goals:

- Improve your writing skills through daily practice, required writing fellow conferences, and optional conferences with the instructor
- Expand your vocabulary and reading comprehension abilities by adopting active reading strategies
- Broaden your horizons by allowing you to understand perspectives and experiences that are different from your own

- Engage in respectful debate with your fellow learners about a variety of sensitive topics, including religion, race, gender, sexuality, and mental illness

Required Materials

You will need to purchase or borrow the following books and movies for this course:

Books

- Bill Watterson's *The Indispensable Calvin and Hobbes*
- Ben Rice's *Pobby and Dingan*
- Katherine Applegate's *Crenshaw*
- John Wyndham's *Chocky*
- Brecht Evans's *Panther* ([on reserve at the library](http://libcat.clemson.edu/search-S1/?searchtype=p&searcharg=pelt&sortdropdown=-&SORT=D&extended=0&SUBMIT=Search&searchlimits=&searchorigarg=psaito) (<http://libcat.clemson.edu/search-S1/?searchtype=p&searcharg=pelt&sortdropdown=-&SORT=D&extended=0&SUBMIT=Search&searchlimits=&searchorigarg=psaito>))
- Camilla Gibb's *Mouthing the Words*
- Chuck Palahniuk's *Fight Club*
- Rachel Ferguson's *The Brontes Went to Woolworths*
- Helen Oyeyemi's *The Icarus Girl*
- Gabrielle Charbonnet and James Patterson's *Sundays at Tiffany's*

Movies

- *Cloak and Dagger*
- *Lars and the Real Girl*
- *Ruby Sparks*
- *The Beaver*
- *Heavenly Creatures*
- *Paper Man*
- A student-selected film (title to be determined)

Buy whichever editions are cheapest/most convenient for you. Ebooks are perfectly acceptable. I have DVD copies of each of the films that I can let you borrow.

You will also need to bring a laptop computer to class every day to complete your daily in-class writing assignments.

In addition to the required books, you will also need:

- A Canvas account
- A clemson.edu or g.clemson.edu email account
- Internet access
- Word Processing software
- Speakers or headphones for audio and video materials
- [Adobe Acrobat Reader](http://get.adobe.com/reader/) (<http://get.adobe.com/reader/>)

I will post all announcements and reminders on Canvas, so be sure to check your email several times per week. You can manage how often you receive Canvas notifications by clicking on your username in the upper right-hand corner, then clicking on "Notifications" in the sidebar on the left-hand side of the page

Course Requirements

Informed Engagement (200 points, or 20% of your final grade): You must publicly demonstrate your engagement with and understanding of the course material by participating in class discussions and activities. There are multiple ways to demonstrate informed engagement:

1. **In-class Discussions:** Contribute thoughtful responses and/or pose helpful, relevant questions during our in-class discussions.
2. **Topics for Discussion:** Your questions and comments will largely drive our class discussion. You can earn informed engagement credit by emailing me potential questions or topics of conversation. If you'd like to focus on a particular passage/scene, be sure to include the passage's page/chapter numbers or the scene's beginning and ending times. Try to send your topics several hours before class begins to ensure that I see them in time to incorporate them into my lesson plan!
3. **In-class Activities:** Take an active role in all small group activities and remain on task.

Informal Writing Assignments (200 points, or 20% of your final grade): This category includes small things, like your daily in-class writing activities, the Know Your Classmates! Exam, and graded discussion forums (which we'll use if I need to cancel class). About the in-class writing activities: you'll write something in class every day. Think of these low-stakes writing assignments as warm-up exercises that will help you get plugged into the material before we launch into our discussions/main activities. Unlike your official projects, these will be informal, so I won't be paying attention to things like grammar and spelling.

Show and Tell (200 points, or 20% of your final grade): Often, professors will give you background information on the assigned reading and viewing, but because this course asks you to be an equal partner in your own learning, you'll be responsible for finding relevant background information and sharing it with your classmates. We'll be using Yellowdig, a social pinning site that's integrated into Canvas, for our Show and Tell activities. As you're looking for items to share for Show and Tell, be sure to:

- Find a credible source that provides context for or explains a key element of our assigned readings or viewing. Online study guides (SparkNotes, Shmoop, eNotes, etc.) and encyclopedia articles **are not acceptable sources for this activity**. Substantial articles in literary magazines and scholarly articles are generally fine; blogs are probably best avoided. Interviews with the author or director, when available, can be promising. If you're unsure whether your source is legit or not, ask! I'm always happy to answer questions.
- Post your source and a list of key takeaways and/or questions for further consideration on Yellowdig. Write at least 100 words.

- Comment on your classmates' posts. Make sure your comments (1) are germane to your classmates' posts and (2) demonstrate that you've actually read the source your classmate posted. Write at least 40 words.

Two people can't post the same source, so be sure to check and see what others have posted before you go hunting for your own source.

To earn full credit for this portion of your grade, you'll need to log 200 points in Yellowdig. You'll earn 10 points for posting a source and providing a 100-word explanation of it. You can earn 2 points for offering substantial comments on your classmates' posts. I give five-point bonuses for exceptional posts. You can earn a maximum of 20 points per week, so it will take you a minimum of 10 weeks to earn full credit for Show and Tell.

Project (400 points, or 40% of your final grade): You'll engage in a semester-long inquiry on a topic related to the imagination. What you investigate and what form your project takes is entirely up to you. (Scary, I know, but you've got this!) Check out the [project guidelines](https://clemons.instructure.com/courses/34332/pages/individual-project) (<https://clemons.instructure.com/courses/34332/pages/individual-project>) for more information.

Grading

I will calculate your grade using a 1,000-point scale. Points are distributed as follows:

Assignment	Points
Informed Engagement	200 points
Informal Writing Assignments	200 points
Show and Tell	200 points
Project	400 points
TOTAL	1,000 points

Your final grade will be determined by the points you've earned throughout the semester. I do not round borderline scores up to the next letter grade.

The following table breaks down the point ranges associated with each letter grade:

Letter	Points
A	900 – 1000 points
B	800 – 899 points
C	700 – 799 points
D	600 – 699 points
F	Below 600 points

Course and University Policies

Attendance: Participation is essential to your success in this course, so you should plan to attend every class meeting. Unexcused absences will negatively affect your Informed Engagement grade. If you need to miss class, you should plan to complete your work ahead of time. Students who provide documentation will not be penalized for absences due to serious or prolonged illnesses, a death in the family, participation in legal proceedings, participation in university-sponsored activities, or documented emergencies. If you know that you'll be missing class ahead of time, you will need to make arrangements to complete your work beforehand. **The attendance grade recorded via Canvas merely shows what percentage of classes you've attended; it doesn't factor in to your grade.**

Tardiness: Habitual tardiness will negatively impact your Informed Engagement grade.

Late Work Policy: I really don't like accepting late work, but I also understand that you all have lives that sometimes get in the way of you turning in your work on time. If you cannot turn in your assignment on time, let me know as soon as possible so that we can make arrangements.

Class Cancellations: In the unlikely event that class is canceled, I will notify you as soon as possible via Canvas and email. However, if I do not arrive within fifteen minutes of the beginning of class, you may assume that class is canceled for the day and leave. If class is cancelled due to inclement weather or any other emergency situation, I will determine how best to make up the assigned material and will announce my decision on Canvas as soon as possible.

Electronic Devices: I don't allow students use laptops, phones, and tablets in class unless we're doing an activity that requires them. I have a few reasons for this.

1. **Research** (<http://www.scientificamerican.com/article/a-learning-secret-don-t-take-notes-with-a-laptop/>) has shown that notetaking on laptops is less effective than taking notes by hand.
2. This is a discussion and project-based course, so there are no exams that require you to regurgitate class notes.
3. If you're goofing around on the internet, texting, and/or doing work for another course, you risk distracting your classmates.

If you need to be available by phone or text due to a family emergency, let me know. I'm not unreasonable!

Feedback: I am always happy to offer you feedback on your work in progress. As you're drafting, feel free to send quick questions about theses, introductions, organization, etc. via email. If you would like me to review a full draft, please make an appointment to talk with me in person. If you have questions about MLA citation or format, please try to find the answer on your own before contacting me. (After all, if you can type your question into a message to me, you can also type it into the search engine of your choice!)

Grading: I will do my best to return all graded material to you within one week (excluding weekends and official university holidays/closures). If I require more time, I will alert you in advance.

Grading Questions: If you have a question about your grade, please wait twenty-four hours after the assignment is returned and contact me via email. I do not discuss grades in person--only in writing--and I require a 24-hour "cool down" period before I answer questions about your graded work. Please be as specific as possible in your email so that I can address your questions and concerns in a timely manner.

Copyright: All materials found in this course are strictly for the use of students enrolled in this course and for purposes associated with this course; they may not be retained or further disseminated. Clemson students, faculty, and staff are expected to comply fully with institutional copyright policy as well as all other copyright laws.

Academic Integrity: Per the [University's Academic Integrity policy](http://www.clemson.edu/academics/integrity/index.html) (<http://www.clemson.edu/academics/integrity/index.html>), any work that you submit in this course **must be your own**. Any words, ideas, or data that you borrow from other people and include in your written work must be properly documented. Failure to document borrowed material is **plagiarism** (<http://www.clemson.edu/culib/Plagiarism/index.htm>). In addition, you may not submit work completed for other courses for credit in this course. If I determine that you have violated the Academic Integrity policy, I will either present you with a Plagiarism Resolution Form or make a formal written charge of academic dishonesty (including a description of the suspected misconduct) to the Associate Dean for Curriculum in the Office of Undergraduate Studies. University policy stipulates that I am not required to notify you of any allegations brought before the Associate Dean for Curriculum. If you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism, please get in touch with me before you turn in a final draft of your work.

Course and University Resources

Instructor Email and Conferences: Please contact me as soon as possible with any questions or concerns that you have about the course or your academic performance in the course. The best way to get in touch with me is via the "[Ask April](https://clemons.instructure.com/courses/34332/discussion_topics/96477)" (https://clemons.instructure.com/courses/34332/discussion_topics/96477) " discussion thread or by email at apelt@clemons.edu (<mailto:apelt@clemons.edu>). (Use email for all inquiries related to your personal performance in the course; use the Ask April forum for general questions related to the course.) I respond to discussion board and email inquiries throughout the day on weekdays, once or twice a day on weekends, and frequently the night before assignments are due. You may also make an appointment to talk to me in person, either in the library or in my off-campus office. **I'm always happy to help, so don't be a stranger!**

Academic Success Center: The Academic Success Center provides free services, including tutoring, academic coaching, and academic skills workshops, for all Clemson students. Visit www.clemons.edu/asc (<http://www.clemons.edu/asc>) for more information on their services and workshops.

Writing Center: Clemson University's Writing Center offers free one-on-one tutoring for all Clemson students. Visit their [website](https://clemons.mywconline.com/) (<https://clemons.mywconline.com/>) for more information about their services or to make an appointment.

Cooper Library: Reference librarians are available in person and via text, phone, email, and chat to answer your research questions. Visit <http://libraries.clemons.edu/ask/> (<http://libraries.clemons.edu/ask/>) for more information or to get in touch with a librarian.

Technical Support: If you are having hardware or software problems, CCIT's Service Desk may be able to help you. Contact them at ITHELP@clemons.edu (<mailto:ITHELP@clemons.edu>) with a detailed description of your problem.

Student Accessibility Services: Clemson University values the diversity of our student body as a strength and a critical component of our dynamic community. Students with disabilities or temporary injuries/conditions may require accommodations due to barriers in the structure of facilities, course design, technology used for curricular purposes, or other campus resources. Students who experience a barrier to full access to this class should let the professor know, and make an appointment to meet with a staff member in Student Accessibility Services as soon as possible. You can make an appointment by calling 864-656-6848, by emailing studentaccess@lists.clemons.edu (<mailto:studentaccess@lists.clemons.edu>), or by visiting Suite 239 in the Academic Success Center building. Appointments are strongly encouraged – drop-ins will be seen if at all possible, but there could be a significant wait due to scheduled appointments. Students who receive Academic Access Letters are strongly encouraged to request, obtain and present these to their professors as early in the semester as possible so that accommodations can be made in a timely manner. It is the student's responsibility to follow this process each semester. You can access further information at the [Student Accessibility Services Website](http://www.clemons.edu/academics/studentaccess/) (<http://www.clemons.edu/academics/studentaccess/>) and the [Office of Access and Equity Website](http://www.clemons.edu/campus-life/campus-services/access/) (<http://www.clemons.edu/campus-life/campus-services/access/>).

Non-Discrimination: Clemson University is committed to providing a higher education environment that is free from sexual discrimination. Therefore, if you believe you or someone else that is part of the Clemson University community has been discriminated against based on sex, or if you have questions about Title IX, please contact the Title IX Coordinator, Alesia Smith, who also serves as the Executive Director of Equity Compliance, at 110 Holtzendorff Hall, 864-656-3181 (voice) or 864-656-0899 (TDD). The Title IX Coordinator is the person designated by Clemson University to oversee its Title IX compliance efforts. Please consult the [university's Title IX policy](http://www.clemson.edu/campus-life/campus-services/access/title-ix/) (<http://www.clemson.edu/campus-life/campus-services/access/title-ix/>) for full details.
