

Oxford Literary Greats (OASP)

Strange things have happened to fictional characters in this town. The place seems to act as a portal to other worlds. It was from here that a group of children went through the back of a wardrobe into a place called Narnia. Alice went through a mirror and down a rabbit hole near the centre of this City, and Bilbo and Frodo Baggins set off from here for their adventures in Middle Earth. Even Harry Potter went to school here. Just what is it about the City of Oxford that made all these stories happen here? What do these magical stories mean, and why is it that they have grown ever more popular since they were written? These are some of the questions that this course will seek to answer...

Escape! Escape!

"Do not adjust your mind, there is a fault in reality". Is the flight into fantasy characteristic of some works of art mere escapism, or is it sometimes a profound critique of the pathology of "real" social life?

Nothing Up My Sleeve

A somnambulant dormouse and a pathologically tardy rabbit, alongside spells, trolls, elves - and a wizard or two for good measure - mark a literature where elements of the sublime and the ridiculous co-exist with no apparent contradiction.

This Green and Pleasant Land

The lost Eden, where willows overhang the banks of the slow-flowing river, where there will always be strawberries and cream for tea, where we will remain in a perpetual state of youth, is preserved in the jam pot of these texts.

The Wild Wood

The changes at work in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, as rural life was disappearing and the 'garden cities' and paved roads encroaching, meant that the wild wood of Milton and Wordsworth was a fast-fading dream. But new threats and beauties are there to be explored.

Recommended pre-summer reading

Alice's Adventures in Wonderland, Lewis Carroll
The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe, C.S. Lewis
The Hobbit, J. R. R. Tolkien
The Wind in the Willows, Kenneth Grahame

There will be some walking excursions into Oxford and the surrounding areas.

If you are unable to obtain books locally, they may be ordered from

<http://bookshop.blackwell.co.uk>

or

www.amazon.co.uk