

Dr. Wieland Schwanebeck

Alice in Wonderland, or: The Importance of Being Nonsensical

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Tue (2)

The Cheshire Cat, the Mad Hatter, the Queen of Hearts, Tweedledum and Tweedledee – Lewis Carroll’s tales of Alice’s adventures in Wonderland are brimming with memorable characters and hilarious episodes full of paradoxical wit and endlessly quotable dialogue. Not only have the two *Alice* books found a place in collective memory, the heroine has stood the test of time in a variety of media, emerging as an unlikely Disney heroine, as a (proto-)feminist icon, and as a staple of British popular culture.

This course will use *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* and its sequel to introduce students to elementary categories of narrative analysis and to facilitate an in-depth reading of a canonical classic that is equally profound and humorous. Moreover, it will shine a light on the genre of nonsense literature and read the latter against various philosophical traditions and concepts of laughter. Our journey ‘down the rabbit-hole’ will not only lead us to various adaptations of Carroll’s novel (including the classic Disney cartoon of 1951), it will also take include other nonsense classics, including the works of poet Edward Lear and the oeuvre of Monty Python’s Flying Circus.

You are expected to have read the first of the two Alice volumes (*Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*) before the beginning of the semester.

Please buy:

Carroll, Lewis (1865/1872/1998). *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland and Through the Looking-Glass and What Alice Found There*. Ed. Hugh Haughton. London: Penguin. [ISBN 978-0-141-43976-1]