The study of fairy tales is closely linked to controversial debates about the complex aesthetic, philosophical and social connotations of fantasy and of the imaginary. We will examine the transitions from magic to uncanny, surrealist, and fantasy tales in texts from Romanticism to the 21st century, and discuss the processes of writing and reading as fantastic processes that rethink and refashion our perceptions of reality by challenging the fluid borders between various fictive realities.

Literary texts to be discussed may include tales by Jakob and Wilhelm Grimm, Johann Wolfgang Goethe, Novalis, Ludwig Tieck, ETA Hoffmann, Franz Kafka, Ingeborg Bachmann, Michael Ende, Herman Hesse, Christian Kracht, Cornelia Funke or Rafik Schami. As theoretical frameworks we will study texts by Friedrich Schlegel, Stith Thompson, Vladimir Todorov, Sigmund Freud, Walter Benjamin, Peter Brooks, and Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari.

Readings provided in German & English.

Discussions in English with an optional hour of discussion in German.

Crosslisted with the departments of Comparative Literature & Folklore.