From *Little Red Riding Hood* to *Cinderella*, from the original collection of tales by the Brothers Grimm to the big-screen versions that made Disney what it is: fairy tales have entranced, enchanted, frightened, and inspired generations of children and adults. What makes these tales so compelling? What gives them the sticking power that has kept them part of our cultural imaginary for so long and allowed them to transcend cultures and generations?

This seminar aims to reexamine the fairy tales themselves and to trace their cultural development into contemporary society. We will examine some of the key tales and their different versions. We will then turn to the form itself and the ways authors have drawn on it throughout different eras: from texts that approach these tales directly, yet subvert them to new means, such as Anne Sexton’s *Transformations* and Angela Carter’s *The Bloody Chamber*, to cinematic versions, to narratives that appropriate certain structural or stylistic elements in order to underpin stories that stray widely from the ‘original’ tales. And we will look closely at other types of children’s literature, examining alternative ways that authors sought to appeal to the child’s mind.