A teenage girl imagines herself at Hogwarts and writes about it online. The Brontë children write zines about the Duke of Wellington. Sherlock turns “the woman who beat Sherlock Holmes” into a professional dominatrix. A professional dominatrix writes fanfic about Sherlock. And so it goes. What makes “fanfiction” different from Shakespeare basing his plays on sources, or House turning a Victorian detective into a doctor in West Windsor? What can amateur, unauthorized stories about other people’s characters do for readers and writers that paid, official culture can’t or won’t? In this course, we’ll be reading a lot of fanfic as well as looking at other cultural uses of adaptation and appropriation such as TV shows, web series, and avant-garde poetry. We’ll look at the historical tradition of “writing from sources” and examine the co-evolution of fanfiction and mass media from the 1890s to today.