

English 300-10: Medieval Literature

ENG 101-17

Term: Fall 2013

Time: TR 8:30-9:45

Place: Daly 213

Office Hours: Tues 12:30-2:30pm, Thurs 3pm-4pm & By Appointment

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COURSE DESCRIPTION. Nearly every institution that shapes our modern world, from universities and universities, banks, parliaments, and the modern nation, to printers and book publishers, religious institutions, trial by jury, European languages, and romantic love, began in the medieval world. This course is keyed to the on-campus performance of William Shakespeare's *Henry IV Part One*, one of a tetralogy of history plays dealing with events from the reign of Richard II to Henry V in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries. In this course, we will focus on medieval texts and writers that shaped expressions of authority in two key ways: through their exploration of political authority and their formulation of literary authorship. As we shall see, literary texts continue to have real-world effects, which we in turn can shape and redirect through our own processes of reading and interpretation.

After familiarizing ourselves with key political theories of the Middle Ages, we will acquaint ourselves with some well-known medieval figures—King Arthur, Lancelot and Guinevere, Tristan and Isolde, Robin Hood, Thomas Becket—to explore the theories of kingship, fealty, treachery, law, country and outlawry they came to embody. We will also read major representative writers from the period, including Geoffrey of Monmouth, Marie de France, Dante Alighieri, the Pearl Poet, Geoffrey Chaucer and Christine de Pizan. The course concludes with an in-depth look at medieval English drama, the chief public genre of urban medieval life.

TEXTBOOKS. May be purchased at Campus Bookstore.

1. *History of the Kings of Britain*, by Geoffrey of Monmouth, trans. Lewis Thorpe, published by Penguin. ISBN-10: 0140441700/ISBN-13: 978-0140441703.
2. *Lais*, by Marie de France, trans. Glyn S. Burgess and Keith Busby, second edition, published by Penguin. ISBN-10: 0140447598/ISBN-13: 978-0140447590.
3. *The Divine Comedy of Dante Alighieri: Inferno*, trans. and ed. Robert Durling and Ronald Martinez, published by Oxford University Press. ISBN-10: 0195087445/ISBN-13: 978-0195087444.
4. *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, trans. and ed. James Winny, published by Broadview Literary Texts. ISBN-10: 0921149921/ISBN-13: 978-0921149927.
5. *Dream Visions and Other Poems*, Geoffrey Chaucer, ed. Kathryn L. Lynch, Norton Critical Editions. ISBN-10: 0393925889/ISBN-13: 978-0393925883.
6. *The Book of the City of Ladies*, Christine de Pizan, Revised Edition, trans. Earl Jeffrey Richards, published by Persea. ISBN-10: 0892552301/ISBN-13: 978-0892552306

7. *Norton Anthology of English Literature*, Volume 1 or Volume 1A (The Middle Ages). ISBN-10: 978-0-393-91247-0/ISBN-13: 978-0-393-91249-4. **You may already own this volume; a used copy or shared copy is fine, as we'll need it for just three classes (November 15th, 18th, and 20th).**

COURSE GOALS.

1. **Literary History:** Students in English should understand the breadth, variety, and depth of literature written in English across a range of genres and time periods. To that end, we explore the rich cultural, historical, linguistic and artistic heritage of the European Middle Ages, charting the trajectory of this period and reading representative medieval authors at an advanced level. You will explore the conventions of numerous literary genres, culminating in an in-depth exploration of medieval drama in relation to contemporary texts and present-day performances. In the process, you will also develop your **CURIOSITY and AESTHETIC INSIGHT**, core values of Washington College.
2. **Critical Reading:** Students in English should employ a variety of analytic and interpretive skills to evaluate literary and non-literary texts. We will therefore explore how literary analysis and an awareness of critical debates can enable you to construct rigorous arguments in written form, reading some short secondary sources and applying the ideas from these critics to various texts. As you brainstorm and discussion ideas and questions in conversation with classmates both in class and on the course Canvas website, you will be developing your **ANALYTIC THOUGHT**, another core value of Washington College.
3. **Rhetorical Knowledge:** Students in English should write and produce texts that are imaginative and intelligent. You will be writing a variety of formal and informal pieces in this course, including two formal essays on the primary texts, and collaboratively producing and presenting a final project centering on a mini-edition of a medieval mystery cycle play. These substantial written assignments will be polished and improved through peer review and feedback from fellow students. In the process of developing your **CLEAR COMMUNICATION**, another core value of Washington College.
4. **Information Literacy:** Students in English should use information effectively and appropriately from a variety of sources. As you investigate topics of interest to you while respecting the cultural and historical specificity of medieval primary source materials. You will evaluate, read and cite secondary research sources appropriately and effectively and build your own knowledge of the methods and resources for research in this area. The research and writing process sustains an intellectual community within this classroom that connects to a larger, interdisciplinary intellectual community of medievalists, and thus calls on your practices of **INTEGRITY AND CIVIC RESPONSIBILITY**, two core values of Washington College.
5. Finally, in this class we will be asking ourselves how political and literary authority intersect in a series of texts from western Europe between the twelfth and sixteenth centuries. As we consider the ethical and political implications of what we read, and how we read it—and how real-world politics shaped the artistry and content of these literary works—we will be called upon to exercise **ETHICAL SENSITIVITY and MORAL COURAGE**, core values of Washington College.

CLASS CIVILITY and LEADERSHIP. These core values of Washington College are at the heart of our active engagement with each other in the exciting ferment of this course! Your alert engagement with your fellow classmates' ideas and writing is critical to your own learning, and the learning of those around you (including me!). **Therefore, class meetings will have a “no screens” policy: all electronic devices must be turned off and stowed away before entering the classroom.** Since we will be discussing challenging texts and many issues with contemporary, urgent relevance, you will want to focus on debating ideas with the “respect, dignity and understanding” at the heart of the honor code.

Part of this mutual respect is you taking responsibility to keep on top of the workload, and therefore letting me know when you need some extra assistance. If you need an extension on an assignment due to illness or other conflicts, you must speak to me and secure this extension **at least 24 hours in advance of the due date.** Extensions are at my discretion. Absent or late students should contact their fellow students to learn what they missed in class that day, and hand in assignments via Canvas as usual. If you have a medical or family emergency, please contact me by email as soon as possible to discuss how you can make up missed work. If you will need to miss classes because of religious observances, you must tell me during the first week of class for those excused absences.

INTEGRITY. The Washington College Honor Code defines plagiarism as “willfully presenting the language, ideas, or thoughts of another person as one’s original work” or any “unauthorized use of another’s intellectual property, including published material online.” Please refer to the class Honor Code handout for more details on how you will cite and use ideas and words for the purposes of this course.

ACCOMODATIONS. Please let me know if you anticipate any issues that might affect your performance in the class, if you need to make any special arrangements, or if you have emergency medical information that you wish to share with me. If you require disability-related accommodations, please register with the Office of Academic Skills (OAS). For other Washington College resources for students needing accommodations, visit <http://www.washcoll.edu/offices/academic-skills/our-mission.php>.

RESOURCES. For more on tutoring and academic resources for this course and others, above and beyond the peer review and meetings with me that are part of this course, please avail yourself of the guidance in study skills offered by the Office of Academic Skills (<http://www.washcoll.edu/offices/academic-skills/studyskills.php>) and peer tutoring (<http://www.washcoll.edu/offices/academic-skills/peertutoring.php>). For more advice and feedback on your writing, I encourage you to check out the Washington College Writing Center (<http://www.washcoll.edu/offices/writing-center/>) which offers fantastic handouts and web resources to sharpen your writing; free, drop-in writing workshops throughout the semester; and one-on-one and small group meetings with peer consultants, fellow students who are dedicated and passionate writers with extra training and expertise. Their appointment hours are Monday-Friday, 10:30am-5:30pm in Goldstein 106; Sundays 4:30pm to 8:30pm in the Miller Library second floor; and drop-in hours Monday-Thursday 6:30pm-8:30pm. **Appointments are recommended.**

OFFICE HOURS. Drop-in office hours are Tuesdays 12:30-2:30pm and Thursdays 3-4pm, and I will have additional office hours by appointment. Office hours give us a chance to review your work, discuss your ideas, and plan out the next steps in the process. You can ask me questions and we can have a more in-depth discussion one-on-one. Additionally, for each graded paper, we will schedule an in-person conference to review your work so that I can give you additional oral and written feedback besides the rubric grade on Canvas. **You must meet with me in the first two weeks of classes.**

GRADES. Your grade is out of a hundred points. Each paper will be worth 20 points (abstract completion and peer review included in that score); class participation and attendance will be worth 15 points; the weekly online class discussions on Canvas will be worth 10 points; and the final project will be worth 35 points.

SCHEDULE OF READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS.

Monday August 26th

First class, introduction to class, syllabus; maps, nationality and identity; opening section to Bede, *Ecclesiastical History of the English People* (**in-class handout**)

Wednesday August 28th

Aeneid Book 2 & 4 selections 55-61, 97-121; selections from Dante, *De Monarchia* (*all on Canvas*)

Friday August 30th

John of Salisbury's *Polycraticus* (*On Canvas*); continue discussion of *De Monarchia*

Monday September 2nd

Geoffrey of Monmouth, *History of the Kings of Britain*, 51-74; 81-87; 105-118

Wednesday September 4th

Geoffrey of Monmouth, *History of the Kings of Britain*, 119-125; 141-146; 155-169

Friday September 6th

Geoffrey of Monmouth *History of the Kings of Britain*, 195-211; 212-261

Monday September 9th

Marie de France's *Prologue* and *Lanval*

Wednesday September 11th

Marie de France, *Yonec* and *Bisclavret*

Friday September 13th

Marie de France, *Guigemar* and *Milun*, and Sharon Kinoshita, "Colonial Possessions: Wales and the Anglo-Norman Imaginary in the *Lais* of Marie de France," from *Medieval Boundaries: Rethinking Difference in Old French Literature* (*On Canvas*)

Monday September 16th

Chretien de Troyes, *The Knight of the Cart*, or *Lancelot*, 207-234 and Sarah Kay, "Courts, Clerks, and Courtly Love," from *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval Romance* (*On Canvas*)

Wednesday September 18th

Chretien de Troyes, *The Knight of the Cart*, or *Lancelot*, 235-261 (*On Canvas*)

Friday September 20th

Chretien de Troyes, *The Knight of the Cart*, or *Lancelot*, 262-294 (*On Canvas*)

Monday September 23rd

Gilte Legende St. Thomas Becket and St. Lucy (*On Canvas*)

Submit paper abstract, paper 1

Wednesday September 25th

Elizabeth of Schönau, *Revelations concerning St. Ursula and the Eleven Thousand Virgins*, and William Caxton, “St. Ursula” from the *Polychronicon* and the *Golden Legend* (*On Canvas*)

Friday September 27th

Excerpts from the *Gilte Legende* St. Edward the Confessor (*On Canvas*)

Trade first draft with partners for peer review

Monday September 30th

Dante, *Inferno*, Cantos 1-3

Wednesday October 2nd

Dante, *Inferno*, Cantos 4-8

Submit first paper

Friday October 4th

Dante, *Inferno*, Cantos 10, 11, 13-15 and Lawrence Venuti, “The Pedagogy of Literature,” from *The Scandals of Translation: Toward an ethics of difference* (*On Canvas*)

Monday October 7th

Dante, *Inferno*, Cantos 19, 21-22, 26

Wednesday October 9th

Dante, *Inferno*, Cantos 31-34

FALL BREAK

DURING FALL BREAK, REVIEW MIDDLE ENGLISH MATERIALS ON CANVAS

Monday October 14th

Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, Fitts 1 & 2

Wednesday October 16th

Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, Fitts 3 & 4

Friday October 18th

Chaucer, *Book of the Duchess*, lines 1-709, and Stephen F. Kruger, “Dialogue, debate, and dream vision,” from *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval English Literature, 1100-1500*

Monday October 21st

Chaucer, *Book of the Duchess*, lines 710-1334

Wednesday October 23rd

Chaucer, *House of Fame*, Books I & II

Friday October 25th

Chaucer, *House of Fame*, Book III

Choose groups and plays for final project, begin working on final project

Monday October 28th

Chaucer, *Legend of Good Women*, Prologue, in versions F&G (lines 1-545 and 1-579, most lines similar to each other)

Wednesday October 30th

Chaucer, *Legend of Good Women*, Legends of Cleopatra, (lines 580-705), Thisbe (lines 706-923), Dido (lines 924-1367), Lucrece (lines 1680-1885)

Friday November 1st

Christine de Pizan, *The Book of the City of Ladies*, Part One, sections 1-12 (opening, the three ladies, beginning to build the city, discussion of Ovid, Rose metaphor and Mary Magdalene, legal defense, queens of France); selections from *The Vision of Christine (On Canvas)*

Monday November 4th

Christine de Pizan, *The Book of the City of Ladies*, Part One, sections 16-19 (Amazons and Penthesilea); 43 (prudence); 46 (Dido), 48 (Lavinia); Part Two, sections 1 (opening); 6-7 (Empress Antonia, daughters versus sons); 12-13 (houses finished, marriage); 22 (Xanthippe and Jeanne de Laval); 36-37 (women's education and women's chastity); 44 (Lavinia); 50 (Griselda)

Wednesday November 6th

Submit abstract for paper 2 (one author, two secondary sources)

NO CLASSES, FALL ADVISING DAY

Friday November 8th

Christine de Pizan, *The Book of the City of Ladies*, Part Two, sections 52 (Bernabo's wife who lives as a man), 55 (Dido), 67-69 (Generous Busa, Dame Marguerite de la Rivière, Princesses and ladies of France, all women); Part Three, sections 1 (opening), 3 (St Catherine of Alexandria), 7 (St. Lucy of Syracuse), 10 (St. Christine), 12-13 (Sts. Marina and Euphrosyna); 16 (St. Natalia); 19 (conclusion)

Monday November 11th

Gest of Robyn Hood, Fitts 1-4 (*On Canvas*)

Exchange papers for peer review

Wednesday November 13th

Gest of Robyn Hood, Fitts 5-8 (*On Canvas*)

Friday November 15th

Start Wakefield *Second Shepherds' Play* (*Norton Anthology*)

Paper 2 due

Monday November 18th

Wakefield *Second Shepherds' Play*, handouts about medieval English drama (*On Canvas*)

SUBMIT GLOSSED EDITIONS OF CHESTER PLAYS

Wednesday November 20th

York *Crucifixion* (*Norton Anthology*)

Friday November 22nd

Viewing of film of Chester Mystery cycle (from Chester Mystery Plays website)

Monday November 25th

[Chester Mystery Cycle Group 1 & 2](#)

THANKSGIVING BREAK

Monday December 2nd

[Chester Mystery Cycle Group 3 & 4](#)

Wednesday December 5th

[Chester Mystery Cycle Group 5](#)

Wednesday December 11th
Chester Mystery Group Plays Final Versions Due