

**Carleton University
Winter 2014
Department of English**

**ENGL 5208 : *Studies in Medieval Literature*
2013-14 Topic: *King Arthur*
Tuesdays, 11:35-14:25, 1816 DT**

**Instructor: Dr. S. Calkin
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PLEASE NOTE: This is a Preliminary Syllabus. Please check again in December for the final syllabus and schedule of class meetings, which may differ in some details.

Course Description:

Arthur, Guinevere, Lancelot, Gawain—the names of these medieval characters live on today in a variety of films, novels, and games. But what were their literary origins? This course introduces students to the Arthurian literature circulating in Britain between 1100 and 1500. We will study the central texts of the medieval Arthurian tradition in Britain, and examine the ways in which different writers took up this varied and disparate tradition. We will read both chronicles and romances about Arthur, and explore the ways in which these genres use the same characters, plots, and motifs to explore a wide range of issues. Specifically, we will consider the different ways in which Arthurian texts envision kingship, queenship, violence, and knighthood. We will also examine the literary models of love and loyalty provided in various texts, as well as the ideals of masculinity and femininity promulgated therein. We will strive to set these literary texts and models in their historical contexts, and consider how medieval Arthurian texts spoke to central issues of their day and why they still speak to audiences today.

Course Objectives:

Students in this course will:

- Read a variety of medieval Arthurian texts
- Explore how medieval Arthurian texts engage the issues of gender, violence, history, polity, and religion
- Develop a historical and historicized understanding of the depictions of masculinity, femininity, love, kingship, knighthood, and vassalage in late medieval England
- Develop an appreciation and understanding of the Middle English language as well as a facility with reading and quoting it
- Become familiar with current critical discussion about medieval Arthurian texts
- Consider what constitutes the medieval Arthurian Tradition, and what explains its enduring appeal

Readings/Required Texts:

French, Latin and Welsh texts will be read in modern English translation. All other texts will be read in Middle English. Assistance with reading Middle English will be provided as needed.

- Geoffrey of Monmouth, *The History of the Kings of Britain*. Trans. Michael A. Faletra. Peterborough: Broadview, 2008. Print
- Chrétien de Troyes, *Arthurian Romances*. Trans. William W. Kibler. London: Penguin, 1991. Print.
- *Arthurian Chronicles*. Trans. Eugene Mason. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1996. Print. (Contains Wace's *Roman de Brut* and Layamon's *Brut*, and we will read selections from both)
- Marie de France, *Lanval* (available in both the Norton and Broadview Anthologies often used for ENGL2300; if you do not have either of those, then this reading is available **online** in a translation by Judith Shoaf at www.clas.ufl.edu/users/jshoaf/Marie/)
- *The Mabinogion*. Trans. Sioned Davies. Oxford; Oxford UP, 2008. Print.
- *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*. Ed. Paul Battles. Peterborough: Broadview, 2012. Print.
- *King Arthur's Death: The Middle English Stanzaic Morte Arthur and Alliterative Morte Arthure*. Ed. Larry D. Benson. Rev. Edward E. Foster. TEAMS Middle English Text Series. Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications Western Michigan University, 1994. Print.
- Sir Thomas Malory. *Le Morte Darthur*. Ed. Stephen H. A. Shepherd. New York: Norton, 2004. Print.

*** Books will be available at Haven Books, 43 Seneca Street (Seneca at Sunnyside)**

Telephone: 613-730-9888; E-mail info@havenbooks.ca;

Web: www.havenbooks.ca/carletonsite/carletonhome-e.php

Evaluation:

Short (5-minute) article summary	5%
Seminar Presentation	25%
Term Paper	30%
Manuscript Assignment	10%
Journal of Reading Responses/Analyses	20%
Attendance and Participation	10%