

**Carleton University
Winter 2021
Department of English**

ENGL 2301: Literatures and Cultures 500-1500

Prerequisites: Second-year standing or permission of the department

Preclusions: None

Day and Time: **TBA**

Location: **TBA**

Professor Wallace

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Office Hour: **TBA**

ENGL 2301 introduces students to the richness (and, frequently, the sheer strangeness) of the medieval literature. This section of 2301 emphasizes what scholars call the linguistic “hybridity” of the period within which what we call English literature is born. Works studied will range from a highly influential continental text written in Latin to anonymous poems whose origins and earliest reception histories are murky and likely unknowable, to texts by authors who play foundational roles within the (now global) traditions of literature in English. During the early weeks of the course we will be reliant on modern English translations of works originally written in Old English, Middle Irish, Anglo-Norman (i.e., a dialect of Old Northern French), and Medieval Welsh. By the end of the term we will be working directly with at least two dialects of “Middle English”: that is, reading texts written in a language that is beginning, but only beginning, to be recognizably ours.

Topics for discussion will include (without being limited to) the nature and boundaries of literature, manuscript culture, the uses and limitations of a “canon,” the relationship between the hero and his or her community, free will, gender, love, agency, authority, violence, and the relationship between past and present.

Format: If COVID restrictions on in-person meetings persist into the Winter Term, this will be a “blended” course. Recorded lecture material will be complemented by weekly one-hour lecture / discussion on set days and times via a videoconferencing platform.

Evaluation: Evaluations will combine quizzes, tests, and a final exam.