

Carleton University  
Winter 2021  
Department of English

**ENGL 3200A: *Medieval Literature (King Arthur)***

Prerequisite(s): third-year standing or permission of the department.

Preclusions: None

**Mondays and Wednesdays / 11:35am-12:55noon**

**Location: *online***

**Professor: Dr. S. B. Calkin**

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**Phone: (613) 520-2600 x2337**

**Office Hours: After Class or By Appointment (on Big Blue Button)**

**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 CE. 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(s) and why they still speak to audiences today.



From *Lancelot du lac*, Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS. Rawl. Q. b. 6, reproduced for educational purposes from ArtStor

## Course Objectives:

Students in this course will:

- Read a variety of medieval Arthurian texts
- Explore how these texts engage issues of gender, violence, history, polity, and religion
- Develop a historical and historicized understanding of the depictions of masculinity, femininity, love, kingship, queenship, knighthood, and vassalage in late medieval Britain
- Develop an appreciation and understanding of the Middle English language as well as a facility with reading and quoting it
- Consider what constitutes the Arthurian Tradition, and what explains its enduring appeal
- Develop the research skills required to position medieval literature in relation to some of its secondary scholarship

## Online Delivery Winter 2021:

Based on feedback received from students, I am committed to offering students a course where we can meet synchronously for a lecture/discussion experience at a set time as we read through these texts. This allows for the sharing of responses and ideas, the exploration of questions in a group format, and some virtual human contact with both me and your fellow students.

To that end, I have decided that I will present this course online as a video conference meeting via Big Blue Button (BBB), which is similar to Zoom but embedded into CULearn with better security. BBB allows you the opportunity to virtually raise a hand, to unmute yourself and ask a question, or to type in a chat question for us all to explore. It also allows for recording. I have been told by my students that they liked this feeling of in-person contact and dynamism on Big Blue Button, and that they desired the opportunity to attend class on a regular schedule to help structure their days during social isolation.

**BBB meetings will occur during our set meeting times and will be recorded** so that students who need to miss class or have internet problems can access the course at a later time.

This course best fits the Carleton definition of a **Blended Course**, with the qualification that we will meet **most of the time** online via web conferencing tools:

**Blended Courses:** An online course where there is a mixture of synchronous meetings and asynchronous activities. This means students need to be prepared to meet some of the time online via web conferencing tools at scheduled days and times. The specific dates will be communicated by the instructor in the course outline. The asynchronous activities are intended to provide flexibility to students when the class is not meeting synchronously. Students are expected to remain up to date with the deadlines and due dates provided by the instructor. These courses require reliable high-speed Internet access and a computer (ideally with a webcam), and a headset with a microphone.

## Technology likely to create best experience:

- reliable high-speed internet access at the class meeting times
- a headset/ear buds with a microphone
- computer, ideally with a webcam function (phones may work but BBB seems to work better on computer)

See also the Carleton Educational Technology Web Pages re:

- Technological Specifications for Online Learning: <https://carleton.ca/its/help-centre/faq-technical-specs-for-new-students/>
- Browser Requirements: <https://carleton.ca/culearnsupport/students/browser-support/>
- Accessing and Using Big Blue Button as a student: <https://carleton.ca/culearnsupport/students/bigbluebutton/>

If you have any questions, please contact me at [siobhain.calkin@carleton.ca](mailto:siobhain.calkin@carleton.ca).

## Required Readings:

**French and Latin texts will be read in modern English translation. All other medieval texts will be read in Middle English. Assistance with reading Middle English will be provided as needed. Some of these books, but not all, are available as e-books so allow time for ordering them.**

- Geoffrey of Monmouth, *The History of the Kings of Britain*. Trans. and ed. Michael A. Faletra. Peterborough: Broadview, 2008. ISBN: 9781551116396 / 1551116391 (not available as an e-book)
- Chrétien de Troyes, *Arthurian Romances*. Trans. and ed. William W. Kibler. London: Penguin, 1991. ISBN: 9780140445213
- Marie de France, *Lanval* (available in both the Norton and Broadview Anthologies often used for ENGL 2300 or 2301; if you do not have either of those, then this reading is available **online** in a translation by Judith Shoaf at <http://people.clas.ufl.edu/jshoaf/files/lanval.pdf>)
- *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. Also available **online** at <https://d.lib.rochester.edu/teams/publication/benson-and-foster-king-arthurs-death>. Please note, however, that the two Arthur texts in this book are rather long and so it will be easier on your eyes to read them offline in a hard copy. ISBN 1-879288-38-9
- *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*. Ed. Paul Battles. Peterborough: Broadview, 2012. ISBN: 9781554810192 / 1554810191
- Sir Thomas Malory. *Le Morte Darthur*. Ed. Stephen H. A. Shepherd. New York: Norton, 2004. ISBN: 978-0-393-97464-5 (not available as an e-book)

### **Please note:**

*Right now I have arranged for book orders through the student-run Haven Books near campus (43 Seneca Street) so that you can obtain the books all together from one source. During Covid-19 Haven has moved to an online model of selling books in which they offer shipping across North America and free curbside pickup (tel: 613-730-9888 /e-mail: [havenbooks@cusaonline.ca](mailto:havenbooks@cusaonline.ca); [www.havenbooks.ca](http://www.havenbooks.ca)). You may also order books directly from the individual publishers or seek copies from your preferred online booksellers.*

## Evaluation:

### Oral Presentation on Arthur Text/Website not covered in class

10%

*(On your chosen day, you are expected to speak to us in class (either live or via pre-recorded video; your choice) for 5 minutes about an Arthurian text or website NOT on our assigned readings (these may include primary texts from any period or medium, popular or scholarly websites, games, movies, paintings, or scholarly articles you have read about an Arthurian text we study). Give us a very brief overview of your chosen resource and identify 1-2 points of connection, comparison and/or contrast with the medieval Arthurian texts we are studying. Assignments will be assessed on timely completion of specified tasks, clarity of communication, and effectiveness of organization/presentation)*

### Mid-Term Examination (Feb. 24)

20%

*(passage identification and analysis; essay question; will be scheduled during class time)*

### Paper:

#### Annotated Bibliography and Draft Thesis Statement (Due: week of March 29)

5%

#### Final Paper (Due: April 12)

30%

*(A paper of 10-12 pages, double-spaced, on one or more of the medieval texts studied in class; MLA format and secondary research are required. Possible topics and a detailed outline of my expectations will be posted to CULearn, and I encourage you to discuss your ideas and essay outlines with me on BBB office hours.)*

### Final Examination

35%

*(cumulative; short answer and/or short translation passage, in-depth passage identification and analysis, essay questions; will be scheduled during Formal Examination Period)*

Mid-Term Examinations will be returned to students via CULearn. Final Examinations remain the property of the university and may be consulted by scheduling an appointment with the professor to go over the examination after it has been marked.

## PLAGIARISM

The University Senate defines **plagiarism** as “*presenting, whether intentionally or not, the ideas, expression of ideas or work of others as one’s own.*” This can include:

- reproducing or paraphrasing portions of someone else’s published or unpublished material, regardless of the source, and presenting these as one’s own without proper citation or reference to the original source;
- submitting a take-home examination, essay, laboratory report or other assignment written, in whole or in part, by someone else;
- using ideas or direct, verbatim quotations, or paraphrased material, concepts or ideas without appropriate acknowledgment in any academic assignment;
- using another’s data or research findings;
- failing to acknowledge sources through the use of proper citations when using another’s works and/or failing to use quotation marks;

- handing in substantially the same piece of work for academic credit more than once without prior written permission of the course instructor in which the submission occurs.

Plagiarism is a form of intellectual theft. It is a serious offence that cannot be resolved directly with the course's instructor. The Associate Deans of the Faculty conduct a rigorous investigation, including an interview with the student, when an instructor suspects a piece of work has been plagiarized. Penalties are not trivial. They can include failure of the assignment, failure of the entire course, or suspension from a program. For more information please go to: <https://carleton.ca/registrar/academic-integrity/>

**Please note:** Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor subject to the approval of the Faculty Dean. This means that grades submitted by the instructor may be subject to revision. No grades are final until they have been approved by the Dean.

**Please Note: If one of your assignments is lost, misplaced, or not received by the instructor, you are responsible for having a backup copy that can be submitted immediately upon request.**

## **ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS:**

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. For an accommodation request, the processes are as follows:

**Pregnancy obligation:** write to me with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details click [here](#).

**Religious obligation:** write to me with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details click [here](#).

**Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:** The Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) provides services to students with Learning Disabilities (LD), psychiatric/mental health disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), chronic medical conditions, and impairments in mobility, hearing, and vision. If you have a disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact PMC at 613-520- 6608 or [pmc@carleton.ca](mailto:pmc@carleton.ca) for a formal evaluation. If you are already registered with the PMC, contact your PMC coordinator to send me your Letter of Accommodation at the beginning of the term, and no later than two weeks before the first in-class scheduled test or exam requiring accommodation (if applicable). After requesting accommodation from PMC, meet with me to ensure accommodation arrangements are made. Please consult the PMC website for the deadline to request accommodations for the formally-scheduled exam (if applicable).

### **Survivors of Sexual Violence**

As a community, Carleton University is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working and living environment where sexual violence will not be tolerated, and where survivors are supported through academic accommodations as per Carleton's Sexual Violence Policy. For more information about the services available at the university and to obtain information about sexual violence and/or support, visit: <https://carleton.ca/equity/sexual-assault-support-services>

### **Accommodation for Student Activities**

Carleton University recognizes the substantial benefits, both to the individual student and for the university, that result from a student participating in activities beyond the classroom experience. Reasonable accommodation must be provided to students who compete or perform at the national or international level. Write to me with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. <https://carleton.ca/senate/wp-content/uploads/Accommodation-for-Student-Activities-1.pdf>

**Please note:** Student or professor materials created for this course (including lectures, hand-outs, assignments, presentations, posts, essays, and examinations) remain the intellectual property of the author(s). They are intended for personal use and may not be reproduced or redistributed without prior written consent of the author(s).

## Schedule of Classes and Readings:

Class meets on Class Meetings Link in CULearn. Readings are to be completed for class by the date under which they are listed. Please note that I reserve the right to adjust this syllabus to meet the needs of the class; however, major changes will be announced in advance.

- M. Jan. 11      Overview of Course and Requirements  
Introduction: Arthur Before Geoffrey of Monmouth
- W. Jan. 13      Finish Introduction  
Begin Geoffrey of Monmouth, *History of the Kings of Britain*  
—pp. 41-58 (Brutus); pp. 112-162 (Merlin, Uther, Arthur's Conception)
- M. Jan. 18      Geoffrey of Monmouth, *History of the Kings of Britain*  
—pp. 163-217 (Arthur and afterwards)
- W. Jan. 20      Finish Geoffrey of Monmouth, *History of the Kings of Britain*  
**Day 1: Oral Presentations on Other Arthurs**
- M. Jan.25      Chrétien de Troyes, *Arthurian Romances*  
—*Knight of the Cart (Lancelot)*, pp. 207-94
- W. Jan. 27      —*Knight of the Cart (Lancelot)*
- M. Feb. 1      Chrétien de Troyes, *Arthurian Romances*  
—*Story of the Grail (Perceval)*, pp. 381-494
- W. Feb. 3      —*Story of the Grail (Perceval)*
- M. Feb. 8      Marie de France, *Lanval* (in Norton or Broadview anthologies or on-line)  
**Day 2: Posts / Oral Presentations on Other Arthurs**
- W. Feb. 10      Introduction to Middle English  
Stanzaic *Morte Arthur* (in *King Arthur's Death*), pp. 11-68

- M. Feb. 15 **NO CLASS—READING WEEK**  
W. Feb. 17
- M. Feb. 22 Stanzaic *Morte Arthur*, pp. 69-123
- W. Feb. 24 **Mid-Term Examination (in class)**
- M. Mar. 1 Finish Stanzaic *Morte* if necessary  
Begin *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, Fitt 1, pp. 31-52
- W. Mar. 3 *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, Fitts 1-2, pp. 31-81
- M. Mar. 8 *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, Fitt 3, pp. 82-120
- W. Mar. 10 *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, Fitt 4, pp. 121-144  
**Day 3: Posts / Oral Presentations on Other Arthurs**
- M. Mar. 15 Finish *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*  
Begin Alliterative *Morte Arthure* (in *King Arthur's Death*), pp. 131-203
- W. Mar. 17 Alliterative *Morte Arthure*, pp. 203-61
- M. Mar. 22 Alliterative *Morte Arthure*
- W. Mar. 24 Finish Alliterative *Morte Arthure*  
Begin Thomas Malory, *Le Morte Darthur* if time  
—Beginnings, pp. 3-61
- M. Mar. 29 **Annotated Bibliography and Draft Thesis Statement due this week**  
Malory, Beginnings, pp. 62-112
- W. Mar. 31 Malory, *Le Morte Darthur*  
—“The Noble Tale of the Sankgreal,” pp. 496-544



M. Apr. 5 Malory, "The Noble Tale of the Sankgreal," pp. 544-587

W. Apr. 7 Finish Malory

M. Apr. 12 **Final Papers due**  
Final Examination Format  
Catch Up/Closing Discussion