

Summer 6-15-2005

ENG 5061-031: Memory and Medieval British Literature

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**English 5061
Memory and Medieval British Literature
Summer 2005**

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Office Hours: M/W 9-11, 6-7 and by appointment

About the Course

Memory as desire, as identity, as illusion, as alienation, as the essential condition of being. How does what and how we remember help us define who we are? In this course, we'll consider representations of memory by writers such as Augustine, Chaucer, and Dante in order to explore how these thinkers use the theme of memory to sketch parameters of what we call the "self." At the end of the semester, we'll turn to contemporary fiction and film to consider whether ideas of the self constituted by medieval conceptions of memory still resonate.

Required Texts

Mary Carruthers, *The Medieval Craft of Memory*
Vladimir Nabokov, *Speak, Memory*

*Most of the works we'll be reading are available through the library's e-reserve system.

Our password is fm5061.

* You'll access some texts on-line

Requirements and Policies

Two Presentations: 20%

Midterm Exam: 20%

Final Exam: 25%

Seminar Paper: 35%

Participation: thoughtful contribution to class discussion, informed by careful reading of the assigned texts, will be expected of all students in the class.

Attendance: except under extraordinary circumstances, you're expected to be present for and engaged in every class meeting.

Late work: except under extraordinary circumstances, work turned in late will be penalized.

Syllabus

(I'll notify you in advance of any changes)

Week 1: What is Memory?

Monday, June 13:

Course Overview

Wednesday, June 15:

Plato, *Meno* (eserver.org/philosophy)

Aristotle, *De Memoria et Reminescentia*. Sorabji, trans. (e-reserve)

Aquinas, *Commentary* (Carruthers153-188)

Annas, "Aristotle on Memory and the Self." Nussbaum and Rory, eds. (e-reserve)

Week 2: What is Memory? II

Monday, June 20:

Augustine, "Contents of Memory." Wills, trans. (e-reserve)

Ricoeur, "Memory and Imagination" (e-reserve)

Presentation: on John Duns Scotus

Presentation: on William of Ockham

Wednesday, June 22:

Presentation: on Mazzoni

Dante, *Inferno*

Week 3: Memory and History

Monday, June 27:

Presentation: Le Goff "Memory and History"

Ricoeur, "History and Time" (e-reserve)

Kelley, "Making Memory: Designs of the Present on the Past" (e-reserve)

Wednesday, June 29:

Geoffrey of Monmouth, from *History of the Kings of Britain* (e-reserve)

Gerald of Wales, from the *Instruction of Princes* (e-reserve)

Edward I, Letter (handout)

Week 4: Midterm Exam

Monday, July 4: university closed

Wednesday, July 6: Midterm exam

Week 5: Memory and Self-fashioning

Monday, July 11:

Chaucer, *House of Fame*, (www.georgetown.edu/labyrinth/library)
Margery Kemp, from *The Book* (e-reserve)

Wednesday, July 13:

Gawain and the Green Knight, (e-reserve)
Julian of Norwich, from *Revelations* (luminarium.org)

Week 6: Memory and Mourning

Monday, July 18:

Carty, "Dream Images, *memoria*, and the Heribert Shrine" (e-reserve)
Hirsch, "Projected Memory" (e-reserve)
Presentation: on Williams, "Material Culture as Memory"

Wednesday, July 20:

Pearl (on-line)
Chaucer, *Book of the Duchess* (on-line)

Week 7: Contemporary Representations

Monday, July 25:

Nabokov, *Speak, Memory*
Ricoeur Ch 3 "Personal Memory, Collective Memory" (e-reserve)

Wednesday, July 27:

Memento
Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind

Week 8: Final Comments/ Final Exam

Monday, August 1:

Paper presentations

Wednesday, August 5:

Final exam