

Fall 8-15-2011

ENG 3800-001: Medieval English Literature

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English 3800
Medieval English Literature
 Fall 2011

F. McGregor
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 581-6305
fmcgregor@eiu.edu: I will answer email 8-4 M-F

Office Hours: T/Th 9:15-10:30, 12:15-1:30, and by appointment. You're also welcome to drop in if my door is open.

About the Course

The richness and diversity of Anglo-Saxon and Middle English literature is one of the best-kept secrets of literary studies. Often deeply moving, frequently funny, and always fascinating, this eclectic body of work invites sensitive readers to listen for the human voices it conveys. In this class, we will explore a broad sampling of texts ranging from Anglo-Saxon elegies to spiritual writings to medieval romance. As we consider the social contexts these works are responding to, we'll be discovering what new insights we can gain about, for example, their social, psychological, political, and spiritual visions. While our exploration of this literature will always include historical context, it will be enriched by the critical practices you bring to the texts, whether this be the indispensable skill of close, attentive reading, or this skill in conjunction with more formalized critical approaches such as psychoanalysis, structuralism, deconstruction and so on.

Required Texts

The Book of Margery Kempe, (Windeatt, ed)
The Complete Works of the Pearl Poet (Finch, trans; Andrew and Waldron, ed)
The Lancelot-Grail Reader, (Lacy, ed)
The Longman Anthology of British Literature, (Damrosch, ed)
 Malory, *Le Morte d'Arthur* (Shepherd, ed.)
Sir Gawain: Eleven Romances and Tales (Hahn, ed)

Course Requirements/ Evaluation

1) midterm exam	20%
2) final exam	25%
3) two shorter papers	20%
4) final paper	20%
5) class participation	15%

Note: You may choose to submit an essay from this course to your Electronic Writing Portfolio. For more information, see me and/or the assessment website (www.eiu.edu/~assess).

Policies

- 1) The reading load for this course is heavy and the material challenging, so make sure you allow yourself plenty of time to complete the assigned reading. Keep in mind that if you come to class unprepared, you'll lose participation credit. I also reserve the right to dismiss from class and count as absent any student who has not read the text under discussion or who has not read it with sufficient attention to answer straight-forward plot questions
- 2) Much of what you will learn in this course will come from ideas generated in class discussion and so your presence in, and engagement with, the class are essential. Missing more than two classes will lower your final grade.
- 3) Assignments must be handed in within the first five minutes of class on the day they are due unless we have worked out a prior arrangement. Work handed in after that time will lose half a letter grade for each calendar day it is late. No work will be accepted a week after the deadline.
- 4) You must complete all work for the course in order to receive a passing grade.

Plagiarism Policy

The following is the English department's statement concerning plagiarism:

“Any teacher who discovers an act of plagiarism—‘The appropriation or imitation of the language, ideas, and/or thoughts of another author, and representation of them as one’s original work’ (*Random House Dictionary of the English Language*)—has the right and the responsibility to impose upon the guilty student an appropriate penalty, up to and including a grade of ‘F’ for the course, and to report the incident to the Judicial Affairs Office.”

While I assume I'll have no need to impose penalties for plagiarism, the ones I consider appropriate are that the student fail the course and be reported to the Judicial Affairs Office. If at any point in your writing for this course (or for another, if you like) you're uncertain about whether you're using sources appropriately, please come and talk to me.

Students with Disabilities

If you have a documented disability and wish to receive academic accommodations, please let me know and please contact the Coordinator of the Office of Disability Services (581-6583) as soon as possible.

Syllabus

Week 1: (Aug 23/25)

T: Course introduction
 “The Wanderer” (handout)

Th: Introduction to the *Longman Anthology*, 1-10
 Bede, “An Ecclesiastical History” (*Longman 126*), “Wulf and Eadwacer” (*Longman 146*), “The Wife’s Lament” (*Longman 146*)

Week 2: (Aug 30/ Sept 1)

T: “The Dream of the Rood” (*Longman 120*)
 Th: “Judith,” (*Longman 114*)

Week 3: (Sept 6/8)

T/Th: *Táin Bó Cuailnge*, (*Longman 95*)

Week 4: (Sept 13/15)

T/Th: *Peredur Son of Efrog* (handout)

Week 5: (Sept 20/22)

T: Introduction to the *Longman Anthology*, 11-21
 Marie de France *Prologue* (*Longman 171*), *Yonec* (online)
 Th: *Bisclavret* (online)
First Paper is due

Week 6: (Sept 27/29)

T: Introduction to the *Longman Anthology*, 21-26; Marie de France *Lanval* (*Longman 172*),
 Th: Middle English *Launfal* (handout)

Week 7: (Oct 4/6)

T: Chaucer, *Sir Thopas* (handout)
 Th: Medieval English Lyrics (handout)

Week 8: (Oct 11/13) midterm

Review
Midterm Exam

Week 9: (Oct 18/20)

T: *Pearl* (*Complete Works of the Pearl Poet*)
 Th: Julian of Norwich, from *A Book of Showings* (*Longman 447*)

Week 10: (Oct 25/27)

T: Margery Kempe, from *The Book of Margery Kempe* (Windeatt, ed. Pages TBA)

Th: Richard Rolle, from *The Fire of Love* (Longman 438)

Second Paper is due

Week 11: (Nov 1/3)

T: Geoffrey of Monmouth (*Longman* 153)

Th: Edward I (*Longman* 167), "A Report to Edward I" (*Longman* 169)

Week 12: (Nov 8/10)

T: Gerald of Wales (*Longman* 165)

Th: Malory (*Le Morte*, 3-40)

Week 13: (Nov 15/17)

T: Malory (*Le Morte*, 646-690)

Th: *The Death of Arthur* (*Lancelot-Grail Reader*, 365-401)

Week 14: (Nov 22/24)

Thanksgiving Recess

Week 15: (Nov 29/ Dec 1)

T: *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* (Longman 185)

Th: *The Green Knight* (*Sir Gawain*)

Week 16: (Dec 6/8)

T: *The Wedding of Sir Gawain and Dame Ragnelle* (*Sir Gawain*)

Th: Review

Final paper is due

You will have a comprehensive final exam on Monday, December 12 from 2:45 – 4:45.