ENG 5001-001: Arthurian Traditions in Medieval British Literature

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English 5001
Arthurian Traditions in Medieval British Literature
Spring 2007

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Office Hours: M/W/F 9-10, 11-12; W 6-7; and by appointment

About the Course

In this course we’ll explore the multivalent legends of Arthur and his court, particularly those from Britain and France, with an eye not only toward their literary qualities, but also toward their extraordinary adaptability as tools for political maneuvering, “nation” building, and social critique. As we trace the historical production and circulation of these legends, we’ll consider the ever-shifting representations of Arthur and of his knights in order to ask in what ways these portraits speak to and about the cultures in which they are produced.

Required Texts

Chretien de Troyes, Complete Arthurian Romances

Evaluation and Policies

Annotated bibliography: 15%
Presentation of bibliography: 15%
Mini-presentation: 10%
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.
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 to 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

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

Week 1: January 10
Course Introduction
Edward I and the Scots

Week 2: January 17
Malory, Le Morte D’Arthur Books I-IV (p1-147)

Week 3: January 24
Malory, Le Morte D’Arthur, Books XX-XXI (p865-912)
Presentation: War of the Roses

Week 4: January 31
The Dream of Rhonabwy (handout)
Kilhwch and Olwen (handout)
Presentation: Historical Arthur

Week 5: February 7
Geoffrey of Monmouth, from The History of the Kings of Britain
Gerald of Wales, from On the Instruction of Princes and Mirror of the Church
Presentation: Christianity in England

Week 6: February 14
Chretien de Troyes, *The Knight of the Cart*
Malory, Book XIX (p690-704)
Presentation: Medieval Romance

Week 7: February 21
Chretien de Troyes, *Erec and Enide*
Malory, Book VIII (p278-348)
Presentation: Courtly Love

Week 8: February 28
Marie de France, *Chevrefueil* and *Lanval*
Presentation: Breton Lai

Week 9: March 7
*Mort le roi Artu* (from the French Vulgate Cycle)
Or *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*
Presentation: Chivalric Code

Week 10: Spring Break

Week 11: March 21
Workshop on reading Middle English

Week 12: March 28
*The Marriage of Sir Gawain*
*The Wedding of Sir Gawain and Dame Ragnelle*
*The Greene Knight*
Presentation: Middle English Romance

Week 13: April 4
*Alliterative Morte Arthure*
Presentation: Alliterative Revival

Week 14: April 11
*Alliterative Morthe/ Stanzaic Morte*

Week 15: April 18
*Stanzaic Morte Arthur*

Week 16: April 25
Paper presentations
**Final Papers are due**