ENG 4300-002_4390-098: English Senior Seminar

Timothy Shonk
Eastern Illinois University

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Goals of the Course: The primary goal of the course is to acquaint each student with the social, sexual, martial, and political values and structures central to the world that was chivalry. Students will then discuss these values and structures as they are perceived by authors in succeeding centuries and note the continuing influences of the chivalric world, real, and fictional, in contemporary society and literature. We will begin this discussion with central texts from the Middle Ages and continue with texts through the centuries to understand how the values and characters of the chivalric world continue to occupy an undeniable presence in the arts.

Grades: The course grade will be determined according to the students’ performances on the following assigned activities:

- Class participation: 10%
- Report: 10%
- Paper I (5-7 pages): 15%
- Midterm Exam: 15%
- Presentation: 15%
- Final Paper (8-12 pages): 20%
- Take-home Final: 15%
PARTICIPATION: A seminar's success depends upon the active participation of its members. A lecture course is not a seminar. Thus the participation grade is a very real one, one that must be earned. To earn a high grade in this segment, one must be a regular entrant into class discussions. I often say that a good student answers questions; an excellent student asks them. Asking the good questions, then, is also a large part of the participation grade. Do note that general comments from students who have not read the material (or have read merely internet synopses) does not count toward this grade. I will direct specific questions to specific students, though, and intelligent answers to these questions will count. Obviously, if you miss several classes, the participation grade is damaged irreparably.

REPORTS: Reports will provide the seminar with important information about key figures and theories relevant to our semester's discussion. The individual report should cover all the basic information necessary to grant the seminar a clear understanding of the topic and its significance as well as its relevance to the literature under discussion or having been discussed previously. The reporter will provide for each member of the seminar an outline of the presentation and an annotated bibliography of the sources the reporter found most useful. The report should last from 7-10 minutes, no more than 15. As expert for the day, the reporter should be well prepared for any questions from the seminar (and I hope there are plenty, for good questions score highly in the participation grade).

PRESENTATIONS: Students will be grouped in pairs or triplets to make presentations on major works in the last half of the semester. Essentially, the presentations will occupy from 40 to 50 minutes of the first day’s discussion of a given work, the presenters in charge of organizing and guiding the discussion on this first day, to serve as professors as it were. While the grade for the presentation is based upon both the background work and the effectiveness of the presentation itself, how the presentation is made is up to the presenters: Some presenters prefer to begin with background material about the author, ideas, and structure of the work and then involve the seminar by asking critical questions central to the work's major theme(s). Others prefer to divide the class period and to make a presentation directly, with little discussion from the seminar members. Still others prefer to guide the seminar with well-constructed questions and insert background material as each question comes under discussion. There are many ways to present the material, but whatever method employed should give the seminar a clear understanding of the work's major ideas about and attitudes toward the chivalric tradition.
English 4300
Course Syllabus
Fall 2014
Shonk

Aug.  25  Introduction to the course; backgrounds
       27  Backgrounds; class organization
       29  *Yvain*, Chretien de Troyes

Sep.  1  Labor Day--No Classes
       3  *Yvain*
       5  *Yvain*
       8  *Gawain and the Green Knight* (Norton)
       10 *Gawain and the Green Knight*
       12 *Gawain and the Green Knight*
       15 Chaucer’s “Miller’s Tale” (Norton)
       17 Chaucer’s “Franklin’s Tale” (Norton)
       19 Malory, *Tale of the Sangreal*
       22 *Tale of the Sangreal*
       24 *Tale of the Sangreal*
       26 Malory, *Launcelot and Guinevere*
       29 *Launcelot and Guinevere*

Oct.  1  Malory, *The Morte D’Arthur*
       3  *The Morte D’Arthur*
       8  *The Faerie Queene*, Cantos 5-8
       10 *The Faerie Queene*, Cantos 9-12  **ESSAY I DUE**
       13 *Don Quixote*, pp. 25-47, 54-64
15 MIDTERM EXAM
17 Fall Break--No Classes
20 *Don Quixote*, pp. 209-44
22 *Don Quixote*, pp. 375-92, 804-30
24 Tennyson, *Idylls of the King*, pp. 379-92
27 *Idylls of the King*, pp. 478-521
29 *Idylls of the King* (cont.)
31 Twain, *A Connecticut Yankee*

Nov. 3 *A Connecticut Yankee*
5 *A Connecticut Yankee*
7 *A Connecticut Yankee*
10 Faulkner, *Light in August*
12 *Light in August*
14 *Light in August*
17 *Light in August*
19 *Light in August*
21 Malamud, *The Natural*
24-28 Thanksgiving Break--No Classes

Dec. 1 *The Natural*
3 *The Natural*
5 *The Natural*
8 Percy, *Lancelot*
10 *Lancelot*  [ESSAY II DUE]
12 *Lancelot*