Spring 8-15-2013

ENG 3800-001: Medieval English Literature

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English 3800
Medieval English Literature
Fall 2013

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

Office Hours: M/W/F 9-9:45/ 11-11:50 and by appointment.

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

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 three 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
.Subject to change.

Week 1: (Aug 19-23)
M: Course introduction; “The Wanderer” (handout)
W: Introduction to the Longman Anthology, 1-10
    Bede, “An Ecclesiastical History” (Longman 126)
F: “Wulf and Eadwacer” (Longman 146), “The Wife’s Lament” (Longman 146)

Week 2: (Aug 26-30)
M: “The Dream of the Rood” (Longman 120)
W: “Judith,” (Longman 114)
F: The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle (Longman 138)

Week 3: (Sept 2-6)
M: No class – Labor Day
W: Tāin Bó Cuailnge (Longman 95)
F: Continue with Tāin

Week 4: (Sept 9-13)
M: Peredur Son of Efrog (handout)
W: Continue with Peredur
F: Introduction to the Longman Anthology, 11-21

Week 5: (Sept 16-20)
M: Marie de France Prologue (Longman 171), Yonec (online)
W: Bisclavret (online)
F: Continue discussing Yonec/ Bisclavret
First Paper is due

Week 6: (Sept 23-27)
M: Introduction to the Longman Anthology, 21-26; Marie de France Lanval (Longman 172),
W: Reading Middle English
F: Middle English Launfal (handout)

Week 7: (Sept 30- Oct 4)
M: Chaucer, Sir Thopas (handout)
W: Medieval English Lyrics (handout)
F: No Class – Fall Break

Week 8: (Sept 7-11) midterm
M: Library day
W: Midterm Exam
F: Begin Pearl (Complete Works of the Pearl Poet)
Week 9: (Oct 14-18)
M: Continue discussing *Pearl*
W: Begin Julian of Norwich, from *A Book of Showings* *Longman 447*
F: Continue discussing *Book of Showings*

Week 10: (Oct 21-25)
M: Margery Kempe, from *The Book of Margery Kempe* *Windeatt, ed. Pages TBA*
W: Richard Rolle, from *The Fire of Love* *Longman 438*
F: Continue discussing Kempe and Rolle

*Second Paper is due*

Week 11: (Oct 28-Nov 2)
M: Geoffrey of Monmouth *Longman 153*
W: Continue discussing Monmouth

Week 12: (Nov 4-6)
M: Gerald of Wales *Longman 165 and handout*
W: Malory *Le Morte, 3-40*
F: Malory (TBA)

Week 13: (Nov 11-15)
M: Malory *Le Morte, 646-690*
W: Continue discussing Malory
F: Continue discussing Malory

Week 14: (Nov 18-22)
M: *The Death of Arthur* *Lancelot-Grail Reader, 365-401*
W: Continue discussing *Death*, Begin *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* *Longman 185*
F: Continue discussing *Gawain*

Week 15: (Nov 25-29)

*Thanksgiving Recess*

Week 16: (Dec 2-6)
M: *The Wedding of Sir Gawain and Dame Ragnelle* *Sir Gawain*
W: *The Green Knight* *Sir Gawain*
F: Exam Review

*Final paper is due*

You will have a comprehensive final exam on Wednesday, December 11 from 12:30 – 2:30.