

English 4305/5305: Medieval English Literature

10:50-12:15 TTh

Irby 304

Spring 2009

Instructor: Jay Ruud

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Office Hours: TTh 8:00-10:45; MWF 9:00-12:00, or by appt.

Useful Links:

- You might want to explore the [labyrinth](#), for fascinating medieval sites on the web.
- A specific site of great interest is the [Chaucer metapage](#), with links to a large number of Chaucer sites on the web.
- The [Harvard Chaucer homepage](#) is the best on the web. It has information about all of Chaucer's works and links to other important sites. And it is well illustrated.
- For a bit of fun, you might take a look at the "[Geoffrey Chaucer Hath a Blog](#)" site.
- The [Internet Medieval Sourcebook](#) links to full-text sites for a wide variety of medieval literature.
- You might want to access the online [Middle English Dictionary](#).
- Here is a site with an in-progress [Old English dictionary](#).
- A huge number of Arthurian sites are available online. Some of the more useful ones are [Stephen Shepherd's](#) site on *Le Morte Arthur* and Middle English romances);
- And [The Camelot Project](#) (a site with a number of interesting things, including artistic representations of the Arthurian legend).
- A page with numerous links to resources on [Mysticism](#) (including Julian of Norwich and Margery Kempe) is available here.

Required Texts:

- David, Alfred, et al., eds. *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, Vol. 1A. 8th ed. New York: Norton, 2006. (If you have the 7th edition, we can work with it).
- Beadle, Richard, and Pamela King, eds. *York Mystery Plays: A Selection in Modern Spelling*. Oxford and New York: Oxford World Classics, 1995.
- Crossley-Holland, Kevin, ed. *The Anglo Saxon World: An Anthology*. Oxford and New York: Oxford World Classics, 1999.
- Julian of Norwich. *Revelations of Divine Love*. Trans. Elizabeth Spearing. New York: Penguin, 1998.
- Langland, William. *Piers Plowman*. Ed. and trans. by A.V.C. Schmidt. Oxford and New York: Oxford World Classics, 1992.
- Malory, Thomas. *Le Morte D'Arthur*. Vol. 2. Edited by Janet Cowan. London and New York: Penguin, 1969.
- Tolkien, J.R.R., trans. *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, Pearl, and Sir Orfeo*. New York: Ballantine, 1975.

Course Description:

The catalogue description of this course is as follows: “for English majors to satisfy upper-division period requirements. The course offers an overview of English medieval literature (exclusive of Chaucer). Anglo-Saxon and some Middle English texts will be taught in translation, but Middle English will be retained whenever possible.” For this course, I have decided to use some Chaucer after all, so that students may more clearly situate him into the context of his time.

Course Objectives:

1. Students will develop their reading and critical thinking skills by close reading and interpretation of medieval literature.
 2. Students will be able to write a clear, focused, and organized essay on some aspect of medieval literature.
 3. Students will be able to find and use effectively scholarly sources, and will be able to distinguish authoritative from non-authoritative sources.
 4. Students will demonstrate understanding of significant aspects of Old English poetry and prose.
 5. Students will demonstrate understanding of significant aspects of Middle English poetry and prose.
 6. Students will recognize how the cultural, historical, and aesthetic context of the Middle Ages shaped literature in English, and will understand the differences between those contexts in the Old and Middle English periods.
 7. Students will understand the relationship of the Old English and Middle English literary periods to subsequent periods of English literature.
 8. Graduate students will become familiar with important medieval texts and will gain a deeper understanding of their contexts by additional outside reading.
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Tentative Course Outline:

- Wk. 1:
 - Th (1/15): Introduction to course and expectations. Introduce Old English poetry and look at “Caedmon’s Hymn.” (handout)
- Wk. 2:
 - Tu (1/20): Old English religious poetry. Read “Advent Lyric VII” (Crossley-Holland 198-200) and “The Dream of the Rood” (Crossley-Holland 200-204).
 - Th (1/22): Old English heroic poetry. Read “Deor” (Crossley-Holland 7-8), “The Battle of Maldon” (Crossley-Holland 11-19) and “The Battle of Brunnanburh” (Crossley-Holland 19-21). Also look at the section from *Egil’s Saga* online—it is another view of the Battle of Brunnanburh)
- Wk. 3:
 - Tu (1/27): An Old English epic: Judith *Norton Anthology* 100-108).
 - Th (1/29): Old English elegiac poetry. Read “The Wanderer” (Crossley-Holland 50-53), “The Seafarer” (Crossley-Holland 53-56), “The Wife’s Lament” (Crossley-Holland 56-57) and “Wulf” (Crossley-Holland 59).
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- Wk. 4
 - Tu (2/3): Old English prose. Read selections from *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* (Crossley-Holland 37-43), “The Passion of St. Edmund” (Crossley-Holland 228-233), and Wulfstan’s “Sermon of Wolf to the English” (Crossley-Holland 294-299).
 - Th (2/5): Read “The Myth of Arthur’s Return” (Norton, pp. 127-128) and discuss roots of Arthurian legend. Read *Lanval* (Norton 142-155).
- Wk. 5
 - Tu (2/10): Middle English romance tradition. Read *Sir Orfeo* (Tolkien 169-190).
 - Th (2/12): Read Chaucer, *The Wife of Bath’s Tale* (Norton 275-284), and Gower, *The Tale of Sir Florent* (online).
- Wk. 6
 - Tu (2/17): Read Chaucer, *The Prioress’s Tale* (online) and the *S Document* (online).
 - Th (2/19): Review Chaucer, *The General Prologue*. Read *Piers Plowman*, Prologue (Langland 1-7). **Take-home Midterm assigned.**
- Wk. 7
 - Tu (2/24): Read *Piers Plowman*, chapters 2-7 (Langland 15-81).
 - Th (2/26): Read *Piers Plowman*, chapters 8-12 (Langland 82-136).
- Wk. 8
 - Tu (3/3): Read *Piers Plowman*, chapter 18 (Langland 210-225).
 - Th (3/5): *Pearl* (Tolkien 123-168). **MID-TERM DUE**
- Wk. 9
 - Tu (3/10): Begin Julian of Norwich. Read chapters 3, 4, 5, 7, and 27 (Julian of Norwich, pp. 42-54, 58-62, 77-86, 95-96).
 - Th (3/12): Julian of Norwich. Read chapters 50-51, and 53 (Julian of Norwich, pp. 114-124, 128-129). **Paper assignment available online.**
- Wk. 10
 - Tu (3/17): Finish Julian of Norwich. Read chapters 58-63, and 85-86 (Julian of Norwich, pp. 131-147, 178-180).
 - Th (3/19): Selections from *The Book of Margery Kempe* (Norton 383-397).
- Wk. 11
 - Tu (3/24): NO CLASS—SPRING BREAK
 - Th (3/26): NO CLASS—SPRING BREAK
- Wk. 12
 - Tu (3/31): Middle English lyrics: “I Sing of a Maiden” (Norton 369), “Adam Lay Bound” (Norton 370), “The Corpus Christi Carol” (Norton 370), “Alison” (Norton 436), and Chaucer’s “Complaint to His Purse” (Norton 318).
 - W (4/2): English Mystery Plays. Read “The Fall of the Angels,” “The Fall of Man,” “The Building of the Ark,” and “The Flood” (Beadle and King 1-32).
- Wk. 13
 - Tu (4/7): Mystery Cycle continued: Read “The Wakefield Second Shepherd’s Play” (Norton 407-435).
 - Th (4/9): Mystery cycle continued: Read “Christ Before Pilate 2,” “The Crucifixion,” and “The Death of Christ” (Beadle and King 192-236).
- Wk. 14
 - Tu (4/14): End of the cycle: Read “The Harrowing of Hell,” “The Resurrection,” and “The Last Judgement” (Beadle and King 237-279).
 - Th (4/16): Read Malory, (“Tale of the Sangrail”), pp. 238-300.
- Wk. 15
 - Tu (4/21): Continue Malory, (“Tale of the Sangrail”), pp. 301-372).
 - Th (4/23): Continue Malory, (“Book of Launcelot and Guinevere”), pp. 373-455.
- Wk. 16

- Tu (4/28): Finish Malory (“The Death of Arthur”), pp. 456-532.
 - Th (4/30): Read Everyman (Norton pp. 463-484) **PAPER DUE BY FRIDAY AT 4:30.**
 - **Final Exam:**
 - Thursday, May 7, 11:00 AM-1:00 PM
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Assignments:

- 1. A final paper will be required. Minimum 6 pages (undergraduates), 10 pages (graduates). Graduate students should use a minimum of 4 scholarly sources (scholarly generally means *not* internet, unless it is a full-text database of scholarly journals) with an *annotated bibliography* attached. A more explicit assignment will be placed on Blackboard BY March 12. The paper is due by the Friday of the final week of class (May 1).
 - 2. A take-home mid-term exam (three essay questions) covering texts through *Piers Plowman* will be assigned on February 19 and due on Thursday, March 5.
 - 3. A final exam (comprehensive, but more heavily focused on material after the mid-term).
 - 4. Keep a READING JOURNAL in which you comment on, question, and otherwise respond to the readings. Undergraduates should choose ONE reading per week to write on. Graduate students should make TWO entries per week. Post your journal entries on the Blackboard Bulletin Board by 8:00 A.M. on the day of the class during which we will be discussing the text on which you comment. You should take a few minutes before class and read one another’s journal entries (and reply to any that you feel compelled to—such online discussions will enhance your journal grade). These entries may raise some issues to discuss in class.
 - 5. Class discussion is expected and required. You are expected to be in class every day with the assignment read and ready to discuss the texts for the day. There may be occasional in-class writings that would be figured into the Class Participation grade.

Attendance and Drop Policy: As the above makes clear, regular attendance is important for you to do well in this course. Any more than three consecutive absences, or six total absences for the semester, will be asked to drop the course or will be dropped with a WF grade.
 - 5. Graduate Students should meet with Dr. Ruud to discuss outside readings from other important medieval sources. Students should expect to lead discussion of some of these texts during the semester.
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Grades and Other Policies:

- 1. Final grades for the course will be based on the following formula:

Undergraduates

- Class participation=150 pts.
- Journal=150 pts.
- Midterm=200 pts.
- Paper=250 pts.
- Final=250 pts.
- **Total=1000 pts.** For the final grade, 900 or more points will be an A, 800-899 a B, 700-799 a C, and so on.

Graduates

- Class Participation=100 pts.
- Journal=125 pts.

- Midterm=175 pts.
 - Paper=250 pts.
 - Final=200 pts.
 - Discussion Leader=150 pts.
 - **Total=1000 pts.** For the final grade, 900 or more points will be an A, 800-899 a B, 700-799 a C, and so on.
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- 2. Late papers or late exams will be docked one letter grade.
 - 3. PLAGIARISM or any other form of academic dishonesty will result in an F for the assignment involved and/or an F in the course. Plagiarism is representing the work of another as your own. This would include taking the words or ideas of a published source without giving that source proper credit; giving credit to a published source but representing the source's words as your own (i.e., not putting the author's ideas into your own words, or not using quotation marks around quotations); or using the work of other students and passing it off as your own.
 - 4. OTHER POLICIES: Important academic policies and the campus Sexual Harassment policy are detailed in your *Student Handbook*. Consult the handbook for specifics.
 - AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT: the University of Central Arkansas adheres to the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act. If you need accommodation under this act due to a disability, contact the Office of Disability Support Services at 450-3135.