

ENGLISH 4000-01W: MEDIEVAL BRITISH LITERATURE

Fall 2016 * M/W 11:00-12:15 * HUM 209

Dr. Leah Haught

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Office Hours: W: 5-6; Th: 10-3; alternate/virtual meetings available by appt.



Course Description

Vikings? Check. Chivalry? For sure. Perilous travels abroad? You bet. Fart jokes? But of course. Welcome to medieval Britain! In this course we will read widely in the diverse genres, subjects, and linguistic traditions associated with the roughly thousand-year period of literary history commonly referred to as the Middle Ages. More specifically, we will consider the broader social and cultural implications of the period's status as a "middle" age by paying careful attention to what, if anything, the texts characterized as "medieval" have in common with each other as well as with literatures of other eras, including our own.

Course Objectives

- Students will develop the ability to understand, analyze, and critique selections of medieval literature in order to gain familiarity with the content and defining qualities of the period.
- Students will gain an understanding of the interrelationship between medieval texts and their cultural milieu.
- Students will recognize theoretical and critical approaches to the analysis of medieval literature.
- Students will demonstrate in both oral and written work a discipline-specific critical facility through convincing and well-supported analysis of related material.
- Students will demonstrate their command of academic English and the tenets of sound composition by means of thesis-driven analytical prose.

- Students will learn to use discipline-specific computer technologies related to the study of language such as listservs, word processing, and internet research.

Program Goals

According to the revised English Program Learning Outcomes, English majors will be able to:

- Understand and assess the traditions, conventions, and contexts associated with the study of the English language and its literatures.
- Apply critical thinking skills to the analysis, synthesis, and evaluation of information and ideas from diverse oral, written, and/or visual sources.
- Conduct research, develop organizational strategies, and compose professional documents using the academic conventions of English Studies as a discipline.

Required Texts

The Broadview Anthology of British Literature: The Medieval Period (Vol. 1). Ed. Joseph Black, et al. 3rd ed. (9781554812028)

The Cambridge Companion to Medieval English Literature 1100-1500. Ed. Larry Scanlon. (9780521602587)

Athelston (<http://d.lib.rochester.edu/teams/text/salisbury-athelston>)

Supplementary readings are available online or via CourseDen

Required Work

Fuller descriptions of your written assignments and study guides for your exams will be posted to CourseDen.

- *Daily Participation* (15%): You are expected to not only do the assigned readings, but also to come to class prepared to discuss said readings. This does not mean that you have to have everything “figured out” ahead of time; questions and clarifications are perfectly reasonable ways to contribute to class discussions, though you need to make an effort to share your opinions and insights too if you want higher than a “C” in this component of your grade. Challenge yourself to talk at least once a week if not once a class. Bringing both the texts we’ll be discussing and the notes you took while reading those texts to class is a good starting point for being prepared for class discussions. If I get the sense that you are not reading, I will incorporate reading quizzes into this component of your grade. I will post your participation grade twice: around midterm and at the end of the semester.
- *Middle English Recitation* (5%): You will be responsible for preparing and reading a passage of around 25-30 lines from one of the texts we read in Middle English. You can either record yourself reading or come to read during my office hours, whichever is easiest and most comfortable for you. We will discuss the variety of online resources available to assist you in this endeavor during the first few weeks of class, and will also practice reading Middle English aloud together at several points during the semester.
- *Analytical Essay* (20%): a 4 to 5 page paper focusing on the close, analytical reading of a text or texts from the first half of the semester. I will give you a list of suggested topics. Alternatively, you may adapt one these or propose a topic of your own in consultation with me.

- *Getting Medieval Presentation* (15%): Working with a group of your peers, you will design a thirty-minute presentation on one of the topics outlined by the reading schedule below. Your primary goal is to shed additional light on the texts and themes that we have been discussing as a class by explicating their historical contexts in more detail. In other words, you will be deeply engaged with the questions of what makes your particular topic both important and “medieval,” as well as how we “moderns” might find meaning in the past. An effective visual aid should accompany these presentations.
- *Term Paper* (30%): a 7 to 8 page research paper about a well-constructed subject related to the course topic and chosen in consultation with me. As part of this assignment, you will submit a proposal and annotated bibliography for your paper, which is worth 5% of the overall grade.
- *Final Exam* (15%): cumulative, writing intensive exam covering class readings, discussions, lectures, etc.

Attendance

You are expected to attend class daily and be on time. I take roll by asking the class a specific “attendance question”; if you show up after I am done with roll you will be considered late. You may miss three classes with no questions asked. Absences four and five will result in your final grade dropping by two percentage points. Six or more absences will result in you not passing this class. Three late arrivals count as one absence. Leaving class early without permission also counts as an absence. If you are asked to leave class for any reason, that too will count as an absence. Should you miss a class at any point in the semester, it is your responsibility to talk to your peers to figure out what you missed. In-class work cannot be made up except for cases of documented emergency and missing multiple in-class discussions will negatively impact your participation grade.

Deadlines and Submitting Assignments

All of your work is due on the days and times indicated by the schedule below. You will submit your work electronically via CourseDen (or email if there happens to be server trouble). Your grade will drop by two grade scales (4 points) for every day that it is late, including weekends. If you are going to be absent the day that something is due, it remains your responsibility to make sure that your work is turned in on time. Failure to do so will result in your grade dropping. If you are having trouble with an assignment, come and talk to me **well ahead** of that assignment’s due date; I do not grant last minute extensions for assignments nor can I be of much help the night before an assignment is due. It is your responsibility to regularly back up your work and to ensure that the submitted product is formatted correctly. “My computer ate my file” and “I thought I uploaded the file” are not accepted excuses for late work, so I strongly suggest you save your work to a USB drive regularly (backing your work up on Google Drive or another cloud service might also be advisable) and double check that ALL of your submissions to CourseDen go through as planned. If you have questions or concerns about CourseDen, you should contact the Distance Learning office (<http://uwgonline.westga.edu/>) directly.

Grading and Revision Policies

Grades are based on student performance on each assignment. Simply turning in every assignment does not guarantee that you will receive the grade you want on those assignments, nor does earning a “good” grade on one assignment guarantee that you will earn a similar grade on the next assignment. The grading scale and standards I use are detailed in the “Grading Scale

and Guidelines for Formal Assignments” document on CourseDen. I do not offer extra credit for this class. I do accept revisions of analytical papers **if you meet with me** to discuss your plans for revision **within a week** of me handing the graded paper back to you. You should come to this meeting with your **revision plan/goals typed up or written out**. Revised papers do not necessarily earn higher grades, but I do guarantee that your grade will not drop in any way should you decide to attempt a revision. If you are revising a paper that was penalized for plagiarism, your old grade and your new grade will be averaged to determine the final grade that you will receive.

University Policies and Student Rights/Responsibilities

Please carefully review the following Common Language for all university course syllabi: http://www.westga.edu/assetsDept/vpaa/Common_Language_for_Course_Syllabi.pdf. It contains important material pertaining to university policies and responsibilities. These statements are updated as federal, state, university, and accreditation standards change, so you should review the information each semester.

Academic Honesty

The act of plagiarism—claiming someone else’s ideas, language, images, or other original materials as your own without giving full credit to your source—is a serious offense. As members of an academic community, it is important that we engage in responsible and honest communication with one another. Plagiarism, whether accidental or intentional, will result in a failing grade for assignment and will, as a result, negatively impact your overall grade. Repeat offenders will fail the course and might be subjected to additional action by the University.

If you are unclear about how to cite a source, ask me **before** you turn your work in. Sources you should consult before talking to me include:

- The department's website: <http://www.westga.edu/%7Eengdept/Plagiarism/index.html>
- The Bedford/St. Martin student site:
http://bcs.bedfordstmartins.com/rewriting2e/#t_526483
- The research and citation section of Purdue’s online writing lab:
<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/2/>

Submitting someone else's work as your own, resubmitting your own work done for another class, or collaborating with peers on individual assignments are also forms of academic dishonesty that will result in failing grades for the assignment in question.

Accessibility Services

UWG adheres to the American with Disabilities Act (ADA), which requires that accommodations be made to make programs accessible for people with disabilities. If you are a student with a disability, please make sure to register at the Accessibility Services Office and provide me with a copy of your Accommodation Request as soon as possible. The Accessibility Services Office is located at 123 Row Hall. You may call them at 678-839-6428 or visit their website at <http://www.westga.edu/counseling/4486.php>.

Classroom Environment

Since everyone is expected to participate in class, it is important that you all feel comfortable doing so. Some of the content we will be discussing involves topics or perspectives with which

you might not agree or feel wholly comfortable, and that is okay. Differing viewpoints are welcome in class discussions; however, disrespectful comments against specific individuals or groups will not be tolerated under any circumstances. In the event that such a statement is made, the speaker will be asked to leave class immediately and will be marked absent for the day. Disagreeing with someone is one thing, disrespecting or attacking him or her is another—do not do it. On a related note, it is disrespectful to both me and your fellow classmates to let your cell phones ring during our time together, so please turn off your phones before class. Other portable electronics should, likewise, be turned off during class unless you are given permission to use them for a specific project. If I see you text messaging, emailing, checking facebook, or doing work for another class, I will ask you to leave and mark you as absent.

Additional Help

I am always happy to meet with you outside of class to discuss readings, your progress in the class, or any other questions/concerns/ideas you might have. I will be in my office during the office hours listed at the top of this syllabus. (On the occasion that I need to reschedule office hours, you will be given as much advanced notice about these changes as possible.) If you are unable to come to office hours, let me know and we'll figure out another time to meet that is convenient for us both. I am also happy to answer specific questions over email and will do so as quickly as I can. That said, please don't panic if you don't hear from me right away, especially if you send your email at, say, midnight. If, however, I haven't responded in 24 hours, feel free to send a follow up email.

The University Writing Center is another excellent resource that I encourage you to take advantage of as all writing benefits from multiple sets of eyes; indeed, professional writers workshop their pieces all of the time. You may go to the Writing Center at any stage in your writing process. For more information or to make an appointment, call 678-839-6513, visit TLC 1201, or email writing@westga.edu.

UWG Cares

College can sometimes feel stressful. Please know that everyone at UWG is committed to supporting you to the best of our abilities; we've been in your shoes. If at any point during the semester you or someone you know starts to feel overwhelmed, I'd encourage you to call the Counseling Center (it's free and anything you discuss can remain confidential) at 678-839-6428. If you need me to help you find a particular support service or walk with you to an office, I am happy to do that; you need to know, however, that I am legally obligated to report any incident of sexual assault. If you are worried about someone who does not seem to want to ask for help, visit <http://www.westga.edu/uwgcares/> to file an anonymous report on that person. In case of emergency, don't be afraid to call national help lines, like the national suicide prevention lifeline at 800-273-8255 or the national sexual assault hotline at 800-656-4673.

Schedule of Readings and Assignments (due the date on they are listed)

This syllabus is a general plan for the course and might be modified as the semester progresses to meet course objectives and address the needs of the class. Most (if not all) of the changes made will be in consultation with the class as a whole. I will announce any changes made in class before sending an updated syllabus. Unless otherwise noted, you are to read the **entire** named section in the Broadview anthology, **including the introductions**. Readings from the Cambridge companion are marked as such.

Week One: Introductions

Aug. 10	Course overview: establishing expectations. Historical overview: defining medieval. <i>Email me your top three choices for Getting Medieval by midnight on Friday, 8/12</i>
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Week Two: Anglo-Saxon Community—Heroic and Christian Ideals

Aug. 15	Anglo-Saxon Britain and Old English: Christian Eternity. <i>Homework due:</i> “The Medieval Period” (xxxiii-xlvi—stop at “After the Norman Conquest”—and lxx—start at “Language and Prosody”—to end); Bede, from <i>Ecclesiastical History of the English People</i> ; Exeter Book Elegies; “The Dream of the Rood”
Aug. 17	Heroic immortality. <i>Homework due:</i> “The Battle of Maldon”; “Battle of Brunanburg”; “The Story of Cynewulf and Cyneheard” (“B” from the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle); “Judith”

Week Three: Britain’s Continental Past

Aug. 22	Epic origin stories. <i>Homework due:</i> <i>Beowulf</i> (to page 93—stop before section 27); O'Brien O'Keefe, “Values and Ethics in Heroic Literature” (e-reserve)
Aug. 24	<i>Getting Medieval: Pagan and Christian worldviews</i> Old English as a cultural phenomenon, or giving Latin a run for its money. <i>Homework due:</i> Finish <i>Beowulf</i> ; Alfred's “Preface” to <i>Pastoral Care</i>

Week Four: From Anglo-Saxon to Anglo-Norman (or the French Arrive!)

Aug. 29	Anglo-Norman Britain. <i>Homework due:</i> “The Medieval Period” (xlvi-lx—skip “Wales, Scotland, Ireland” and stop at “Cultural Expression in the Fourteenth Century”); Geoffrey of Monmouth, the <i>History of the Kings of Britain</i> ; Wace, <i>Roman de Brut</i> (e-reserve); Layamon, <i>Brut</i> (e-reserve); Thomas of England, <i>Le Roman de Tristran</i> (e-reserve); Marie de France, “Bisclavret,” “Lanval,” and “Chevrefoil”
Aug. 31	Adapting and translating French. Introduce Analytical Paper. <i>Homework due:</i> “Sir Orfeo”

Week Five: The Rise of Middle English and the Birth of Romance

Sept. 5	No class: Labor Day.
Sept 7	The Matter of England. <i>Homework due:</i> Scase, “Re-inventing the vernacular: Middle English language and its literature” (Cambridge, pp. 11-23); <i>Athelston</i> (http://d.lib.rochester.edu/teams/text/salisbury-athelston)

Week Six: From Folk Hero to Chivalric Knight

Sept. 12	Formulaic style and thematic variety. <i>Homework due:</i> Chism, “Romance” (Cambridge, pp. 57-69); “The Medieval Period” lx-lxiii (stop at “Fifteenth-Century Transitions”); <i>Sir Gawain and the Green Knight</i> Fitts One and Two
Sept. 14	<i>Getting Medieval: Differing Approaches to Romance</i> <i>Homework due:</i> finish <i>Sir Gawain and the Green Knight</i>

Week Seven: The Layperson Speaks

Sept. 19	Writing Workshop: articulating and developing an argument. <i>Bring a copy of your draft to class.</i>
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Sept. 21	Female voices. <i>Homework due:</i> Kempe, <i>The Book of Margery Kempe</i> (Proem, Preface, chapters 1-3, 11, 51-55 and 86); Norwich, <i>A Revelation of Love</i> (chapters 1-3, 5, 7, 11, 50-51, and 86); <i>Analytical Papers due by noon tomorrow (9/22).</i>
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Week Eight: The Layperson Speaks Cont'd

Sept. 26	Male voices. <i>Homework due:</i> Langland, <i>Piers Plowman</i> Prologue; excerpts from Passus 5 and Passus 7 (e-reserve “Langland, Piers Plowman 3”); Gower, lines 1-332 from Book 1 of <i>Confessio Amantis</i> (e-reserve: “Vol. 1 Gower Contexts,” pp. 8-12; read introduction on pp. 1-3 too); Kruger, “The uses of Middle English debate/dialogue and dream” (Cambridge, pp. 78-82 of “Dialogue, debate, and dream vision”)
Sept. 28	Getting Medieval: social interaction/social order. <i>Homework due:</i> General Prologue to <i>Canterbury Tales</i> Last day to withdraw from class with a “W” is 9/30 at midnight.

Week Nine: Traveling in England

Oct. 3	Father of English literature? <i>Homework due:</i> Scanlon, “Geoffrey Chaucer” (Cambridge, pp.172-78—starting with “Chaucer began work...”); Chaucer, <i>The Miller's Prologue and Tale</i>
Oct. 5	Non-normative identities. <i>Homework due:</i> Chaucer, <i>The Pardoner's Prologue and Tale</i>

Week Ten: Traveling in England Cont'd

Oct. 10	Getting Medieval: misogyny and the feminine voice <i>Homework due:</i> Chaucer, <i>The Wife of Bath's Prologue and Tale</i>
Oct. 12	Unfinished or unfinishable? <i>Homework due:</i> Chaucer, <i>The Prioress's Prologue and Tale</i> ; Chaucer's Retraction

Week Eleven: Traveling Beyond England

Oct. 17	Crossing the borders of time and space. <i>Homework due:</i> <i>The Travels of John Mandeville</i> ; Margery Kempe in Jerusalem (e-reserve) Davenport, “Voyages and otherworld journeys” (e-reserve)
Oct. 19	Getting Medieval: encountering non-British people and places <i>Homework due:</i> <i>The Voyage of Saint Brendan</i> (e-reserve); <i>The Vision of Tundale</i> , lines 1-310; (http://d.lib.rochester.edu/teams/text/foster-three-purgatory-poems-vision-of-tundale)

Week Twelve: Celtic Borderlands

Oct. 24	Welsh perspectives. Introduce Term Paper Requirements. <i>Homework due:</i> “Medieval Period” (liv-lv—stop at “The Thirteenth Century”); <i>Y Goddoddin</i> ; First and Second Branches of the <i>Mabinogi</i> ; Dumville, “Celtic' Visions of England” (e-reserve);
Oct. 26	Scottish and Irish perspectives. <i>Homework due:</i> Early Irish Lyrics; “Cúchulainn's Boyhood Deeds” (e-reserve); Henryson, “Prolog,” “Taill of the Cok and the Jasp” and “Taill of the Lyoun and the Mous” from <i>Morall Fabillis</i> (e-reserve: “Robert Henryson” supplement, pp. 1-15)

Week Thirteen: Performing Community

Oct. 31	Performing Belief. <i>Homework due:</i> <i>Mankind</i> ; Beckwith, “Drama” (Cambridge pp. 83-92, skip “Chester Plays”)
Nov. 3	Getting Medieval: the sacred and the profane York “The Crucifixion”; Wakefield <i>Second Shepherds' Play</i>

	<i>Last day to complete Middle English recitations is tomorrow by 3pm.</i>
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Week Fourteen: The End of an Era?

Nov. 7	Civil War and Political Nostalgia. <i>Homework due:</i> “The Medieval Period” lxiii-lxv—stop at “Language and Prosody”; Malory, <i>Morte Darthur</i> (Book 8); Caxton's Preface (<i>Morte</i> in Context)
Nov. 9	Workshop: working with sources <i>Term Paper Proposals and Annotated Bibliographies due by beginning of class.</i>

Week Fifteen: Term Papers

Nov. 14	Workshop: TBD by class.
Nov. 16	Workshop: revising vs. editing (and why both are important!)

Week Sixteen: Thanksgiving Break

Nov. 21	No class.
Nov. 23	No class.

Week Seventeen: Conclusions

Nov. 28	Peer review of Term Papers: <i>bring a printed copy of your draft to class.</i>
Nov. 30	Final Exam Review/Course Evaluations. <i>Term Papers due by noon tomorrow (12/1)</i>

Final Exam: Monday, December 5th, 11-1pm