

English 4106-02W: Studies in Genre (Arthurian Literature)

Fall 2015 * M/W 2:00-3:20 * HUM 209

Dr. Leah Haught

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Office Hours: M/W, 3:30-5:30; Th, 11:30-3:30; alternate/virtual meetings available by appt.



Course Description

Few narrative traditions from the Middle Ages continue to be as popular today as those involving King Arthur and the knights of the Round Table. From the earliest references to Arthur, to the more fully developed plots of later romance, the Arthurian world has captured the imagination of historians and poets alike. The same complexity and diversity that has contributed to the legend's popularity in a wide variety of countries and cultural contexts also, however, effectively ensures that no two retellings of it are the same. Among the Arthurian legends there are tales of prophecy and magic, of love lost and found, of adventure and heroism, of spiritualities tested and rewarded, and, equally important, of conflict between families, friends, countries, and even ideals. In short, the Arthurian tradition is more accurately a set of related but distinct traditions, continuously adapted to reflect the values and concerns of the eras or audiences for which they are being reinterpreted. In this course, we will begin to explore the invention and long cultural afterlife of medieval conceptions of the Arthurian legend by reading a diverse assortment of medieval and post-medieval texts that will help us consider not only how the legend itself has continued to evolve, but also exactly what constitutes an "Arthurian" text. Most Middle English texts will be read in the original language; texts in other languages will be read in translation.

Course Objectives

- Students will learn about the distinguishing characteristics of a literary genre and develop and appreciation of how that genre evolves into many diverse forms.

- Students will develop an advanced critical facility in the formal analysis of a specific literary genre.
- Students will be able to identify and use some of the most significant theories and methods that shape the contemporary study of a specific literary genre.
- Students will read and analyze works from a specific literary genre written during different historical eras and from different national or cultural perspectives.
- 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.

Required Texts

The Romance of Arthur: An Anthology of Medieval Texts in Translation. Ed. James Wilhem. Rev. Ed. (Garland Reference Library 9780815315117).

Sir Gawain and the Green Knight. Ed. and trans. James Winny (Broadview 9780921149927).

Malory, Thomas. *Le Morte Darthur*. Ed. Stephen H.A. Shepard (Norton 9780393974645).

Sword and the Stone (Disney 1963), which you can view digitally (via Amazon, Google Play, Vudu, etc.) or in hard copy (via library reserves).

Tennyson, Alfred (Lord). *Idylls of the King*. Ed. W.J. Rolfe (Dover 978-0486437958).

Twain, Mark. *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* (Signet 978-0451529589).

Supplementary readings will be available online or through 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 come to class not only having read the assigned materials, but also being prepared to talk about them in detail. 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. To that end, you should bring the assigned texts to class on the day they are being discussed. You should also bring any notes you took while reading, and you should take notes during class discussions. If I get the sense that the class as a whole is not doing the reading, quizzes or other forms of graded, in-class work will be assigned.
- *Panel Discussions* (10%): Working with a group of your peers, you will lead a half hour discussion on one of the topics outlined by the reading schedule below. These discussions should engage your peers by illuminating the class readings related to that topic, but they should also exhibit a broader consideration of the topic in question, which means some additional research/reading as a group. An effective visual should accompany your discussion.
- *Adaptation Presentation* (10%): Drawing on the discussions we've had throughout the semester, each student will chose a text that they think might meaningfully be understood

as an Arthurian adaptation. These do not need to be literal to be effective, and your text might include a wide range of mediums (book, movie, game, graphic novel, etc.) Each student will present their choice and explain their rationale in an oral “pitch” during the last week of class. All choices must be approved by me ahead of these presentations.

- *Response Papers* (20%): At several points in the semester you will be asked to reflect on the work we've been doing in and for class in a two page (around 1000 words) response paper. While not formal essays, these responses should be grounded in specific examples from the readings and class discussions, exhibiting your ability to think critically about both and extend the conversations being had in a written format.
- *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 effect 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 one-third 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. 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/>).

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 “Grading Scale and Guidelines for Formal Assignments” document on CourseDen. I do not offer extra credit for this class. I do accept revisions of response papers **if you meet with me** to discuss your plans for revision **within a week** of me handing the graded paper back to you. 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.

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. Because these statements are updated as federal, state, university and accreditation standards change, 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 happy to meet with you outside of class to discuss readings, your progress on a project, or any other questions/concerns 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.

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 out a revised syllabus.

Week One: Introductions

Aug. 24	Historical overview: whose once and future king? Course overview: establishing expectations.
Aug. 26	<i>Top three choices for panel discussion topics due.</i> Folk hero or historical person? The earliest references. <i>Readings: Culhwch and Olwen (Romance pp 25-58); "Arthur in the Latin Chronicles" (Romance pp. 3-9); "Arthur in the Early Welsh Tradition" (Romance pp. 11-23)</i>

Week Two: A Legend is Born

Aug. 31	Norman backgrounds and Influences. <i>Readings: Geoffrey of Monmouth, History of the Kings of Britain (Romance pp. 59-93); Wace, Roman de Brut (Romance 95-108); Layamon Brut (109-19); contemporary responses to Geoffrey (e-reserve); Gerald of Wales, The Education of Princes (e-reserve)</i>
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Sept. 2	<i>Readings:</i> The <i>Alliterative Morte Arthure</i> (Romance pp. 489-527); Lynch, "Imperial Arthur: home and away" (e-reserve) Response one due by noon, September 3.
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Week Three: Britain Invades France (Kinda)

Sept. 7	No class: Labor Day.
Sept. 9	Panel Discussion One: Courtly Love <i>Readings:</i> Chrétien de Troyes, <i>Lancelot, or The Knight of the Cart</i> (Romance pp. 121-99); Marie de France, <i>Lanval</i> (e-reserve)

Week Four: Conquering the Past/Romancing the Past

Sept. 14	<i>Readings:</i> <i>Sir Gawain and the Green Knight</i> (Winny); Gilbert, "Arthurian Ethics" (e-reserve)
Sept. 16	Panel Discussion Two: The Many Faces of Sir Gawain <i>Readings:</i> <i>The Rise of Gawain, Nephew of Arthur</i> (Romance pp. 365-99); <i>The Wedding of Sir Gawain and Dame Ragnell</i> (Romance pp. 467-87) Response paper two due by noon, September 17.

Week Five: A Narrative to Consume All Narratives

Sept. 21	<i>Readings:</i> Malory, "Merlin" (pp. 3-40), "The Death of Merlin and the War with Five Kings" (pp. 78-83) [***Use Chart on p. li to see titles and page numbers***]; Lambert, "Shame and Guilt" (pp. 849-56 in the back of your Norton editions)
Sept. 23	<i>Readings:</i> Malory, "Balin: Knight with the Two Swords" and "The Wedding of King Arthur" (pp. 40-77)

Week Six: Malory Cont'd

Sept. 28	<i>Readings:</i> Malory, "Arthur and Accolon" and "Gawain, Ywain, and Marhalt" (pp. 83-112)
Sept. 30	Panel Discussion Three: Chivalry <i>Readings:</i> Malory, "Tale of Sir Gareth of Orkney" (pp.177-227) Response paper three due by noon, October 1.

Week Seven: Malory Cont'd.

Oct. 5	<i>Readings:</i> Malory, "Noble Tale of Sir Lancelot du Lake" (pp. 151-77) and "Lancelot and Elaine" (pp. 462-90)
Oct. 7	Panel Discussion Four: Arthurian Gender Roles <i>Readings:</i> Malory, "The Poisoned Apple" and "The Fair Maid of Astolat" (pp. 588-618)

Week Eight: Malory Cont'd

Oct. 12	<i>Reading:</i> Malory, "The Great Tournament," "The Knight of the Cart," and "The Healing of Sir Urry" (pp. 618-45)
Oct. 14	<i>Reading:</i> Malory, "The Most Piteous Tale of the Morte Arthure Saunz Guerdon" (pp. 646-98); Benson, "The Ending of the <i>Morte Darthur</i> " (e-reserve) Response paper four due by noon, October 15.

Week Nine: Legitimizing Queen and Country

Oct. 19	<i>Readings:</i> Rob Gossedge and Stephen Knight, "The Arthur of the sixteenth to nineteenth centuries" pp. 103-12 (e-reserve); Edmund Spenser, <i>Faerie Queen</i> , Book 1, Cantos 1-6 (e-reserve)
Oct. 21	Term paper requirements introduced. <i>Readings:</i> Edmund Spenser, <i>Faerie Queen</i> , Book 1, Cantos 7-12 (e-reserve)

Week Ten: Modeling Victorian Virtue

Oct. 26	<i>Readings:</i> Rob Gossedge and Stephen Knight, “The Arthur of the sixteenth to nineteenth centuries” pp. 112-19 (e-reserve); Tennyson, “The Lady of Shallot” (http://d.lib.rochester.edu/camelot/text/tennyson-lady-of-shalott-1842) and “Sir Galahad” (http://d.lib.rochester.edu/camelot/text/tennyson-sir-galahad); <i>Idylls</i> “Dedication” (pp. 1-2), “The Coming of Arthur” (pp. 2-15), “Gareth and Lynette” (pp. 16-52), “Balin and Balan” (pp. 97-113)
Oct. 28	Panel Discussion Five: Victorian Nostalgia <i>Readings:</i> Tennyson, <i>Idylls</i> , “Lancelot and Elaine” (pp.137-72), “The Last Tournament” (pp. 210-29), “Guinevere” (pp. 229-47), “The Passing of Arthur” (pp. 247-58), and “To the Queen” (pp. 259-60) Response paper five due by noon, October 29.

Week Eleven: Arthur Crosses the Ocean

Nov. 2	<i>Readings:</i> Lowell, “The Vision of Sir Launfal” (http://d.lib.rochester.edu/camelot/text/lowell-vision-of-sir-launfal); Teasdale, “Guenevere” (http://d.lib.rochester.edu/camelot/text/teasdale-guenevere); Hawthorne, “The Antique Ring” (e-reserve); and Pyle, excerpts from <i>The Story of King Arthur and His Knights</i> (e-reserve); Taylor and Brewer, “Arthur's 'Return' in the New World” (e-reserve)
Nov. 4	<i>Readings:</i> Twain, <i>Connecticut Yankee</i> (pp. 3-93).

Week Twelve: American Arthurs Cont'd

Nov. 9	<i>Readings:</i> Twain, <i>Connecticut Yankee</i> (pp. 94-231); Hoffman, “Mark's Merlin” (e-reserve)
Nov. 11	Panel Discussion Six: American Medievalism. <i>Readings:</i> Twain, <i>Connecticut Yankee</i> (pp. 232-343). Response paper six due by noon, November 12.

Week Thirteen: Modern Arthurian Adaptations (A Sampling)

Nov. 16	<i>Readings:</i> T.H. White, <i>Once and Future King</i> excerpts (e-reserve); watch Disney's <i>Sword and the Stone</i> . View/discuss other adaptations in class.
Nov. 18	Term Paper Proposals and Annotated Bibliographies due. Incorporating sources and organizing information workshop.

Week Fourteen: Break

Nov. 23	No class: Thanksgiving Recess.
Nov. 25	No class: Thanksgiving Recess.

Week Fifteen: Conclusions

Nov. 30	Presentations.
Dec. 2	Presentations. Take home exam assigned. Final papers are due by noon on Friday, 12/4.

Final Exam: Monday, December 7, 2-4:30