

English 4109/5106/02W: Film as Literature

A Knight at the Movies

Spring 2018 * T/R 12:30-1:45 * Pafford 308

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Office Hours: M: 11-1 online; T: 10-10:55 and 2:20-3:20; Th: 10-10:55 and 4:50-6; or by appt.



Course Description

Few figures have captured the public's imagination as completely and as consistently as that of the chivalric knight. Given the distinctly medieval origins of chivalry and knighthood alike, the persistent interest in both within contemporary culture might, at first, seem strange. In this course, we will use the medium of film to explore how the twentieth and twenty-first centuries have reinterpreted the figure of the knight to be emblematic of medieval AND modern fantasies about heroism, social mobility, gendered behavior, religious instruction, and national identity politics, among other topics. We will consider carefully the ongoing debates over the importance of historical accuracy in artistic representations of the past, the role films play in our understanding of the historical periods in question, and the emotional attachments we have to specific depictions of the Middle Ages.

Course Objectives

Students in this course will be able to:

- Understand and assess the traditions, conventions, and contexts associated with the study of film as literature.

- Apply critical thinking skills to the analysis, synthesis, and evaluation of information and ideas from diverse oral, written, and/or visual sources and to adapt writing techniques for a diverse, audience-driven, context-sensitive field.
- Conduct research, develop organizational strategies, and compose professional documents and oral presentations using the academic conventions of English Studies as a discipline.

Required Texts

This is a film class, so assigned films are the bulk of your “readings.” No viewing listed on the syllabus is optional and all films should be watched ahead of the day they will be discussed in class. For these reasons, you will probably find it convenient to have a subscription to a video service like Netflix, Hulu, or Amazon Prime (all of which have student rates), but that is by no means required. It is also possible to digitally “rent” most of the assigned films for between two and five dollars via Amazon or iTunes, among other possibilities. You can access these films through these means, too: the English Department library (2nd floor of TLC), the Ingram library, Kanopy (online service available through Ingram), the Georgia Public Library system, old-fashioned DVD rental, borrowing, or purchase.

As of 1/1/18 *Perceval* and *Willow* are the only two assigned movies not available to stream. Between the English Department library and Ingram, there is at least one copy of every film available for borrowing, and many instances there are two or three. Nevertheless, you will need to plan ahead to make sure you can access these films when needed, and you will also need to share. To that end, I would encourage you to set up screenings with your peers in the library, your dorm rooms, or your homes. Group screenings happen to be a great way a great way to experience films. I have scheduled a screening of *Perceval* (see schedule below), since it is the only film that we have a single copy of via Ingram library. Remember: films are our primary sources, so take good notes. I strongly recommend viewing films more than once, especially if you will be writing about said film.

I am not asking you to purchase any books for this class. All of supplementary, scholarly readings will be will be available online or through CourseDen.

Required Work

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

- *Daily Participation* (15%): You are expected to come to class not only having read/viewed 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 take notes while reading and bring those to class as well as take notes during class discussions. If I get the sense that the class as a whole is not doing the assigned work, quizzes or other forms of graded, in-class work will be assigned. I will post your participation grade twice: around midterm and at the end of the semester.
- *Scene Analysis Paper* (15%): a two and a half to three page paper focusing on the close, analytical reading of a scene of one of the films we have watched up to this point.

- *Movie Review* (15%): a two and a half to three page paper that offers a formal review of the narrative ambitions of one of the films we have watched since your last paper.
- *Syllabus Pitch Presentation* (15%): Working in groups, you will design a unit you would add to our syllabus if your group were responsible for teaching this class. You will then pitch your unit—based around a film—to your peers by way of a fifteen-minute formal presentation.
- *Term Paper* (30%): an five to seven 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* (10%): cumulative, writing intensive exam covering class reading, 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, as does showing up more than twenty-five minutes late. 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 one grade scale (two points) for every day that it is late, including weekends, and I will not accept work that is over a week late. 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, but I am happy to do everything in my power to help you produce work that you are proud of. 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—A+, A+/A, A, etc.— 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 scene analyses and movie reviews **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. Any late penalties associated with the original assignment will also be applied to your 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 writing center’s site: <https://www.westga.edu/academics/coah/writing>
- 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.

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 have been in your shoes. If at any point during the semester you or someone you know starts to feel overwhelmed, I would encourage you to call the Counseling Center (it is 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, do not 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 Homework and Assignments (due the date upon which 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. It is your responsibility to check CourseDen and your email regularly to ensure you are up to date on all class announcements, etc.

Week One: Introductions

Jan. 9	Course overview: establishing expectations.
Jan. 11	Cinematic medievalism and critical engagements with the past <i>Homework due:</i> Woods, “Authenticating Realism in Medieval Film”; Higson, “‘Medievalism,’ the period film, and the British Past”; and Eco “Dreaming of the Middle Ages” (all on e-reserve)

Week Two: Naming the Past—Arthur as Paradigm

Jan. 16	A bankable name <i>Homework due:</i> watch <i>Knights of the Round Table</i> (dir. Thorpe, 1954); read Harty, “Lights! Camelot! Action!” (e-reserve)
Jan. 18	The trouble with comprehensiveness. <i>Homework due:</i> watch <i>Excalibur</i> (dir. Boorman, 1981); explore film studies website Viewing of <i>Perceval tomorrow (1/19)</i> from 1:00 to 3:30 in TLC 1200

Week Three: Man or Legend?

Jan. 23	Textual “accuracy.” <i>Homework due:</i> watch <i>Perceval</i> (dir. Rohmer, 1978); read Williams, “Eric Rohmer”
Jan. 25	Historical “accuracy.” <i>Homework due:</i> watch <i>King Arthur</i> (dir. Fuqua, 2004); read Matthews, “Knightly Endeavor” (e-reserve)

Week Four: Arthurian Knighthood Reimagined

Jan. 30	Scene analysis workshop. <i>Homework due:</i> read Corrigan, “Film Terms and Topics for Film Analysis” (e-reserve)
Feb. 1	Democracy calls. <i>Homework due:</i> watch <i>Camelot</i> (dir. Logan, 1967) and <i>First Knight</i> (dir. Zucker, 1995) Scene analysis papers due by midnight tomorrow (2/2)

Week Five: Laughing at Past Ideals

Feb. 6	The joke is on them. <i>Homework due:</i> watch <i>Black Knight</i> (dir. Gilmer 2001) and <i>Knight’s Tale</i> (dir. Helgeland, 2001); read Finke and Shichtman, “Forever Young”
Feb. 8	The joke is on us. <i>Homework due:</i> watch <i>Monty Python and the Holy Grail</i> (dir. Gilliam and Jones, 1975); find and bring a movie review of the film to share with class

Week Six: Knight(s) Errant

Feb. 13	In the vein of romance. <i>Homework due:</i> watch <i>Ladyhawke</i> (dir. Donner, 1985); read Schnellbach, “Is <i>Ladyhawke</i> the Best Fairy Tale of Them All?” (https://www.tor.com/2015/03/13/ladyhawke-revisionist-fairy-tale/) and Canby’s NYT review (http://www.nytimes.com/movie/review?res=9B00E5D61338F931A25757C0A963948260)
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Feb. 15	In the vein of fantasy. <i>Homework due:</i> watch <i>Willow</i> (dir. Howard, 1988); read Muir, “Cult Movie Review” (http://reflectionsonfilmandtelevision.blogspot.com/2014/05/cult-movie-review-willow-1988.html)
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Week Seven: Outlaw as Knight

Feb. 20	Reluctant heroism <i>Homework due:</i> watch <i>Robin Hood</i> (dir. Irvin, 1991); read Johnson, “Agamben’s <i>Homo Sacer</i> ” (e-reserve)
Feb. 22	Ideological heroism <i>Homework due:</i> watch <i>Robin Hood</i> (dir. Scott, 2010); read, Raglan, “Robin Hood” (e-reserve)

Week Eight: Medieval Multiculturalism

Feb. 27	As historical fantasy. <i>Homework due:</i> watch <i>Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves</i> (dir. Reynolds, 1991); read Schubert, “Managing a Multicultural Work Force” (e-reserve) Last day to withdraw with a “W” is tomorrow (2/28).
Mar. 1	As a joke. <i>Homework due:</i> watch <i>Robin Hood Men in Tights</i> (dir. Brooks, 1993)

Week Nine: Fighting With a Saint

Mar. 6	<i>Homework due:</i> watch <i>The Passion of Joan of Arc</i> (dir. Dryer, 1928); read Bernau, “Iron Maidens” (e-reserve) and Finke and Shichtman, “Politics of Hagiography” but skip “postwar Joan” section (e-reserve)
Mar. 8	Term paper requirements introduced. <i>Homework due:</i> watch <i>The Messenger: The Story of Joan of Arc</i> (dir. Besson, 1999) Movie reviews due by midnight tomorrow (3/9)

Week Ten: Fighting Foreigners

Mar. 13	Crusades as modern. <i>Homework due:</i> watch <i>Kingdom of Heaven</i> (dir. Scott, 2004); read Haydock, “Theaters of War”
Mar. 15	Syllabus pitch presentation requirements introduced. Crusades as multicultural. <i>Homework due:</i> watch <i>Arn: The Knight Templar</i> (dir. Filth, 2007)

Week Eleven: Break

Mar. 20	No class: Spring Break
Mar. 22	No class: Spring Break

Week Twelve: A long time ago...?

Mar. 27	Making “old” ideals accessible. <i>Homework due:</i> watch <i>Henry V</i> (dir. Branagh, 1989) and <i>Braveheart</i> (dir. Gibson, 1995); read Helmbold, “Take a Soldier, Take a King” and Maley, “Braveheart” (both on e-reserve)
Mar. 29	Online class. <i>Homework due:</i> watch <i>Star Wars</i> episode IV (dir. Lucas, 1977)

Week Thirteen: Knights in Outer Space

Apr. 3	No class: Scholar’s Day. <i>Homework due:</i> Watch <i>Star Wars</i> episode V (dir. Kershner, 1980)
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Apr. 5	<i>Homework due:</i> Watch <i>Star Wars</i> episode VI (dir. Marquand, 1983); read Rubey, "Not So Long Ago nor Far Away" (e-reserve) <i>Proposals and Annotated Bibliographies due by midnight tomorrow (4/6)</i>
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Week Fourteen: Workshopping

Apr. 10	Term paper workshop.
Apr. 12	Presentation workshop.

Week Fifteen: Presentations

Apr. 17	Presentations.
Apr. 19	Presentations.

Week Sixteen: Conclusions

Apr. 24	Peer review of final papers
Apr. 26	Course evaluations. Discuss take home exam. <i>Final papers are due by midnight on Sunday, April 29</i>

Final Exam: Thursday, May 3, 11-1