

University of Florida
Medieval and Early Modern Studies¹

MEM 2500, Tales of King Arthur
Spring 2014
T per 8-9, Th per. 9 Turl 2305

Instructor: Dr. Judy Shoaf jshoaf@ufl.edu
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Phone: (352) 371-7149
Office Hours: TBA and by appointment

Course description: The great literary works of the Arthurian tradition and the manner in which the tales of King Arthur serve, from their 6th century Celtic origins to the present, to articulate the interests and values of different social groups throughout history.

Course Objectives: By the end of the course, it is expected that students will

- Understand how the fictional Arthurian universe evolved in the varying political and social situations of England, Wales, and France in the 12th through 15th centuries.
- Become familiar with the main characters of the Arthurian universe, and able to identify variations on their “canonical” forms in new works.
- Engage at least superficially with the attitudes towards Arthur of historians, archaeologists, literary scholars and philologists, folklorists, and enthusiasts of various kinds.
- Gain experience in communicating both in a scholarly discipline (literature) and by addressing knowledgeable peers in an oral presentation.
- Want to read more.

Books to buy (in the editions indicated):

Geoffrey of Monmouth, *History of the Kings of Britain*, trans. **Faletra** (Broadview)

Chretien de Troyes, *Yvain, or the Knight with the Lion*, trans. Cline

Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, trans. Winny (Broadview) aka **SGGK**

Quest of the Holy Grail, trans. Matarasso (Penguin), aka **Grail Quest**

Thomas **Malory**, *Le Morte Darthur*, abridged by Helen Cooper (Oxford)²

Other readings are available online, in the Sakai (UF e-learning) website, accessible via <https://lss.at.ufl.edu/>

¹ This Medieval and Early Modern Studies course is administered through the Department of Languages, Literatures, and Cultures, 310 Pugh Hall.

² The Oxford World Classics Malory, ed. Cooper, is also available as an e-book. If you prefer to use the e-book, that is acceptable for class. Other editions of Malory will not be acceptable, unfortunately.

Grades will depend on several types of written materials and oral participation.

- Casual writing, graded primarily for content.
 - Short-answer quiz on the readings in EVERY class where reading is due.
 - Short exam on the early materials.
- Formal writing, graded for style and organization as well as content:
 - Short paper (4-5 pp.) on one of the poetic romances.
 - Take-home essay, answering specific questions about the topic of the final presentation.
- Other participation:
 - Class participation
 - Presentation in a final "Round Table" discussion during the last week of the term. These presentations will be based on the final topic (the same one used for the take-home essay).

Absences. Daily attendance is expected. More than 2 unexcused absences (after the first day) will affect the final grade. Absences will be excused in accordance with UF policy. Acceptable reasons include illness, religious holidays, military obligation, and the twelve-day rule.

(<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>).

Quizzes cannot be made up, but a student absent with or without an excuse should complete the reading and meet with the instructor outside of class to discuss it briefly.

Lateness. A student who arrives to class late risks missing the daily quiz, which can't be made up. The student should however remind the instructor after class that he or she was present.

Cell phones, texting, and laptops. Cell phones should not be audible or be in use for communication at any time during class. The use of a laptop or pad during the class should be discussed with the instructor, and may be forbidden if it is disruptive.

Grade policy: This course satisfies the H and N General Education requirement, provided the student does not take it S-U. For further information on UF's Grading Policy, see:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx#hgrades>

<http://www.isis.ufl.edu/minusgrades.html>

Online Course Evaluation Process: Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course based on 10 criteria. These evaluations are conducted online at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results>.

Academic Honesty: UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, "We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: "On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment." The Honor Code (<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honorcode/>)

specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor or TAs in this class.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the Instructor when requesting accommodation. Contact the Disability Resources Center (<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/>) for information about available resources for students with disabilities.

Counseling and Mental Health Resources: Students facing difficulties completing the course or who are in need of counseling or urgent help should call the on-campus Counseling and Wellness Center (352-392-1575; <http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/>).

Assignments and schedule

Readings listed are due on the date for which they are listed. Students should note that the syllabus is a guideline and that there may be changes to the class schedule.

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Jan 7 Who was Arthur? The Age of Arthur

Jan 9 Four historical records (Faletra 218-238, 281, and online “Welsh Annals”)

Jan 14 Arthur the legendary warlord (Geraint Elegy, Excerpts from Gododdin Elegies and abridged version of *Culhwch and Olwen*, online)

Jan 16 Arthur and the landscape (Marvels of Britain, report of the Canons of Laon, lives of some saints; online)

Jan. 21 Geoffrey of Monmouth, *History of the Kings of Britain* (Faletra pp. 41-58 & 112-129 & 143-173)

Jan. 23 Geoffrey of Monmouth, *History*, pp. 173-199.

Jan 28 Medieval reactions to Geoffrey (Faletra); **Exam**

Jan. 30 Marie de France, *Lanval* (online)

Feb. 4 Beroul’s *Tristan* (excerpt)

Feb. 6 Chaucer, *Wife of Bath’s Tale*

Feb. 11 Chretien de Troyes, *Yvain*, to line 2304

Feb. 13 *Yvain*, lines 2305-4480

Feb. 18 *Yvain*, finish. **Choose Round Table Topic.**

Feb. 20. SGGK. Parts 1 & 2

Feb. 25 SGGK Parts 3 & 4

Feb. 27 SGGK: discussion of language assignment **SGGK Language Assignment Due**

Spring Break

Mar. 11 Eric Rohmer, *Perceval* film shown in class (no reading due)

Mar. 13 *Quest of the Holy Grail*, pp. 32-134 **Literary Paper Due**

Mar. 18 *Quest of the Holy Grail*, pp. 134-207

Mar. 20 *Quest of the Holy Grail*, finish

Mar. 25 Malory, Coming of Arthur, 3-81;

Mar. 27 Malory, Elaine of Astolat, pp. 403-444

April 1 Malory, Lancelot and Guinevere, pp. 445-505

Apr 3 Malory: Death of Arthur, pp 505-527

Apr 8 Tennyson, Idylls of the King, excerpts (online).

Apr 10 Tennyson and Lowell. **Take-Home Essay Topic** passed out

Apr 15 Round Table #1 **Take-Home Essay Due.**

Apr 17 Round Table #2

Apr 22 Round Table #3