



English 350: Middle English (1200-1485)

Fall 2013
2:00 pm - 3:15 pm TR
Ross 1090
Line Number: 13891
Credit Hours: 3

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Course Objectives

This course is designed to introduce students to the literature and language of the Middle English period through a historical approach in order to develop a more sophisticated understanding of the distinction and relationship between text and context. To facilitate this goal, we will limit our focus to the evolution of the Arthurian legend during the Middle Ages. As the primary goal of the course is to equip students with the historical knowledge necessary to continue to read and to enjoy Middle English texts, the majority of texts will be read in translation. A secondary goal, however, is to equip students with the linguistic tools needed to read texts in Middle English, and so a few will be read in their original language.

As with any of the 300-level period courses, emphasis will also be placed on the following:

- Close reading and/or textual analysis: students should be able to recognize and analyze (a) rhetorical techniques and conventions (tropes and figures, methods of persuasion, grammatical constructions, etc.), (b) narrative techniques and conventions (story, discourse, character, etc.), (c) critical interpretative vocabulary appropriate to the selected text.
- Proper use of external research materials appropriate to the course's content. The student should be able to use appropriate bibliographical tools to discover essays on specific literary texts (e.g., MLA Bibliography), and know the difference between juried and non-juried sources. S/he should understand and respond to the critiques and analyses of others. The student should be able to demonstrate familiarity with and incorporate useful reference materials (e.g., *Dictionary of National Biography*, *Dictionary of Literary Biography*), and other tools for historical contextualization. S/he should be able to write knowledgeably about individual texts' placement within literary, social, and political history. S/he should also master the proper use of the MLA citation system.

Required Texts and Materials

- Layamon. *Layamon's Arthur: The Arthurian Section of Layamon's Brut (lines 9229-14297)*. Trans. by W.R.J Barron, S.C. Weinberg. 2nd ed. Chippenham: U of Exeter P, 2002.
- Marie de France. *The Lais of Marie de France*. Trans. by Glyn S. Burgess, Keith Busby. 2nd ed. London: Penguin, 1999.
- *Middle English Romances*. Ed. Stephen H.A. Shepherd. Norton Critical Edition. New York: W.W. Norton, 1995.
- *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*. Trans. by Marie Borroff. Norton Critical Edition. New York: W. W. Norton, 2010.
- Malory, Thomas. *Sir Thomas Malory's Morte Darthur: A New Modern English Translation Based on the Winchester Manuscript*. Ed. & trans. Dorsey Armstrong. Anderson: Parlor Press, 2009.

Additional readings—both primary and secondary—will be made available online via the course's Blackboard site. Please be aware that there are numerous locations on campus that offer free printing!

Some valuable online resources include:

- Oxford English Dictionary (<http://library.unco.edu/dbasesalph.htm#o>)
- Oxford Dictionary of National Biography (<http://library.unco.edu/dbasesalph.htm#o>)

- Dictionary of Literary Biography (<http://library.unco.edu/dbasesalph.htm#d>)
- Middle English Dictionary (<http://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/med/>)
- Medieval Bestiary (<http://bestiary.ca/>)

Attendance & Participation

As with any class, it is vital that you attend every session and come fully prepared; in other words, please have the readings completed by the class period for which they are listed. You are responsible for all of the readings on the schedule, whether or not we have time to discuss them in class. *Please remember that “reading” an assignment involves a close and detailed analysis, in which you make notes regarding significant passages or ideas, and become as thoroughly familiar with the assigned material as you can.* It's **never** a bad idea to keep a "reading journal" in which you sketch out defining traits of characters, major plot points, *et cetera*, especially when we get to Malory!

Attendance is required and will be taken at the beginning of every class. **More than FIVE (5) unexcused absences will be grounds for failure in the course. Excused absences will require medical or other official documentation.** Unexcused absences include but *are not limited to* non-life threatening illness, car trouble, general sleepiness, and non-emergency doctor (or advisor) appointments. NEVER assume an absence is excused unless you have it **in writing** from me. It is your responsibility to keep track of how many absences you accrue over the course of the semester. Arriving late to or departing early from class (i.e., ten minutes) = ½ absence. Missing 30 minutes or more of class = 1 absence.

Our discussions will arise from looking closely at the literary texts so you **must** bring the assigned text(s) to class each day. I will feel free to mark you as absent if you do not have the proper text(s) on your desk and open to the appropriate page(s). Some of the readings are longer than others; please pay close attention to the reading schedule and allow yourself sufficient time for each assigned reading.

If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to find out from a classmate if there are changes to the course schedule. I expect you to find out what you missed from another student and to come fully prepared—without excuses—to the next class meeting. In-class work cannot be made up unless I am informed in advance that you cannot attend that class meeting. Online quizzes cannot be made up.

Because of the nature of group activities and discussion-oriented class periods, it is important that you respect the beliefs, backgrounds, and ideas of one another. While I do not require you to accept my beliefs or those of other students, I do require that you treat one another with respect and consideration. Also, to avoid disrupting your classmates, please keep all cell phones, laptop computers, and other electronic devices **turned off and out of sight** during class.

Participation will account for 15% of the semester grade. Missing more than three classes other than for documented medical/personal emergencies will reduce your participation grade. Your grade for participation will be holistic, but you can keep the following in mind (borrowed and revised from Professor Desjardins):

- **A-level Participator**: Earning the maximum participation points possible, outstanding contributors miss two or fewer classes, and are almost never late. They **often** contribute to class (that is, several ***on-point*** contributions per class period). Moreover, their contributions in class reflect thorough preparation. Ideas offered are almost always substantive, frequently provide genuine insight, and enhance, if not direct class discussion. Arguments are intelligent and persuasively presented.
- **B-level Participator**: Earning 85% of possible participation points, good contributors miss three or fewer classes, and rarely show up late. They contribute **consistently** to class. Contributions in class reflect considerable preparation. Ideas offered are typically substantive, provide good insight, and sometimes direct class discussion. Arguments, when presented, are generally well substantiated and quite persuasive.

- C-level Participant: Earning 75% of the possible participation points, adequate contributors miss four or fewer classes, and are sometimes tardy. They **sometimes** contribute to class (that is, maybe they speak up once or twice a week). Their contributions in class reflect satisfactory preparation. Ideas offered are sometimes substantive, prove generally insightful, but seldom offer a major new direction for the discussion. Arguments are sometimes presented, somewhat substantiated, and only sometimes persuasive.
- Unsatisfactory Contributor: Unsatisfactory contributors seldom, if ever talk, contribute little to class discussion, and/or seldom offer ideas and arguments that are intelligent, thoughtful, or supported. So what does this mean? If you come to class and sit quietly over the course of the semester, you will receive a zero for participation. **Attendance does not equal participation.**

How can students participate in class?

- Offer interpretations of characters, passages, etc.
- Compare story with previous assigned readings
- Bring in relevant material from other classes to shed light on readings
- Ask questions—of instructor as well as each other (i.e., “I’m not quite sure why you’ve interpreted this story in this way; can you elaborate on how you’ve reached this conclusion?”)
- Offer further evidence to support a classmate’s theory
- Offer opposing/alternative viewpoints to those offered in class

Policy on Electronic Devices in the Classroom

Students are not allowed to use laptops or other electronic devices (with the exception of approved e-readers—see below) during class with the exception of students who have a documented reason for needing a laptop in the classroom. Also, to avoid disrupting your classmates, please keep all cell phones and other electronic devices turned off and out of sight during class.

I do allow kindles and other e-readers provided that they are approved by me at the beginning of the semester (i.e., the first week of classes) and they have large screens that allow for note-taking (and that the screen stays consistently on the text being discussed in class and does not, say, accidentally stray over to Facebook, etc.).

Credits and Workload Expectations

For undergraduate courses, one credit is defined as equivalent to an average of three hours of learning effort per week (over a full semester) necessary for an average student to achieve an average grade (C) in the course. For example, a student taking a three credit course that meets for three hours a week should expect to spend an additional six hours a week on coursework outside the classroom.

Course Requirements

- In-Class Participation. See above for details, as well as below.
 - Consistent attendance and on-point participation will count toward 15% of each student’s grade.
 - Missing more than three classes other than for documented medical/personal emergencies will reduce a student’s participation grade.
- Online Daily Reading Quizzes.
 - These will be made available through Blackboard under "Quizzes."
 - You will have 15 minutes to complete each quiz (quizzes automatically submit when fifteen-minute mark is reached). DO NOT open the quiz until you are ready to complete it. Once you start, you must finish!
 - All of the quizzes will be made available until the beginning of the class period for which the reading is due. Each quiz draws random questions from a larger pool of questions, so this is where careful reading notes comes in handy!
 - Each student is allowed TWO (2) quiz resets in case of internet connectivity problems. Be sure to resolve any technology problems by talking to the Blackboard support line. If I do reset your

- quiz, **you still must complete it by the deadline.** As a result, it is in your best interest to attempt the quizzes well before each deadline. If you run into trouble right before the class session for which the quiz is due and I am not available to reset the quiz before the deadline, you will **not** receive a deadline extension.
- Resets are NOT allowed if you click on the wrong quiz (pay close attention to page / chapter numbers!) or if you forget to complete a quiz on time.
 - At the end of the semester, I will drop your lowest quiz score.
- One Short Analytical and Argumentative Essay (3-5 pages; approximately 1400-1600 words). This close reading will require students to demonstrate their ability to analyze and interpret a specific aspect of Layamon's *Brut* (details will be provided in class).
 - A sample close reading will be made available on Blackboard to give you an idea of what a “close reading” entails to me.
 - Note: I will note grade any paper that is more than ½ page (or 175 words) short of the minimum length requirement. This means that all margins must be no more than 1-inch wide and presented in *Times New Roman* 12-point font. Papers that do not meet these minimum requirements will automatically receive a failing grade.
 - Annotated Bibliography of 8-10 scholarly sources under consideration for final paper (15%; approximately 7-10 pages).
 - This assignment will demonstrate students' ability to use appropriate bibliographical tools to discover essays on specific literary texts (e.g., *MLA Bibliography*, *Iter*, *J-STOR*, *Project Muse*), and to understand and respond to the critiques and analyses of others.
 - Students are also expected to master the proper use of the MLA citation system.
 - Long Analytical and Argumentative Essay (8-10 pages; approximately 2800-3200 words). This essay will synthesize close reading and secondary research.
 - Layamon's *Brut* is not an option for this second paper.
 - Students will conduct substantial research about the topic (via the annotated bibliography) and incorporate both formal analysis and secondary sources into their analysis, and be able to locate their own arguments in relation to other relevant scholarly work. The paper must make use of at least 4 academic (that is, peer-reviewed) sources.
 - A proposal of 250 words will be required in which you indicate your primary text(s), your working thesis, and a justification for your approach (that is, some indication of what other scholars have said and what YOU are adding to the conversation).
 - Students should also demonstrate an awareness of and control over their theoretical approaches.
 - Students must also construct a works cited page that includes all sources cited, paraphrased, or referenced in the paper. Both the works cited page and annotated bibliography must comply with MLA citation methods.
 - Note: I will not grade any paper that falls short of the secondary source requirements, or is more than ½ page (or 175 words) short of the minimum length requirement. This means that all margins must be no more than 1-inch wide and presented in *Times New Roman* 12-point font. Papers that do not meet these minimum requirements will automatically receive a failing grade.

Please keep in mind that I am more than willing to look at multiple drafts prior to the final version provided that you set up a face-to-face meeting with me (I do not read/comment on drafts via e-mail). The Writing Center (<http://www.unco.edu/english/wcenter/>) may also prove to be a useful tool when you are drafting a paper.

Grades on essays will not be discussed for 24 hours after receipt.

All essays are to be typed (*Times New Roman*, 12 point) and double-spaced with 1” margins. All papers will require a Works Cited page using proper MLA format. Papers not adhering to MLA format will be penalized; I will deduct one point for each lapse in MLA format, including formatting errors on the first page, works cited page errors, etc.

In addition, ALL essays and major assignments must be submitted electronically by the specified time on the day that the assignment is due. **Acceptable electronic paper formats only include Word (.doc), WordPerfect**

(.wpd), or Rich Text Format (.rtf). If you are a Mac user, please be aware that you will need to rename your files before you upload them, adding on file extensions that indicate the type of file (e.g., .doc for word processing document). Be sure to put a period before the extension. **It is YOUR responsibility to make sure that your paper is submitted in the proper format; failure to do so will result in a late penalty.**

Students are required to complete all work satisfactorily in order to receive a passing grade. This means that all of the essays must be completed satisfactorily; failure to turn in any of the major assignments will result in an automatic F for the semester.

Grading

The breakdown of the semester grade is as follows:

Participation	15%
Online Daily Reading Quizzes	15%
Short Paper (Close Reading)	20%
Annotated Bibliography	20%
Long Paper (Research)	30%

Method of Evaluation: Letter Grade

Concerning Grades: You have a right and an obligation to discuss your grades with me if you have questions or concerns. **You do not** have a right to a grade or an A or B, or even a passing grade, merely because you need such a grade to stay eligible for athletics, organizations, scholarship, or continued enrollment at / graduation from UNC. I cannot and am not obligated to assist you if you're getting a low grade in another course and need a certain grade in this course to make your GPA acceptable in your particular situation. Your grades are your responsibility.

For your protection, I will only give out or discuss your grades with you in person—not over the phone, and definitely not through e-mail (this includes semester grades).

***** I NEITHER CURVE GRADES NOR PERMIT REVISION OF GRADED MATERIAL *****

University Grading Standards

- A (90% or higher) - achievement that is outstanding relative to the level necessary to meet course requirements.
- B (80-89%) - achievement that is significantly above the level necessary to meet course requirements.
- C (70-79%) - achievement that meets the course requirements in every respect.
- D (60-69%) - achievement that is worthy of credit even though it fails to meet fully the course requirements.
- F (59% or lower) - represents failure (or no credit) and signifies that the work was either (1) completed but at a level of achievement that is not worthy of credit or (2) was not completed and there was no agreement between the instructor and the student that the student would be awarded an I.

Disability Statement

Any student requesting disability accommodation for this class must inform the instructor by giving appropriate notice. Students are encouraged to contact Disability Support Services at (970) 351-2289 to certify documentation of disability and to ensure appropriate accommodations are implemented in a timely manner.

E-mail Policy and Etiquette

Effective communication between teacher and student is essential to your success and to the success of the class as a whole. It is my responsibility to be on campus and available to you during designated times and mutually-scheduled appointments. It is your responsibility to take advantage of those times when you have concerns about any aspect of the course. While e-mail can be an excellent aid to communication, it is a poor substitute for face-

to-face discussion because of time-lag and the potential for misunderstanding. Therefore, I will not discuss the following via e-mail: your progress in the course, including absences or grades; tests; essay drafts; assignment criteria or expectations; requests for extensions; or other topics which require lengthy discussion. E-mail should only be used to set up or reschedule appointments in which we can personally discuss such concerns.

Also, please do not come up to me at the beginning (or end, etc.) of class and ask me, “Did you answer my e-mail yet?” (or some variant). Rather, you should spend time checking your inbox for the response before asking. It’s extremely frustrating if I put a lot of time into an e-mail response and the student doesn’t even read the reply. Second, it gives off the impression that you believe your professor’s life revolves around your e-mail. Professors attend meetings, have research demands, serve on committees and sleep at night. Please allow your professor a normal response time, especially if the e-mail was sent at 1 a.m. The more polite way to handle the situation would be to follow up with a second e-mail if I do not answer the first one within a week.

[Language borrowed from “5 Things You Should Never Say To Your Professor,”

<http://www.usatodayeducate.com/staging/index.php/campuslife/5-things-you-should-never-say-to-your-professor>]

Please allow 24 hours response rate for all e-mails during the work week. I do not respond to e-mails over the weekend (5:00 pm Friday - 8:00 am Monday).

Late Work

Assignments are to be submitted promptly. Essays and annotated bibliographies will drop a letter grade for every day (not class period) that they are late. Other late assignments (reading quizzes) will receive a zero.

Lack of preparation on the part of the student, absence, or mechanical difficulties (printers breaking, computers crashing, etc.) are NOT valid excuses. If you miss a class period in which an assignment is given, it is your responsibility to prepare the assignment for the day on which it is due. If you come to class unprepared, you will not be given the opportunity to make up the missed work for credit (with the exception of verifiable medical emergency). All assignments will be listed on the class web site, available through Blackboard.

You will be permitted to make up missed work only in the event of documented, university-sponsored events and religious holidays. You must provide me with written documentation explaining your absence, and the missed work must be made up within two days of your return to class. It is your responsibility to notify me **prior** to the absence.

Plagiarism

The Department of English at UNC has adopted the following policy regarding plagiarism. Pretending that another’s work is one’s own is a serious scholarly offense known as plagiarism. For a thorough discussion of plagiarism, see the Dean of Students website:

<http://www.unco.edu/dos/academicIntegrity/students/definingPagiarism.html>

Students who are caught plagiarizing will receive a final grade of ‘F’ in the course. In addition, they will be reported to the Chair of the Department of English and the Dean of Students office for possible further disciplinary action.

Some but not all UNC instructors regard double or repeat submissions of one’s own work as a form of plagiarism. If you intend to use in this course written material that you produced for another course, you must consult with your instructor before doing so for each individual assignment. Otherwise, you may be guilty of cheating. Falsifying research also constitutes academic dishonesty and will be treated the same as plagiarism.

The issue of digital plagiarism has raised concerns about ethics, student writing experiences, and academic integrity. UNC subscribes to a digital plagiarism detection program called SafeAssign, which will be used to

check papers submitted in this course against Web pages and databases of existing papers. Although you may never have engaged in intentional plagiarism, many students do incorporate sources without citations; this program can alert me to your academic needs.

.....
Your continued presence in class signifies that you have read, understood, and agreed to all of the policies outlined in this syllabus.
.....

Schedule of Assignments: (*This schedule is subject to change*)

The reading assignments are to be completed for the day for which they are listed, and the page numbers correspond to the online quizzes. Quizzes, by the way, only cover primary texts. Additional short readings may be given throughout the course and will be made available via Blackboard (BB); please print these off and bring them with you to class. *Nota Bene:* Make sure that you carefully read the introductory material provided in each course text as you begin reading the primary text.

Week 1

August 27 Introduction to the course; syllabus distributed. Pre-1200 Arthur.
August 29 **Early Middle English and the Chronicle Tradition.**
Layamon's *Brut*, "Introduction," pg. x-lxxi.
Layamon's *Brut*, pg. 1-65 (line 10506, ". . . that he would never come here again").
*****University Course Add Deadline is August 30th**

Week 2

Historical Reading for Week 2: Stephen (c.1092–1154), king of England.

All historical readings should be accessed using the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (DNB). Access this database at <http://library.unco.edu/dbasesalph.htm#o>. You do not need to print off these readings, but please read them carefully (better yet, take notes!) by the beginning of each Tuesday's class period. Look for connections between the historical reality and the literature assigned for that week.

September 3 Layamon's *Brut*, pg. 66 (line 10507, "Then the news reached King Arthur . . .") – pg. 143 (line 12047, "Many a proud man did Arthur humble, and many a haughty subject he brought to heel").
September 5 Layamon's *Brut*, pg. 143 (line 12048, "It was one Eastertide when men had fasted") – pg. 205 (line 13303, ". . . the Britons pursued them and slew fifteen hundred of the force").
*****University Course Drop Deadline is September 9th**

Week 3

Historical Reading for Week 3: William Marshal (c.1146–1219)

September 10 Layamon's *Brut*, pg. 205 (line 13304, "Then there came to their aid from their own army") – pg. 255.
September 12 Etienne de Rouen, *Draco Normannicus*, "Introduction," pg. 47-54; "Epistola Arturi Regis ad Henricum Regem Anglorum," pg. 237-257 [Blackboard > "Course Materials" > "Online Reading Materials"].

Week 4

Historical Reading for Week 4: Henry II (1133–1189), king of England

- September 17 **The Contributions of French Romance.**
Marie de France: “Introduction” (pg. 7-36), “Prologue” (pg. 41), “Guigemar” (pg. 43-55), “Equitan” (pg. 56-60), “Le Fresne” (pg. 61-67).
- September 19 Marie de France: “Bisclavret” (pg. 68-72), “Lanval” (pg. 73-81), “Les Deus Amanz” (pg. 82-85).

Week 5

Historical Reading for Week 5: Eleanor of Aquitaine (c.1122–1204), queen of England

- September 24 Marie de France: “Yonec” (pg. 86-93), “Laüstic” (pg. 94-96), “Milun” (pg. 97-104).
September 26 **No class (I will be at a conference).**
Short Analytical and Argumentative Essay due ELECTRONICALLY by 5:00 pm.

Week 6

Historical Reading for Week 6: Richard II (1367–1400), king of England

- October 1 Marie de France: “Chaitivel” (pg. 105-108), “Chevrefoil” (pg. 109-110), “Eliduc” (pg. 111-126).
- October 3 *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*: “Introduction,” pg. vii-xiii; *SGGK*, pg. 3-30 (lines 1-1125). Please also print off and examine the glossed excerpt from *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* (lines 130-249; corresponds to pg. 6-9 in the Norton Anthology), available on Blackboard [Blackboard > “Course Materials” > “Online Reading Materials”]. Pay close attention to poetic devices such as alliteration, rhyme, word choice, deixis, imagery, word order, etc.

Week 7

Historical Reading for Week 7: Edward III (1312–1377), king of England

- October 8 *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*: pg. 31-64 (lines 1125-end).
October 10 *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, cont. Please print off and read the three Beheading Analogues (“Bricriu's Feast,” “John the Baptist,” and “Simon de Montfort”) [Blackboard > “Course Materials” > “Online Reading Materials”].

Week 8

Historical Reading for Week 8: Sir Thomas Malory (1415x18–1471), author

- October 15 *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, conclusion. Please print off and read Geraldine Heng's "Feminine Knots and the Other Sir Gawain and the Green Knight"; it can be found on pg. 194-217 in the Norton Critical Edition or on Blackboard [Blackboard > “Course Materials” > “Online Reading Materials”]
- October 17 Sir Thomas Malory, *Le Morte Darthur*, pg. 3-58. Also, “Introduction,” pg. vii-xi. We will be reading excerpts from Geoffroi de Charny's *Book of Chivalry* as we work through Malory; page numbers and dates TBA.
*****Individual Course Withdrawal Deadline is October 17th**

Week 9

Historical Reading for Week 9: Henry VII (1457–1509), king of England

October 22 Malory, pg. 59-112.
October 24 Malory, pg. 113-178.

Week 10

Historical Reading for Week 10: Margaret (1430–1482), queen of England

October 29 Malory, pg. 179-235.
*** **EXTRA CREDIT OPPORTUNITY:** If you attend the Neal Cross Lecture this evening (details TBA) for a lecture on the nature of good vs. evil in graphic novels (emphasis on the Joker of Batman fame), delivered by Joseph Michael Sommers, you can receive 3 percentage points of extra credit on your first essay grade.

October 31 Malory, pg. 236-291.
Proposal for Final Paper due ELECTRONICALLY by 1:25 PM.

Week 11

November 5 Malory, pg. 292-351.
November 7 Malory, pg. 352-406.

Week 12

November 12 Malory, pg. 407-452.
November 14 Malory, pg. 538-589. **Note:** Pay close attention to the page numbers: we're skipping the Grail Quest!



Week 13

November 19 Malory, pg. 590-636.
November 21 **Reading Middle English.**
“Reading Middle English,” pg. xv-xx in Shepherd’s *Middle English Romances*.
Sir Launfal, pg. 190-218.
Annotated Bibliography due ELECTRONICALLY by 5:00 pm.

Week 14

November 26 *The Weddyng of Syr Gawen and Dame Ragnell for Helpyng of Kyng Arthoure*,
pg. 243-267.
November 28 **No Classes; University Holiday.**

Week 15

December 3 *The Awntyrs off Arthure at the Terne Wathelyne*, pg. 219-243.
December 5 *The Awntyrs off Arthure*, cont.

The final essay (Long Analytical and Argumentative Essay) is due promptly at 10:45 AM on Wednesday, December 11, 2013. During our final examination period (10:45 AM – 1:15 PM), we will watch and discuss a medieval film.



Arthurian Britain