

**English 321/521
Medieval British Literature
Spring 2017**

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Office hours: Monday 1-2:30, Tuesday/Thursday 12:30-1:30, Wednesday 1-1:50
and by appointment

Description and Goals

The goal of this course is to increase your familiarity with, and ability to appreciate, discuss, and interpret the literature of the Middle Ages in Britain. This will include learning about the historical context, culture, and genres of the period, but our primary concern will be developing the ability to read the texts closely and construct meanings from them. Most texts will be read in translation; the original is available for some works for those who have the background or interest to tackle them.

Classes will consist primarily of full- and small-group discussion, with occasional mini-lectures as needed. Course work consists of a range of reading and writing assignments, both formal and informal.

Texts

Rental: *The Broadview Anthology of British Literature*, vol. 1: The Medieval Period

Purchase: J. R. R. Tolkien, trans., *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, Pearl, and Sir Orfeo* (Del Rey/ Ballantine), ISBN 978-0-345-27760-2, \$7.95 (needed by Mar. 2)

William Langland, *Piers Plowman*, ed. Elizabeth Robertson and Stephen H. A. Shepherd (Norton Critical Edition), ISBN 978-0-393-97559-8, \$23.75 (needed by Mar. 14)

Thomas Malory, *Le Morte Darthur*, ed. Helen Cooper (Oxford World's Classics), ISBN 978-0-19-953734-1, \$16.95 (needed by Apr. 11)

Requirements and Grading

The success of this course depends heavily on the active involvement of students. You should expect to read and think in preparation for every class. The formal requirements are as follows:

Reading/preparation for class: Read the material on the schedule for each day, making note of your questions and observations. You may find some of this material difficult, but do what you can with it. For some readings, I will post some suggestions for possible things to look for or think about as you read, and links to useful resources. Feel free to draw on these, or follow your own interests.

Journals: These are opportunities to reflect in an informal way on the reading that we have already discussed and begin to think about possible topics for papers. Comment on what you found most interesting from our discussions, identify issues that you might be interested in exploring further, and begin that process. This is informal writing; don't worry about grammar, organization, etc. Aim for at least 500 words. There are six journal dates on the schedule; you should do at least five journals. You can upload your journal to the dropbox in D2L, email it to me, or have a paper copy ready to turn in.

Attendance and participation: Regular attendance and meaningful engagement during class is expected. If you are shy, I encourage you to set a goal of speaking up about once every other class meeting, and to let me know if there is anything I can do to help you feel comfortable contributing. If you lack confidence about your understanding of the material, it's all the more important to speak up—and remember, others may have the same questions. If you tend to talk a lot in class, try to be mindful of the quieter people around you and hang back occasionally.

- Collectively, your attendance, preparation, and participation will contribute **150 points**, or 15% of your course grade. The rubric on the next page will guide the determination of your grade.

Papers: Two papers, the first about five pages long and the second about eight, will contribute **250 points** (25%) and **250 points** (30%) toward your course grade. Further details about these assignments (include grading criteria) will be provided in class.

Revision option: For each of the two papers, you will have an opportunity to do an additional draft after the assignment is graded. The original grade will not be changed, but your work in revising will be recognized with bonus points. The maximum number of points for each assignment equals the *percentage* that assignment carries. (For example, you can earn up to twenty-five revision points on the first paper.)

Exams: There will be a take-home midterm exam and a final exam, each worth **150 points** (15%) of your course grade.

How I calculate grades: Letter grades are converted to points, and points back to a letter grade for the course, using the following scale: D, 60-66.99%; D+, 67-69.99%; C- 70-72.99%; C, 73-76.99%; C+, 77-79.99%; B-, 80-82.99%; B, 83-86.99%, B+, 87-89.99%, A-, 90-92.99%, A, 93-100%. An assignment not turned in or test essay not attempted is a 0, but an F paper/essay will earn points in the F range.

Rubric for Preparation, Attendance, and Participation

	Plusses – at least a few things here needed for an A	Expectation – meeting this in all categories is necessary for a B	Minuses – these will lead to grades lower than B
Attendance	Is present for all of every class meeting, or (rarely) is absent for a compelling reason, which is shared with the instructor promptly.	Attends consistently (at least 90% of the time). Occasional absences or late arrivals are mostly for a valid reason.	Missing class, arriving late, or leaving early, more than 10% of the time, or less often but without explanation.
Attentiveness	Consistently comes equipped (book, notebook, etc.) to class. Is always listening actively when not speaking	Usually comes equipped and is listening actively when not speaking.	Attends to something other than class activities.
Journals	Journals give evidence of above-average effort and thoughtfulness.	At least five journals submitted, showing appropriate level of thought.	Fewer than five journals submitted, or journals fail to show sufficient effort and thought about the reading.
Quality of participation	Makes comments that stand out for the level of careful thought they demonstrate: about the material and about the unfolding conversation.		Makes comments that reflect inattentiveness to others' contributions or lack of preparation, are irrelevant, or otherwise tend to derail the conversation.
Classroom community	Improves the conversation in a significant way. (E.g. helps draw others out, makes extra effort to contribute if shy, etc.)		Impairs the conversation in a significant way. (E.g. dominates discussion, talks while others are talking, treats other students or their ideas with disrespect)

Policies

Attendance. Because participation in discussion is a large part of the course, regular attendance is expected. Absences and late arrivals will impact your grade directly through the Attendance/Participation/Preparation part of your grade, and will likely have a negative effect on your performance on graded assignments. Please let me know when you are absent, late, or unable to participate in a particular activity for some legitimate reason.

Email: Your UWSP email account is the university's standard method of communication with you, and you should check it regularly. I may at times use email to contact the class as a whole or individual students; I will routinely use the course home page in D2L for reminders and announcements.

Late work.

- Because journals are intended to help you process the material and get early feedback on your ideas before writing a paper, they are most useful when completed as scheduled. If you miss more than one and have a legitimate excuse, talk to me about the possibility of getting credit for a late submission.
- A late paper will lose one-third letter grade (e.g. B- to C+) for each class meeting it is late. This penalty may be waived if circumstances warrant. If legitimate problems interfere with getting your work in on time, talk to me, the earlier the better.
- The midterm will be accepted late only under extraordinary, unavoidable circumstances.

Academic honesty. Students enrolled in a 300-level course should already understand the difference between appropriate and inappropriate forms of help in writing papers and know how to select, use, and cite sources properly. If that's not true of you, or if you have questions or feel unsure about any use of help or sources, ask before proceeding. Any instance of Academic Misconduct will be dealt with according to University policy, which includes the possibility of failing the course. (Information about the Academic Misconduct policy is available at <http://www.uwsp.edu/dos/Documents/AcademicIntegrityBrochure.pdf>.)

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: If you have a disability and may need accommodations for this course, please contact the Office of Disability Services. Call 715 346-3365 or email dissv@uwsp.edu to make an appointment or get more information. Disability Services is located in room 609 of Albertson Hall (a.k.a. Library).

Use of Technology: Phones, tablets, or other devices should be silenced and put away, unless you are using them to take or refer to notes and you have the discipline to avoid distractions. Note: Students may not make audio, video, or photographic recordings of lectures or other class activities without written permission from the instructor. Anyone violating this policy will be asked to turn off the device being used. Refusal to comply with the policy will result in the student being asked to leave the classroom, and possibly being reported to the Dean of Students.

Any change to the syllabus will be announced in class and posted in D2L.

Other Useful Information

Copies of all course documents and additional resources will be available in **Desire2Learn** (<http://www.uwsp.edu/d2l/Pages/default.aspx>) and on my **website** (www4.uwsp.edu/english/mbowman/321/).

As a UWSP student, you have access to Microsoft's OneDrive (cloud storage) and Office 365 (online versions of Word, Excel, etc.), and can download Office 2016 to your own devices. Get started here: <https://portal.office.com/Home>

Schedule

- Jan. 26:** Selections from Bede, *Ecclesiastical History*, Broadview 2-15
Suggested cuts: Read 2-3, stopping after two sentences into the right column of 3; bottom of left column on 4 – middle of right column on 9; middle of right column on 11 – 2 paragraphs on p. 12; first full paragraph on 13 – 15.
Anglo-Saxon Chronicle for years 449-495 and 755, pages 110-112
- Jan. 31:** “The Dream of the Rood,” 23-25; “The Wanderer,” 17-19; “The Ruin,” 21-22.
- Feb. 2:** “The Seafarer,” 19-20; “The Wife’s Lament,” 21; Riddles, 29-31.
- Feb. 7:** Begin *Beowulf*, pages 39-55 (through line 1250).
Journal 1 due (reading from Jan. 26 – Feb. 2)
- Feb. 9:** *Beowulf*, pages 55-67 (through line 2199).
- Feb. 14:** *Beowulf* to end (p. 80); *Judith*, pages 85-94.
Journal 2 due (*Beowulf*)
- Feb. 16:** A-S Chronicle 871-878, pages 112-114; Alfred, “Preface to *Pastoral Care*,” 120-121; Ælfric, *Passion of St. Edmund*, 124-126
- Feb. 21:** A-S Chronicle 980-994, pages 114-115; “The Battle of Maldon,” 95-100; Wulfstan, “*Sermo Lupi ad Anglos*,” 128-130
- Feb. 23:** Anglo-Saxon Chronicle for 1086, pages 115-117; Selections from Geoffrey of Monmouth, *History of the Kings of Britain*, pages 136-157 (OK to skip from bottom of 141, left column, to 144, middle of left column)
Paper 1 due
- Feb. 28:** Marie de France, “Lanval,” 166-181; selections from Andreas Capellanus, *The Art of Courtly Love*, pages 310-312
- Mar. 2:** “Pwyll, Prince of Dyfed,” Broadview 224-234; “Sir Orfeo,” pages 169-190 in Tolkien. (If interested, also see the original in Broadview, 213-221).
- Mar. 7:** *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* Parts (or Fitts) One - Three, Broadview pages 236-287, OR Tolkien pages 23-100
Journal 3 due (reading from Feb. 16 – Mar. 2)
- Mar. 9:** SGGK part Four, pages 287-300 (or 100-121)
Start “Pearl” in Tolkien (through stanza 62, pages 123-150)
Paper 1 revision (optional)

- Mar. 14:** "Pearl" to end.
Langland, *Piers Plowman*, Prologue and Passus I, pages 3-25. You may also find useful the Preface (xi-xv) and the Summary beginning on 495.
- Mar. 16:** *Piers Plowman* Passus II-V, pages 25-97.
Mid-term due
- Mar. 21, 23: Spring Break
- Mar. 28:** *Piers Plowman* Passus VI-VIII and XIII, pages 97-129, 201-223.
- Mar. 30:** *Piers Plowman* Passus XIV-XVI, pages 223-287.
- Apr. 4:** *Piers Plowman* Passus XVII-XVIII, pages 287-323.
Journal 4 due (SGGK, *Pearl*, or *Piers Plowman*)
- Apr. 6:** *Piers Plowman* Passus XIX-XX, pages 323-363.
- Apr. 11:** Malory, *Le Morte Darthur*, pages 3-49.
- Apr. 13:** Malory pages 50-81 and 95-119.
Journal 5 due (*Piers Plowman* or Malory)
- Apr. 18:** Malory, pages 120-168.
- Apr. 20:** Malory, pages 281-303 and 310-345.
- Apr. 25:** Malory, pages 346-387.
Journal 6 due (Malory)
- Apr. 27:** Malory, pages 388-444
- May 2:** Malory, pages 445-498.
- May 4:** Malory, pages 498-530.
Paper 2 due
- May 9:** Selections from *The Travels of Sir John Mandeville*, Broadview pages 486-504, and selections from the *Book of Margery Kempe*, 524-546
- May 11:** Sample lyric poems, Broadview 190-199, including "Sumer is icumen in," "Fowles in the frith," "When Adam delf," "I have a gentil cock," "I sing of a maiden," "Adam lay ibounden," "My lefe is faren in a lond."
- May 16 (Tuesday):** 12:30-2:30 PM, Final Exam
Paper 2 revision (optional)