COURSE REQUIREMENTS: MEDIEVAL ROMANCE

This course will introduce you to medieval romance, one of the most popular genres of medieval literature and one that gives us some of the best-loved literary characters of all time. We will study the genre of romance, including Arthurian romance and other varieties, from the genre’s inception. We will pay particular attention to the form of story-telling that it popularizes, the concept of love that it systematizes, and the notion of heroism on which it depends. We will privilege English romance and will therefore read many texts in their original Middle English. Requirements include lively class participation, timely and thoughtful completion of all assigned readings, dutiful attendance, two brilliant papers, and a final exam. No prior knowledge of Middle English or medieval literature is expected.

REQUIRED TEXTS:


All texts are available at the University bookstore. Additional readings will be made available to you via Coursework.

CLASS PARTICIPATION AND ATTENDANCE:

Since this is a seminar, you will be expected to participate frequently and thoughtfully in the conversations that occur in it. I do not intend to harass the most shy among you, and I respect the occasional desire to keep one’s ideas to oneself, but try to keep such reticence to a minimum; successful class discussion requires the exchange of several ideas. Regular class attendance is required and excessive absences will affect your grade significantly. You simply won’t learn as much from a class that you do not attend regularly. If you are so unfortunate as to miss a class, it is your responsibility to learn about and promptly complete any work that was assigned in it. Please show up to class on time as well.

ASSIGNMENTS:

Of course it is your responsibility to do all of the readings carefully and on time. I reserve the right to give quizzes, without warning, if the class does not appear to be keeping up with the readings. Expect that the readings will take longer as you develop your Middle English readings skills. I encourage you very strongly to read the Middle English texts more than once, especially early in the class. Please also bring the relevant text(s) with you to every class.

The ability to write subtle, persuasive, and elegant literary analysis is the defining skill of the English major, and for this reason your grade will depend heavily on the two papers that you write for this class. Your papers are your opportunity to work through your own ideas about a given text, to propose a creative yet plausible account of some theme or stylistic feature in it, to argue for your
reading effectively, and to express that reading gracefully. A good paper is hard and time-consuming to write, and although we will talk about the components of a good paper in class, I encourage you to come talk with me as you are working on yours. If you have not written many college-level English papers, then I encourage you all the more strongly to come meet with me.

In lieu of a final exam, there will be three scheduled tests throughout the quarter. Their whole purpose is to reward careful completion of the readings and attentive attendance of class. To that end, they will consist of quotations from the readings upon which you will be asked to comment. Do note that the passages will be in the original language. You will not have access to a dictionary, and while I will gloss especially difficult or unusual words, you will need to have developed considerable fluency in Middle English in order to do well on the tests.

**Consultation:**

I enthusiastically encourage you to come to office hours to talk about course readings, assignments, or other matters relevant to the course. I will also happily schedule a meeting with you outside my office hours if you are unavailable during them. Short questions are appropriate over email, but please come see me if you have a question that requires more than a 1-2 sentence answer. Do not expect immediate responses to emails: I will respond to all messages that require response within 48 hours.

**Grades:**

Your final grade will be determined by the sum of your work. The papers play the largest role, but class participation and tests will figure prominently as well. Keep all of your work throughout the quarter.

- First paper: 25%
- Second paper: 30%
- Texts: 25%
- Class Participation: 20%

**Students with Disabilities:**

Students who have a disability that may necessitate an academic accommodation or the use of auxiliary aids and services in a class must initiate the request with the Student Disability Resource Center (SDRC). The SDRC will evaluate the request with required documentation, recommend appropriate accommodations, and prepare a verification letter dated in the current academic term in which the request is being made. Please contact the SDRC as soon as possible: timely notice is needed to arrange for appropriate accommodations. The SDRC is located at 563 Salvatierra Walk (phone 723-1066; TTY 725-1067). Its web address is: [http://www.stanford.edu/group/DRC/](http://www.stanford.edu/group/DRC/).

**Academic Integrity:**

Any infraction of the honor code, including plagiarism and cheating, will be reported to the Office of Judicial Affairs. According to their website, “For purposes of the Stanford University Honor Code, plagiarism is defined as the use, without giving reasonable and appropriate credit to or acknowledging the author or source, of another person’s original work, whether such work is made up of code, formulas, ideas, language, research, strategies, writing or other form(s).” If you are unsure what constitutes plagiarism, it is your responsibility to find out.

You can find the honor code here: [http://www.stanford.edu/dept/vpsa/judicialaffairs/guiding/honorcode.htm](http://www.stanford.edu/dept/vpsa/judicialaffairs/guiding/honorcode.htm)
SYLLABUS: MEDIEVAL ROMANCE

T 1/6    Introduction
Th 1/8    No Class

T 1/13   Geoffrey of Monmouth, History of the Kings of Britain
         Marie de France Prologue and Guigemar
Th 1/15   Marie de France, Lanval and Eliduc
         Ovid, The Art of Love, Book I, ll. 1-40 and ll. 263-773, Book II, ll. 1-746

T 1/20    Chrétien de Troyes, Lancelot, or, The Knight of the Cart
Th 1/22   Chrétien de Troyes, Cligés

T 1/27    Sir Orfeo
         Ovid’s Metamorphoses, Selections
Th 1/29   Floris and Blancheflour    Test #1

T 2/3     Geoffrey Chaucer, The Knight’s Tale
Th 2/5    Chaucer, The Squire’s Tale
         Chaucer, The Tale of Sir Thopas

T 2/10    Chaucer, The Franklin’s Tale
         Chaucer, The Wife of Bath’s Tale
Th 2/12   Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, Fitts 1-2    First Paper Due

T 2/17    Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, Fitts 3-4
Th 2/19   Chaucer, Troilus and Criseyde, Book 1    Test #2

T 2/24    Chaucer, Troilus and Criseyde, Book 2
Th 2/26   Chaucer, Troilus and Criseyde, Book 3

T 3/3     Chaucer, Troilus and Criseyde, Book 3
Th 3/5    Malory, Morte Darthur, Tales of Lancelot du Lake and Sir Gareth

T 3/10    Malory, Morte Darthur, Lancelot and Guenevere
Th 3/12   Malory, Morte Darthur, The Death of Arthur    Test #3

Friday, March 13th    Second Paper Due