

# English 394

## Literature and Culture of Medieval Britain: The Grace and Glory of a Thousand Years

Fall 2006

Instructor: John Black

Classroom: Zinzendorf 100

Class schedule: TTh 10:20-11:30

Email: [jrb1@moravian.edu](mailto:jrb1@moravian.edu)

Office: Zinzendorf 303

Office Hours: MW 2:15-3:45,

and by appointment

English Dept. Phone: 861-1390

### Required texts:

*The Norton Anthology of English Literature, Vol. A: The Middle Ages.* 8<sup>th</sup> ed. Edited by Alfred Davis, M. H. Abrams, and Stephen Greenblatt. 2005.

Supplemental readings via Blackboard, photocopy, and reserve.

**Other useful books:** (These may be found in the reference section in Reeves Library. Other versions of the material may be found on the Web.)

*A Handbook to Literature.* Edited by Hugh Holman and William Harmon. (PN41 .H6 1986)

*A Glossary of Literary Terms.* Edited by M. H. Abrams. (PN41 .A184 1988 - stacks)

*A Pocket Style Manual.* Diana Hacker. (PE1408 .H26 2000)

*MLA Handbook.* Joseph Gibaldi. (PE1478.M57 2003)

### Course Description, Objectives, and Format:

Welcome to English 394! As we explore British literature and culture of the Middle Ages (c.500-c.1500), this course allows you to read texts not only in a wide variety of genres and forms, but also from a diverse collection of authors - some well-known, others less well-known - writing on many different themes. The Middle Ages were neither 'dark' nor merely 'in between' other periods. Instead, the vibrant medieval period serves as the very root of the modern era in very many significant aspects. In this course, close readings of selected major and minor texts (most in translation) from Old English and Middle English literature will serve as the basis of our study. In addition, readings on the historical, cultural, and literary contexts in which these works were created will shed light on the rich legacy we've inherited from the Middle Ages. Assignments in the class will help you refine your critical reading and writing skills. And, along the way, you'll get to enjoy some great reading! While short lectures, audio-visual aids, and presentations will introduce literary periods, figures, and texts, our class will consist primarily of discussion: *preparation, attendance, and participation are, therefore, essential to the success of the class and to your success in it.*

### Papers, Exams, and other Assignments:

English 394 is an upper-level, major elective course; your work for the class should reflect deliberation and sophistication in thinking and writing. As assignments for the course, you will draft and revise one 15 page paper, make a brief oral presentation on your paper, and take mid-term and final exams consisting of short answer questions (ID's, etc.) and longer essays. Approximately every week you'll have a short quiz covering basic facts or themes, or an explication or interpretation of a passage, or perhaps a short reading response. These short exercises help us keep up with the reading, serve as practice for our course exams, prompt us to think about what we've read, and provide us with a starting point for discussions. There are no make-up exercises; however, I will drop your lowest quiz/short response score. Requirements for the assignments and exams will be discussed in advance of each. I encourage and expect you to consult with me throughout the course of your assignments. **Your best preparation for both the quizzes and exams is careful, thorough, and thoughtful reading and re-reading. I strongly recommend taking notes on what you read.** Draft workshops and individual conferences will help you strengthen your writing process. **I do not accept papers that have not been reviewed in the draft workshop process.** Drafts and papers are due in class on the due dates noted on the syllabus. **In addition to the final version of a paper, all preliminary drafts, notes, etc. are to be handed in; otherwise, the assignment is incomplete and will not be accepted. I do not accept or read late papers, except under very unusual circumstances.**

## Evaluation:

The instructor will apply both quantitative and qualitative assessments in determining grades for assignments and for the course. Final grades calculated on 10-pt. scale: 90=A-, 80=B-, etc.

Midterm exam (Old English).....	25%
Final exam (Middle English).....	25%
Research Paper.....	30%
Quizzes, Reading Responses, and Oral Presentation on Paper .....	10%
Informal Writing and Class Participation.....	10%

**You must complete all these requirements in order to be eligible to pass the course.**

**Extra credit:** Students may earn up to a total of three points of extra credit to be added at the end of the semester to their lowest assignment grade. Extra credit is earned through confirmed participation in various activities related to literature and writing. In December, Moravian will host the Undergraduate Conference in Medieval and Early Modern Studies; a student who submits a paper for the conference, assists with the conference, or attends the conference will earn one point. Similarly, a student whose attendance is verified at the Dodge Poetry Festival, at a MCTC production, or at a MC poetry or fiction reading will earn one point for each activity. Attendance at performances and readings at other Lehigh Valley institutions may also be eligible for extra credit. Similarly, any student for whom submission of creative work to *Manuscript* or other literary journal is verified will earn one point. Also, any student for whom a session with the Writing Center is verified will earn one point. Total extra credit may not exceed three points.

## Attendance and Participation:

**Be here:** I will take roll regularly. You are expected to attend each day. **Be prompt:** Class begins at 10:20 am sharp. **Be prepared:** Your first responsibility is to read carefully, re-read, and be prepared to discuss, both orally and in writing, all assignments. You should expect to devote several hours to preparing for each class. **Participate:** Classes become more meaningful the more you engage yourself in them. You are expected to make comments or ask questions on the readings and topics each day. I will not hesitate to call on you if you are not contributing. Class time allotted for group work, group discussion, draft feedback, etc. is instructional time; you are expected to remain focused on the assigned activity for all of the allotted time.

If you know you will be absent from class, please talk to me beforehand. If you are sick, please notify me as soon as possible. *Your absence from more than three classes may affect your final grade. Every three times you come to class late or leave early without talking to me first will also count as an unexcused absence. Missing more than five classes may result in your failing the course. If you are absent, it is wholly your responsibility to determine what was covered in class and what revisions, if any, were made to the syllabus in your absence.*

One of the qualities I expect and appreciate most in students is **professionalism**. Students who exhibit this quality are alert, responsive, and tactful in class, turn in thoughtful assignments, meet deadlines, and keep me informed of any difficulties or successes they have while in my class.

**Note:** Please refrain from bringing food and drink into the classroom. Also, please turn off all cell phones and beepers before coming into the classroom. Please arrange to go to the restroom before or after class.

## Office Hours:

Students are always welcome in my office. My office hours are times that I have set aside specifically to talk with you – not only about class and assignments, but also about life at Moravian, about something fun and exciting you've done, or whatever. Make use of them. I realize that for some of us my posted office hours just won't work, so I'm also available by appointment: [jrb1@moravian.edu](mailto:jrb1@moravian.edu).

## Other Resources:

- When working on written assignments, I strongly encourage you to take advantage of the help available through appointment at the Writing Center (2<sup>nd</sup> fl, Zinzendorf). For more information, visit its website at: <http://home.moravian.edu/public/eng/writingCenter/appointments.htm>

- Similarly, the librarians in Reeves are very resourceful. Make it a habit of consulting with them when research questions arise. The library webpage (<http://home.moravian.edu/public/reeves>) is an excellent resource, offering live online help and research guides.
- The Learning Services Office (1307 Main St., 861-1510) provides many services to help you achieve academic success: <http://home.moravian.edu/public/stusvc/learning/>
- Another important resource that provides help with the demands of college life is The Counseling Center (also at 1307 Main St., 861-1510): <http://home.moravian.edu/public/stusvc/counseling/>
- Students with disabilities who believe that they may need accommodations in this class are encouraged to contact the Learning Services Office (1307 Main St., 861-1510) as soon as possible to enhance the likelihood that such accommodations are implemented in a timely fashion.

### **Academic Honesty:**

Plagiarism, intentionally representing someone else's work as your own, is a breach of personal integrity and a violation of the College's Academic Honesty Policy: see pp. 26-31 in the *Student Handbook* or consult <http://www.moravian.edu/studentLife/handbook/academic2.htm> **Read this policy in its entirety.** I take the provisions of the Academic Honesty Policy very seriously and am obliged to report any suspected cases of plagiarism, the consequences of which may be failure, suspension, or dismissal from the College. If you plagiarize, you will receive a 'zero' on the plagiarized assignment, which will very likely result in your failure for the course. Ignorance of what constitutes plagiarism will not be accepted as an excuse. If at any time you have any questions about documenting sources properly (MLA style) or as to whether or not the aid you are receiving is authorized, don't hesitate to ask me. The Reeves Library online research tutorial also addresses the issue: <http://home.moravian.edu/public/reevestutorial/pages/index.htm>

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(Syllabus subject to change)

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Aug.	29	T	Introduction; policies; syllabus
	31	Th	Introduction in <i>Norton</i> (1-23); background for Anglo-Saxon England and introduction to Old English language (Ackerman, Introduction and Chpt. 1 - Bb);  Bede & "Cædmon's Hymn" (24-27); Exeter Book riddles # 5, 14, 24, 25; 23, 42, 59 ( <a href="http://www2.kenyon.edu/AngloSaxonRiddles/texts.htm">http://www2.kenyon.edu/AngloSaxonRiddles/texts.htm</a> )
Sept.	5	T	<i>Beowulf</i> (29-51); Tolkien article on <i>Beowulf</i> (reserve - photocopy and in Bloom, ed. <i>Modern Critical Interpretations: Beowulf</i> )
	7	Th	<i>Beowulf</i> (51-72); Hill article on <i>Beowulf</i> (reserve - photocopy and in Bjork and Niles, eds., <i>A Beowulf Handbook</i> )
	12	T	<i>Beowulf</i> (72-100); Osborn article on <i>Beowulf</i> (reserve - photocopy and in Bjork and Niles, eds., <i>A Beowulf Handbook</i> )
	14	Th	Old English poetry: "Dream of the Rood" (27-29); "Judith" (100-108); "Wanderer" (111-113); "Wife's Lament" (113-114); "Husband's Message": (OE at <a href="http://www.georgetown.edu/labyrinth/library/oe/texts/a3.32.html">http://www.georgetown.edu/labyrinth/library/oe/texts/a3.32.html</a> ; transl. at <a href="http://www.elfinspell.com/EarlyEnglishHusband.html">http://www.elfinspell.com/EarlyEnglishHusband.html</a> ); "Battle of Maldon": (OE at <a href="http://www.georgetown.edu/labyrinth/library/oe/texts/a9.html">http://www.georgetown.edu/labyrinth/library/oe/texts/a9.html</a> ; transl. at <a href="http://www.georgetown.edu/faculty/ballc/oe/maldon-trans.html">http://www.georgetown.edu/faculty/ballc/oe/maldon-trans.html</a> )
	19	T	Old English saints' <i>lives</i> and images: Guthlac, Cuthbert, and Mary of Egypt; video
	21	Th	Old English prose: King Alfred and <i>The Pastoral Care</i> (108-111); selections from <i>Anglo-Saxon Chronicle</i> (115-117); OE at <a href="http://www.georgetown.edu/labyrinth/library/oe/texts/asc/index.html">http://www.georgetown.edu/labyrinth/library/oe/texts/asc/index.html</a> ; homily by Wulfstan: OE at <a href="http://www.engl.virginia.edu/OE/anthology/sermo.html">http://www.engl.virginia.edu/OE/anthology/sermo.html</a> ; transl. at <a href="http://english3.fsu.edu/~wulfstan/trans.html">http://english3.fsu.edu/~wulfstan/trans.html</a> )
	26	T	Anglo-Saxon art and architecture; manuscript illumination; video; <b>midterm assigned</b>
	28	Th	Introduction to Arthurian legend; legendary Histories of Britain (117-128); Celtic contexts (128-157); video
Oct.	3	T	<b>Midterm due</b> ; introduction to Middle English period; video
	5	Th	Introduction to Middle English language and culture (Ackerman, Chpts. 2 & 4 - Bb)

	10	T	No class – Fall Break
	12	Th	Middle English saints' <i>lives</i> and images: Guthlac, Cuthbert, and Mary of Egypt; El-Haj article on Cuthbert – Bb; <b>Research Paper assigned</b>
	17	T	<i>Sir Gawain &amp; the Green Knight</i> (160-185); medieval world view (Ackerman, Chpt. 5 – Bb)
	19	Th	<i>Sir Gawain &amp; the Green Knight</i> (185-213); Heng article (reserve)
	24	T	Excerpt from <i>Ancrene Riwe</i> (157-159); Julian of Norwich: from <i>Showings</i> (371-382); Margery Kempe: from <i>The Book of Margery Kempe</i> (383-397)
	26	Th	Library research instruction session; selections from William Langland's <i>The Vision of Piers Plowman</i> (331-350)
	31	T	Middle English lyrics (360-370, 435-437); video; <b>Research Paper proposal due</b>
Nov.	2	Th	Guest lecture and discussion on William Langland's <i>The Vision of Piers Plowman</i> (re-read 331-350; read 350-367)
	7	T	Overview of Chaucer (213-238); selections from John Gower (319-331)
	9	Th	Selections from <i>The Cloud of Unknowing</i> <a href="http://www.ccel.org/ccel/anonymous2/cloud.toc.html">http://www.ccel.org/ccel/anonymous2/cloud.toc.html</a> ; video
	14	T	Medieval drama: The Wakefield <i>Second Shepherd's Play</i> (406-435); <i>Everyman</i> (463-484)
	16	Th	Medieval drama – video; <b>Research Paper draft workshop; arrange individual conferences for Paper</b>
	21	T	Late medieval Arthurian tradition; selections from Sir Thomas Malory's <i>Morte Darthur</i> (438-456)
	23	Th	No class – Thanksgiving
	28	T	Scottish Chaucerians: Robert Henryson (456-463); William Dunbar (ME at <a href="http://rpo.library.utoronto.ca/poem/769.html">http://rpo.library.utoronto.ca/poem/769.html</a> ); Hahn article on text and image (reserve)
	30	Th	<b>Oral presentations on research papers</b> ; video; <b>Research Paper due Fri. Dec. 1</b>
Dec.	5	T	<b>Oral presentations on research papers</b> ; video
	7	Th	<b>Oral presentations on research papers</b> ; Transitions: Medieval to Renaissance; Middle English review; course review; course evaluation

**Final Exams are scheduled for December 13-19. Plan accordingly.**