

English 355

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

(Guidelines subject to change)

Fall 2008

Instructor: John Black

Classroom: Zinzendorf 103

Class schedule: TTh 10:20-11:30

Office: Zinzendorf 303

Office Hours: T 2:15-3:15, W 5:15-6:15,
and by appointment

English Dept. Phone: 861-1390

Email: jblack@moravian.edu

Course Description, Objectives, and Format:

Welcome to English 355! A resurgence of interest in the medieval period is apparent in literature, film, academics, and pop culture. What are the foundations for this resurgence? What are the 'originals' and how do contemporary versions make use of them? This course invites you to examine these and other questions by exploring British literature and culture of the Middle Ages (c.500-c.1500). 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 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. We'll look at 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. Similarly, we'll explore examples from other lines of cultural production from the period, such as art and architecture. 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 355 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, take mid-term and final exams consisting of short answer questions (ID's, etc.) and longer essays, and complete other shorter assignments. 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).....	20%
Final exam (Middle English).....	20%
Research Paper.....	25%
Oral Presentation on Paper.....	5%
Writing Assignment for Field Trip.....	10%
Quizzes and Reading Responses.....	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 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 into the classroom and please arrange to go to the restroom before or after class. Also, please silence and put away all cell phones, beepers, etc. before coming into the classroom.

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: jrblack@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 (2nd 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/>
- 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, representing someone else's work as your own, is a serious breach of personal integrity and a violation of the College's Academic Honesty Policy: consult the *Student Handbook* or <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>

English 355 Fall 2008

Resources

Required texts:

The Norton Anthology of English Literature, Vol. A: The Middle Ages. 8th ed. Edited by Alfred Davis, M. H. Abrams, and Stephen Greenblatt. New York: Norton, 2005.

Galloway, Andrew. *Medieval Literature and Culture*. London: Continuum, 2007.

Supplemental readings and films via Blackboard, photocopy, or reserve.

Other useful books for reading and writing about literature: (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)

Syllabus (subject to change)

Aug.	26	T	Introduction; policies; syllabus; informal writing/discussion
	28	Th	Galloway 1-48
Sept.	2	T	Galloway 49-91
	4	Th	Introduction in <i>Norton</i> (1-23); background for Anglo-Saxon England and introduction to Old English language; Bede & "Cædmon's Hymn" (24-27); Exeter Book riddles # 5, 14, 24, 25; 23, 42, 59 (http://www2.kenyon.edu/AngloSaxonRiddles/texts.htm); review tables in Galloway 114-31.
	9	T	<i>Beowulf</i> (29-64); Tolkien article on <i>Beowulf</i> (to be provided)
	11	Th	<i>Beowulf</i> (64-100); Osborn article on <i>Beowulf</i> (to be provided)
	16	T	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 http://www.georgetown.edu/labyrinth/library/oe/texts/a3.32.html); transl. at http://www.elfinpell.com/EarlyEnglishHusband.html); "Battle of Maldon": (OE at http://www.georgetown.edu/labyrinth/library/oe/texts/a9.html); transl. at http://www.wvnorton.com/college/english/nael/NOA/pdf/01Maldon_1_6.pdf); Galloway 92-113; introduce art & literature assignment
	18	Th	Old English saints' <i>lives</i> and images: Guthlac, Cuthbert, and Mary of Egypt (Bb); video
	23	T	Anglo-Saxon art and architecture (Bb); manuscript illumination; video; report on art and literature due
	25	Th	Old English prose: King Alfred and <i>The Pastoral Care</i> (108-111); selections from <i>Anglo-Saxon Chronicle</i> (115-17; OE http://www.georgetown.edu/labyrinth/library/oe/texts/asc/index.html) homily by Wulfstan: OE at http://english3.fsu.edu/~wulfstan/noframes.html ; transl. at http://english3.fsu.edu/~wulfstan/trans.html)
	30	T	Midterm

Oct.	2	Th	Introduction to Arthurian legend; legendary Histories of Britain (117-128); Celtic contexts (128-157); video; Research Paper assigned
	7	T	No class – Fall Break
	9	Th	Introduction to Middle English period; <i>Sir Gawain & the Green Knight</i> (160-185); readings – introduction to Ecocriticism and Rudd article (to be provided)
	14	T	<i>Sir Gawain & the Green Knight</i> (185-213); readings – introduction to Feminist Criticism and Heng article (to be provided)
	16	Th	Library research instruction session; Research Paper topic due (in advance; by email)
	21	T	Middle English saints' <i>lives</i> and images: Guthlac, Cuthbert, and Mary of Egypt (Bb); El-Haj article on Cuthbert (Bb)
	23	Th	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);
	28	T	Middle English lyrics (360-370, 435-437); video; Research Paper proposal due
	30	Th	Guest lecture and discussion on William Langland's <i>The Vision of Piers Plowman</i> (331-367)
Nov.	4	T	Overview of Chaucer (213-238); selections from John Gower (319-331)
	6	Th	Selections from <i>The Cloud of Unknowing</i> http://www.ccel.org/ccel/anonymous2/cloud.toc.html ; video
	11	T	Guest lecture and discussion on late medieval history and historiographic methodologies
	13	Th	Medieval drama: The Wakefield <i>Second Shepherd's Play</i> (406-435); <i>Everyman</i> (463-484)
	18	T	Medieval drama – video; Research Paper draft workshop; arrange individual conferences for Paper; introduce field trip art & literature assignment
	20	Th	Late medieval Arthurian tradition; selections from Sir Thomas Malory's <i>Morte Darthur</i> (438-456)
	22	Sat	Field trip to NYC
	25	T	Scottish Chaucerians: Robert Henryson (456-463); William Dunbar (ME at http://rpo.library.utoronto.ca/poem/769.html); Hahn article on text and image (Bb)
	27	Th	No class – Thanksgiving
Dec.	2	T	Oral presentations on research papers; video; field trip report on art and literature due
	4	Th	Oral presentations on research papers; video; Research Paper due Fri. Dec. 5
	9	T	Oral presentations on research papers; Transitions: Medieval to Renaissance; Middle English review; course review; course evaluation

Final Exam: Fri. Dec. 12, 1:30pm. Plan accordingly.