

English 355
Literature and Culture of Medieval Britain:
The Grace and Glory of a Thousand Years
(Guidelines subject to change)
Blackboard enrollment code for course: ENGL355FA10

Fall 2010

Instructor: John Black

Classroom: Zinzendorf 103

Class schedule: TTh 10:20-11:30

Email: jblack@moravian.edu

Office: Zinzendorf 303

Office Hours: T 2:30-3:30, W 5:15-6:15,
and by appointment

English Dept. Phone: 861-1390

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 12-15 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.**

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. Or, for instance, a student whose attendance is verified 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. (A general rule of thumb for college courses is 2-3 hours outside of class for every hour in 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 notifying 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.*

Please note the mandatory field trip for this class on Sat. Nov. 20. Details of the trip and related assignment will be discussed in advance of the trip.

Other notes: +One of the qualities I expect and appreciate most in students is **personal integrity**. Students who exhibit this quality are ethical and honest, are engaged in class, turn in thoughtful assignments, are responsive to the world beyond themselves, meet deadlines, and keep me informed of any difficulties or successes they have while in my class. +Please arrange to go to the restroom before or after class. +Please refrain from bringing food or drink into the classroom. +*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: jblack@moravian.edu.

Other Resources:

- With work 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> The Writing Center is located in a building that is not accessible to persons with mobility impairments. If you have mobility impairments and need the services of the Writing Center, please call 610-861-1392.
- 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): <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 who wish to request accommodations in this class for a disability should contact Mr. Joe Kempfer, Assistant Director of Learning Services for Disability Support, 1307 Main Street (extension 1510). Accommodations cannot be provided until authorization is received from the office of Learning Services.

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/academic/academic2.html> **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>

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, reading responses, and short assignments.....	10%
Informal Writing and Class Participation.....	10%

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

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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 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 – stacks and reference)

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

Bedford Handbook. 7th ed. Diana Hacker. (PE1408 .H277 2006 - reference)

MLA Handbook. 7th ed. (PE1478.M57 2009 - reference)

Syllabus

Aug.	31	T	Introduction; policies; syllabus; informal writing/discussion
Sept.	2	Th	Galloway 1-48
	7	T	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, 23, 24, 25, 42, 59 (Bb); review chronology, glossary, and tables in Galloway 114-31.
	9	Th	<i>Beowulf</i> (29-64); Tolkien article on <i>Beowulf</i> (Bb); video
	14	T	<i>Beowulf</i> (64-100); Osborn article on <i>Beowulf</i> (Bb)
	16	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 http://www.georgetown.edu/labyrinth/library/oe/texts/a3.32.html ; transl. at http://www.elfinspell.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); introduce art & literature assignment
	21	T	Old English saints' <i>lives</i> and images: Guthlac, Cuthbert, and Mary of Egypt (Bb)
	23	Th	Fall Convocation – class attends convocation course reading: medieval encounters with other cultures – East and West; excerpts from <i>Journey to the West</i> and <i>Ohthere's Voyage</i> (to be provided)
	28	T	Anglo-Saxon art and architecture (Bb); manuscript illumination; Galloway 49-91; video; report on art and literature due

	30	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); video
Oct.	5	T	Midterm
	7	Th	Introduction to Arthurian legend; legendary Histories of Britain (117-128); Galloway 92-113; video
	12	T	No class – Fall Break
	14	Th	“Other Medievals” – guest lecture on medieval China and links to the medieval West; re-read <i>Journey to the West</i> (from Sept. 23)
	19	T	Introduction to Middle English period (review background material for later medieval England in Norton and in Galloway); <i>Sir Gawain & the Green Knight</i> (160-185); readings – introduction to Ecocriticism and Rudd article (to be provided); Research Paper assigned
	21	Th	<i>Sir Gawain & the Green Knight</i> (185-213); readings – introduction to Feminist Criticism and Heng article (to be provided)
	26	T	Library research instruction session; Research Paper topic due (in advance; by email)
	28	Th	Middle English saints’ <i>lives</i> and images: Guthlac, Cuthbert, and Mary of Egypt (Bb); El-Haj article on Cuthbert (Bb)
Nov.	2	T	Middle English lyrics (368-370, 435-437); video; Research Paper proposal due
	4	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); video
	9	T	Selections from <i>The Cloud of Unknowing</i> http://www.ccel.org/ccel/anonymous2/cloud.toc.html
	11	Th	William Langland’s <i>The Vision of Piers Plowman</i> (331-367); introduce field trip art & literature assignment
	16	T	Chaucer’s “The Miller’s Prologue and Tale” (213-218, 239-255); John Gower’s “Tale of Philomena and Tereus” (319-331)
	18	Th	Medieval drama: The Wakefield <i>Second Shepherds’ Play</i> (406-435); <i>Everyman</i> (463-484)
	20	Sat	Field trip to NYC
	23	T	Medieval drama – video; Research Paper draft workshop; arrange individual conferences for Paper
	25	Th	No class – Thanksgiving Break
	30	T	Late medieval Arthurian tradition; selections from Sir Thomas Malory’s <i>Morte Darthur</i> (438-456)
Dec.	2	Th	Scottish Chaucerians: Robert Henryson (456-463); William Dunbar (pp. 1-6 at http://www.edinburghliterarypubtour.co.uk/makars/dunbar/dunbar.pdf Hahn article on text and image (Bb); field trip report on art and literature due
	7	T	Oral presentations on research papers ; Transitions: Medieval to Renaissance; Middle English review; course review; course evaluation; Research Paper due

Final Exam: Thurs. Dec. 16, 1:30pm. Plan accordingly.