
Course Method: We will explore types of medieval narrative and their use by modern authors. Method is lecture-discussion. Have the assignment read on the date by which it first appears on the syllabus. If you don't, we'll have nothing to discuss. If that happens, I'll cancel class, or start giving surprise quizzes.

Requirements: A midterm exam, an 8-10 pp. paper, and a two-hour final exam. The midterm counts roughly 25% of your grade, the paper counts roughly* 25%, and the final, which will synthesize the entire course, counts roughly 50%. “Roughly” means that I'll consider the direction of your effort—up or down. Participation in class discussion is the non-writing requirement, and will be used in making close decisions on your final grade.

The course falls into two halves—medieval and modern—the aim being to connect the two. The paper topic should be the bridge. It is to be chosen by you and must be approved in office conference with me. Choose an aspect of medieval narrative—a character, an episode, a setting, a motif, a pattern—explore its medieval use, then analyze that aspect as treated by one of the modern authors. Or explore the absence of a medieval element, analyze what the modern author does instead, and speculate why he might be doing it. I grade on spelling, punctuation, grammar, organization, and style, as well as on content.

The Lord of the Rings, Tolkien ISBN 0-618343997
The Monsters & the Critics & Other Essays ISBN 978-0261102637
Grendel, John Gardner ISBN 0-394-71056-4
Handouts: The Battle of Maldon, "The Homecoming of Beorhtnoth"

Promptness and Attendance. Get to class on time, be in class when it is in session, bring a valid written excuse if you must miss. You are responsible for what is covered in class, whether you are there or not. If you miss a class, arrange to get the notes from a classmate. Frequent absences may have an unfortunate impact on your grade, since if you are not present you cannot participate and your participation can affect your grade. Cell phones must be turned off and out of sight during class and during exams.
Jan. 25  Discussion — What is “medieval”? What is “myth”? What is “modern”?
Jan. 27 “Beowulf: The Monsters & the Critics” in Tolkien’s The Monsters & the Critics
Feb.1  "Beowulf Monsters & Critics" continued
  3 Beowulf, history of the manuscript, and
  8 Beowulf ll. 11-53 Scyld Seafing
  10 Beowulf ll. 54-1250, Grendel
  15 Beowulf ll. 1251-1887, Grendel’s Dam
  17 Beowulf ll. 1888-3182, The Dragon 
  22 Beowulf The Sigemund Matter,” pp. 314-317
  24 Edda “Gylfaginning” pp. 7-18
Mar. 1 Edda “Gylfaginning” pp. 18-36
  3 Edda “Gylfaginning” pp. 36-58
  8 Edda “Skaldskaparmal” Otter-payment pp. 99-102; Frodi’s meal pp. 106-7
  10 Handout The Battle of Maldon
  15 Maldon continued
  17 MIDTERM EXAM
SPRING BREAK
  29 “The Homecoming of Beorhtnoth” and essays
  31 The Lord of the Rings Prologue, The Fellowship of the Ring, Book I.
Apr. 5 The Fellowship of the Ring, Book I
  7 The Fellowship of the Ring, Book II
  12 The Fellowship of the Ring, Book II
  14 The Two Towers, Book III — — — paper due 8–10 pp.
  19 The Two Towers, Book IV
  21 The Two Towers, Book IV continued
  26 The Return of the King, Book V
  28 The Return of the King Book VI
May  3 Gardner Grendsl chs. 1-4
  5 Gardner Grendel chs. 5-8
  10 Gardner Grendel chs. 9-12
  17 FINAL EXAM 1:30-3:30 P.M.