Course Description: In medieval England the Anglo-Saxons referred to the world as *middengeard*, or Middle-earth, a term better understood today as referencing J. R. R. Tolkien’s creation. The equivalence is not a coincidence, as Tolkien drew on Old English conceptions while infusing them with his own twentieth-century sensibility in creating his fictionalized world. This hybridized sense of Middle-earth as an intersection of the medieval and the modern is the subject of this course. Tolkien was a professor of Anglo-Saxon and well versed in medieval literature—one could say immersed in it, and his creation of Middle-earth is a direct response to both his love for and intimate knowledge of medieval literature, and a response to what he saw as lacking in both the Old English corpus and the modern world. This course proposes to explore his created world of Middle-earth, primarily his novels *The Hobbit*, *The Lord of the Rings*, and *The Silmarillion* through the lens of intertextuality. Drawing in particular on Julia Kristeva’s notion of the intertext (and through her, Mikhail Bakhtin’s concept of dialogue), we will examine the Old English poetry that is in dialogue with Tolkien’s modern works, primarily *Beowulf* as well as poems such as *The Wanderer* and *The Battle of Maldon*, along with Old Norse works such as *Volsungssaga*, and early Middle English texts like *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* and *Pearl*. Tolkien was a medievalist said to describe his task in creating the world of Middle-earth as “creating a mythology for England” and we will explore that world through the medieval works that infuse it.

General Education Program Course: This course fulfills the General Education category Topics: Arts and Humanities. Courses in this category introduce students to the methods of inquiry in the arts and humanities through the critical examination of works (texts, artworks, artifacts, performances, films, media, etc.). This category includes courses which provide the social, cultural, and historical contexts of the field of inquiry.

Prerequisites and/or Co-requisites: CRWT 102


Reading Schedule: Reading assignments should be completed according to the schedule detailed in the syllabus; they are due to be completed by the day they are listed on the syllabus. The reading load is significant, and you are encouraged to plan ahead.
Learning Outcomes: After completing this course, students will:

- Express an understanding of Julia Kristeva’s theory of intertextuality as informed by the ideas of Mikhail Bakhtin (Exams, Discussion)
- Apply the theory of intertextuality to Tolkien’s hybridized creation of Middle-earth (Discussion, CEC, Group Project, Papers)
- Develop an understanding of Tolkien’s fiction as a site where the medieval and modern intersect (Papers, Exams, Discussion, Group Project)
- Become familiar with some medieval literature, primarily Anglo-Saxon (Exams, Papers, Discussion)
- Write competent analytical essays incorporating MLA format (Papers)

Requirements/Paper One 15% Final Exam 15%
Grading: OED Paper 10% CEC 5%
Paper Three 20% Discussion Questions 10%
Midterm 15% Group Project 10%

Attendance and Participation: The pace is challenging, and if you fall behind, it can be extremely difficult to catch up; missing just one or two classes can have serious consequences. Therefore, I expect you to attend class regularly and to come prepared to participate fully (that means having completed the reading assignment for that day!). More than two unexcused absences WILL negatively affect your grade. College policy states that students must notify faculty within the first three weeks of the semester if they anticipate missing any classes due to religious observance.

Discussion Questions: Each student is responsible for formulating discussion questions **eleven** times during the course of the semester according to the first letter of your last name: A-L on Mondays and M-Z on Thursdays. Questions must be typed and turned in to me after you have presented your question to the class. The purpose of this requirement is twofold: it provides an incentive to keep up with the reading and allows your responses to the reading to drive class discussion. For these reasons I do not accept late questions; however, you may make-up one question without penalty. Ideally, questions should focus on some connection between the reading for that day, whether primary text or criticism, and Tolkien’s fiction. What aspects of the reading or critical approach seemed especially valuable in your reading of Tolkien? How did the approach taken suggest (or not suggest) a different way of looking at his work? Can it be applied to other aspects of his fiction? The idea is not to send a question that has an answer, but rather one you would like to discuss. One possible model for a question would be “Critic A suggests B, and I wondered what that means for C.” For example, “Tom Shippey suggests that Tolkien creates in the One Ring a version of evil that is both interior and exterior—that is both inner weakness and outward force. What does that suggest about the culpability of characters who fall to the power of the Ring—including Frodo? Is their failure evidence of their weakness or the strength of evil’s power?” While the questions themselves will not be graded, submitting the required number of acceptable questions on time, along with your general record of attendance and participation, will account for 10% of your final grade in the course. Questions that are submitted late or not at all, or are of extremely poor quality, will negatively impact your final grade.

Exams: The **midterm** exam is scheduled for Thursday, 5 March. It will focus on the modern theoretical readings, the medieval texts, and *The Hobbit*. The **final** exam for this class is scheduled for Thursday, 7 May, 3:00 - 6:00 p.m. The specific formats of both exams will be reviewed in class, but they will both include identification and will be primarily essay.
Papers: There will be three papers assigned for this class. The first, due Thursday, 19 February asks you to consider Tolkien’s incorporation and reworking of older material in his fiction using Kristeva’s or Bakhtin’s theories (4-6 pages). The second, due Monday, 13 April is a discussion of Tolkien’s vocabulary utilizing the OED (4-6 pages). The third paper, due Thursday, 30 April asks you to critically examine some aspect of the epic in light of relevant scholarship, including intertextuality (8-10 pages). A topic proposal is due before the third paper.

Essay Format and Submission: All essays must be typed, double-spaced, and written in 12-point font with 1-inch margins; all pages should be numbered. Essays should have an interesting title, centered in bold at the top of the first page; in the upper left hand corner of the page should appear your name, my name, the course number (LITR 354), and the date, all double-spaced. No separate title page is necessary. Topics will be covered in greater detail at a later date. For your own protection, keep all rough drafts. All essays must be turned in to me in a paper copy at the beginning of class on the day they are due. In addition, all essays must be submitted electronically to Moodle and thereby turnitin.com. Papers will not be graded until they have been submitted to turnitin.com via Moodle.

Late Policy: It is in your best interest to keep up with the assignments, as the schedule is rigorous. Papers are due in class at the beginning of the class period. Late papers will be deducted one-third of a letter grade for each day late; excessively late papers will receive an “F.”

Oral Presentations: Students will examine and report on the volumes of the History of Middle-earth series. More detailed information will be distributed, along with a sign-up sheet.

Course Enrichment Component (CEC): This course will include a minimum of five (5) hours of unmonitored appropriate experience outside of the classroom. For the CEC of this course, you will explore the world of Tolkien fandom and report on its products as intertexts. This component will account for 5% of your final grade in the course.

Policy on Academic Integrity: Students are expected to read and understand Ramapo College’s academic integrity policy, which can be found online in the College Catalog. Members of the Ramapo College community are expected to be honest and forthright in their academic endeavors. Students who violate this policy will be referred to the Office of the Provost. Plagiarism is a serious offense, with serious consequences. All out-of-class papers must be submitted electronically to turnitin.com as well as handed in to me.

Policy on Electronic Devices in the Classroom: Cell phones should be off or on silent and should be both out of sight and out of your hands. Text messaging is NOT allowed. Laptops are allowed only with permission of the instructor.

Electronic Forms of Communication: In accordance with College policy, I will use your Ramapo College email address (@ramapo.edu) to communicate with you about all course-related matters.

Students with Disabilities: If you need course adaptation or accommodations because of a disability that has been documented with the Office of Specialized Services, please make an appointment with me.

Please visit the Literature major web page for more information about the program:
http://phobos.ramapo.edu/majors/literature
Syllabus (subject to change)

**Week One**
R 22 January  Course Introduction

**Week Two**
M 26 January  Kristeva’s “Word, Dialogue, and Novel” (Moodle)
“An Unexpected Party” (Ch. 1 of *The Hobbit* 1-27)
The Tally of Dwarves (Völuspá from the *Poetic Edda*; Moodle)
R 29 January  Bakhtin’s “Epic and Novel” (Moodle)
“Riddles in the Dark” (Ch. 5 of *The Hobbit*, 68-89)
Riddles from the Exeter Book (3, 21, 27, 28, 29, 30, 37, 39, 41, 50, 64, 81; Moodle)
Five Riddles from *Heidrek’s Saga* (Moodle)
Solomon and Saturn II (Moodle)

**Week Three**
M 2 February  “The Shadow of the Past” (Ch. 2 of *The Fellowship of the Ring*)
Plato’s “The Ring of Gyges” (*Republic*, Book II; Moodle)
“The Betrayal of Oswin” (Bede’s *Ecclesiastical History*, III, chap. 14; Moodle)
*The Rune Poem* (http://www.nordic-life.org/nmh/InEnglish/7eng.pdf; Moodle)
R 5 February  The Ring of the Rhinegold
*Saga of the Volsungs* (read chapters 11-19; http://omacl.org/Volsunga/)
*The Nibelungenlied* (read chapter 3; http://omacl.org/Nibelungenlied/)

**Week Four**
M 9 February  *The Hobbit* (remaining chapters)
R 12 February  *Beowulf* (13-105)

**Week Five**
M 16 February  “Sellic Spell” (*Beowulf* 355-425)
R 19 February  *Beowulf*?
Tolkien’s “The Monsters and the Critics” (Moodle)
Tolkien’s “On Translating *Beowulf*” (Moodle)
**Paper One Due**

**Week Six**
M 23 February  *The Wanderer* (Moodle)
*The Ruin* (Moodle)
R 26 February  *The Battle of Maldon* (Moodle)
Tolkien’s *The Homecoming of Beorhtnoth* (Tolkien Reader 3-27; Moodle)

**Week Seven**
M 2 March  *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*
R 5 March  **Midterm**

**Week Eight**
M 9 March  *Sir Orfeo*
R 12 March  *Pearl*
Spring Break: No Classes

**Week Nine**
M 23 March  

R 26 March  
Tolkien’s *FR*; Shippey’s “The Bourgeois Burglar” (*Road to Middle-Earth* 55-93)

**Week Ten**
M 30 March  
Tolkien’s *FR*; Shippey’s “A Cartographic Plot” (*Road to Middle-Earth* 94-134)

R 2 April  
Tolkien’s *The Two Towers*

**Week Eleven**
M 6 April  
Tolkien’s *TT*; Shippey’s “Interlacements and the Ring” (*Road to Middle-Earth* 135-76); Shippey’s “‘When All Our Fathers Worshipped Stocks and Stones’” (*Road to Middle-Earth* 177-222)

R 9 April  
Tolkien’s *The Return of the King*

**Week Twelve**
M 13 April  
Holmes’ “Oaths and Oath Breaking: Analogues of Old English *Comitatus* in Tolkien’s Myth” (Moodle)

**OED Paper due**

R 16 April  
Bolintineanu’s “‘On the Borders of Old Stories’: Enacting the Past in *Beowulf* and *The Lord of the Rings*” (Moodle)

Flieger’s “Frodo and Aragorn: The Concept of the Hero” (Moodle)

Flieger’s “One Fragment” (Moodle)

**Week Thirteen**
M 20 April  
Excerpts from Tolkien’s *Silmarillion*  
“Ainulindalë” and “Valaquenta” (15-32; Moodle) 
“Akallabêth” and “Of the Rings of Power and the Third Age” (259-304; Moodle)

**Paper Three Topic Proposal Due**

R 23 April  
Excerpts from Tolkien’s *Silmarillion*  
“Of Beren and Lúthien” (162-87; Moodle)  
“Of Túrin Turambar” (198-226; Moodle)

**Week Fourteen**
M 27 April  
Jackson’s film adaptations

R 30 April  
Tolkien’s “Smith of Wootton Major” (Moodle; http://www.tolkien.ro/text/JRR%20Tolkien%20-%20Smith%20of%20Wootton%20Major.pdf)  
Tolkien’s “Leaf by Niggle” (*Tolkien Reader* 100-20; Moodle)

**Paper Three due**

**Week Fifteen**
M 4 May  
Course wrap-up; Prepare for final

R 7 May  
**Final Exam** (3:00 – 6:00 p.m.)