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Spring 2015, LITR 354, Section 1 (4 Credits)

Ramapo College of New Jersey, Salameo School of Humanities and Global Studies

### **LITR 354: The Medieval and Modern in Middle-earth Paper One**

According to Julia Kristeva, “any text is constructed as a mosaic of quotations; any text is the absorption and transformation of another” (66). Utilizing the theoretical ideas of Kristeva and/or Bakhtin, especially her notion of intertextuality and his concept of dialogue, consider some of the ways in which Tolkien’s *The Hobbit* is in dialogue with some of the older works we have read, such as *Beowulf*, *Volsungssaga*, etc. Your paper should include a discussion of Kristeva’s and/or Bakhtin’s theories (with appropriate quotation) and apply those ideas to Tolkien’s work. A clear, specific thesis that makes an arguable assertion is paramount.

**A few further “technical” points to remember as you write your essay:** Literature lives in the present moment. That means the action of the poem or novel is conceived of as taking place in a perpetual present: “After accomplishing his mission by defeating Grendel and his mother, Beowulf journeys over the sea back to Geatland” or “Bilbo becomes the *de facto* leader of the group after Gandalf departs.” Just because Tolkien or the *Beowulf*-poet, or whoever else, wrote it in the past does not mean you should write about the action as taking place in the past: it lives anew with every reading.

**Regarding the format of quotations:** Quotations of less than four lines are integrated into the text, and for verse, slashes indicate line breaks: “That is no queenly custom / for a lady to perform—no matter how lovely— / that a peace-weaver should deprive of life / a friendly man after a pretended affront” (1940-3). Note that the capitalization scheme is preserved, as is all punctuation, and the location of the lines of text is specified by designating the line numbers in parentheses. Longer quotations are indented, giving each line of verse its own line of text, and do not require quotation marks; the designation of line numbers follows in parentheses on the last line. **No outside criticism** is to be used beyond the class readings provided.

**Do not forget to submit your essay to Moodle.**

**Paper One Due (15%):** Thursday, 19 February  
4-6 pages