HONR 208E SEMINAR—FALL 2010
Tolkien: Author of his Century
Art-Soc. 3215 12:30–1:45 p.m.

Course aim: We will read, discuss, analyze and explore the values in and assess the value of the fiction of J.R.R. Tolkien. Our goal will be to examine Tolkien’s major works in the context of itself, his life, and his time, and to understand his work as an index of contemporary thought.

Requirements: Participation in discussion, three intermediate exams, a final 2-hour exam synthesizing material covered in the earlier exams with *The Lord of the Rings*. The first exam covers Tolkien’s two critical essays, *Beowulf*, and the Waldman letter. The second exam is on *The Silmarillion*, the third exam on *The Hobbit*. Each exam builds on the one before it, and the final exam builds on all three, asking you to write cogently on *The Lord of the Rings* in the context of its literary and historical background.

Required Texts: *The Monsters and the Critics* ISBN 9780261102637
*The Silmarillion* ISBN 9780618391110
*The Hobbit* ISBN 9780518002214
*The Lord of the Rings* ISBN 09780618343997

Have the assignment read by the date on which it first appears. Keep up with the reading even if discussion falls behind (it will). If too few students have read the text to sustain discussion, I may cancel the class and/or give pop quizzes. These will not add to your grade, but could subtract from it.

Promptness and Attendance. Get to class on time, be in class when it is in session, have a valid written excuse if you 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.

Grading: Each of the short exams will count for 20% of your grade. The final will count for 40%. Class participation will count as plus or minus in your grade, and will be used to make close decisions.
Aug. 30 Discussion — Tolkien: his life, his century, "a mythology for England"

Sept. 1 Tolkien, *Monsters & the Critics* “Beowulf: The Monsters and the Critics”

6 Labor Day Holiday — No Class

8 Chickering, *Beowulf*, ll. 1 – 1962

13 *Beowulf*, ll. 1963 – 3180


20 "On Fairy-stories" continued

22 First Exam

27 *The Silmarillion*, “Ainulindalë,” “Quenta Silmarillion” Chapter 1

29 “Quenta Silmarillion” Chapters 2–9

Oct. 4 Chapters 2-9 continued

6 “Quenta” Chapters 17–20, focus on Beren and Lúthien, Thingol

11 “Quenta” Chapters 20–22; focus on Túrin Turambar, Húrin,

13 “Akallabêth”

18 Second Exam

20 *The Hobbit*, Chapters I-VI

25 *The Hobbit*, Chapters VII-XI

27 *The Hobbit*, Chapters XII-XIX

Nov. 1 Third Exam

3 *LotR, The Fellowship*, Prologue and Book One

8 “ Book One continued

10 “ Book Two

15 “ Book Two continued

17 “ *The Two Towers*, Book Three

22-24 No class — Reading Day

29 “ Book Four

Dec. 1 “

6 *Return*, Book Five

8 “ Book Six

17 Final Exam 8:00–10:00 a.m.