Welcome to Middle-earth and Beyond! I aim for our study of Tolkien this semester to be invigorating, challenging, and fascinating. I never tire of his works, and I look forward to introducing some of you to them perhaps for the first time. Others who have read some Tolkien will also likely find themselves in new territory with some of the texts, and no matter how familiar you are with them, I expect you will discover some facets of Tolkien have explored before.

I have the following general goals for the semester, goals which involve (per the course title) visiting Middle-earth but also going “beyond” those well-known shores:

- To expose (or re-expose) you to Tolkien’s most famous works, *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*.

- To expose you to Tolkien’s wider mythology for Middle-earth, the world of the Valar and the elves of the first age geographically beyond the borders of the Shire, The Lonely Mountain, the Blue Mountains, and Gondor.

- To introduce you to some of Tolkien’s other fiction outside the works dealing with Middle-earth and Valinor.

- To explore Tolkien as a person and a scholar himself and the ways in which his major works are rooted deeply in his own beliefs and his academic field (medieval literature and mythology). We will look at some biographical material and study some of his own scholarly work.

- To introduce you to some of the current scholarly approaches to and conversations about Tolkien’s work though.

- To look at our contemporary pop-culture’s response to and interpretation of Tolkien, going “beyond” Middle-earth in ways he himself would probably never have anticipated.
Course Policies
I will expect from you a high level of engagement with the course material and participation in discussions. I will also expect top-notch writing and other work from each of you. I want to help you gain the maximum combination of learning and intellectual growth out of this course, so please seek me out for assistance at any point with reading or writing if you are having difficulty. To achieve these ends and the goals described above (and the best grade of which you are capable as you demonstrate that achievement), you should expect to invest, on average, two or three hours of study and preparation for each hour the class meets, probably more during the first several weeks as we read fairly quickly through *The Lord of the Rings*.

Attendance and Professionalism
With few exceptions, attendance is required. No excuses. If you miss a session, I expect you to explain your absence in an email to me (or in person or via phone); you must also stay current with the class by contacting another student. Tardiness to class is not acceptable, as the classroom environment involves an active community, and you will be graded on your participation in class discussions. Obviously, if you are not in class, you cannot participate in those discussions.

If you know in advance you will miss class for a religious observance, let me know at least a week in advance. For other expected (or potential) absences, let me know as far in advance as possible; I will consider these on a case-by-case basis.

In the event that you must miss class due to an illness, the policy in this class is as follows:
- For every medically necessary absence from class (lecture, recitation, or lab), you should make a reasonable effort to inform me in advance of the class. When returning to class, you must bring a note identifying the date of and reason for the absence, and acknowledging that the information in the note is accurate.
- If you are absent more than once, I may require documentation signed by a health care professional.
- If you are absent on days when tests are scheduled or papers are due, you should notify me in advance, and upon returning to class, bring documentation of the illness, signed by a health care professional.

Late work is also unacceptable. Assigned work must be turned in no later than the start of class on the due date. I will occasionally extend a deadline in special circumstances, but you should discuss your circumstances with me at least a week prior to the deadline. The penalty for late work submitted without prior arrangement is a letter grade (10 points) for each calendar day past the due date.

Attendance and timeliness (of your attendance and your assignments) are all really subsets of the overall high level professionalism I expect from you. I expect you to conduct yourselves both in class and with assignments like the professionals (in whatever field) you are studying at the university to become.
**Class Participation**
Class participation is essential to successful learning of the course material. Contribute constructively to the course, even if simply by asking good questions. All of you have had experiences and insights from which other students in the class can benefit. Even if you are just beginning to take courses as an English major or are not an English major at all, you have knowledge and the capacity for insight that neither I nor the other students in the class possess and from which we can all benefit.

I will consider the following classroom activities as detrimental to class discussion and class participation and therefore detrimental to your grade:
- Computer use unrelated to the course, including unauthorized emailing or messaging
- Use of cell phones

I may, from time to time, remind the class or specific individuals of the unprofessionalism of these activities; however, I may choose not to disrupt class with a comment and yet still make a note in my records. If you do these things in class, it should not surprise you if at the end of the semester your grade is significantly lower than the sum of just your assignment grades.

Your attendance in class is a vital element in your ability to participate; therefore, your class participation grade will reflect your consistent presence in class as well as your engagement with assignments and discussion.

**Office Hours / Contacting Me**
My office hours are at the top of this syllabus. Normally I will be in my office during these times, though I may occasionally step out. I encourage you, therefore, to schedule an appointment with me even during these times so I will know to expect you. If these hours will not work for you, we may be able to find another time to meet or else confer via phone or email. If you email me with a question, I will normally try get back to you within one working day (24 hours during the week) and at the most within 72 hours. I rarely check this email on the weekend, so if you have something pressing before Monday morning, let me know Friday or else call or text.

**Writing Center**
I encourage all of you to make use of the Writing Center. Through an interactive consultation, a tutor can help you at any stage of the writing process. The Writing Center will not turn a D quality paper to an A paper for you, but the staff can help you develop the skills you need to successfully move your paper to the next step in the process. The Writing Center is located near the entrance to Tawes and provides appointment and walk-in hours during the week. Although the staff will not “correct” or “proofread” your papers, they can help you review and improve your English composition skills. Your visits to the WC are documented and forwarded to me.

**Academic Integrity**
Another facet of your professionalism is Academic Integrity. The University has approved a Code of Academic Integrity that prohibits students from cheating on exams, plagiarizing papers, submitting the same paper for credit in two courses without authorization, buying papers, facilitating academic dishonesty, submitting fraudulent documents, and forging signatures. Plagiarism policy: all quotations taken from other authors, including from the Internet, must be indicated by quotation marks and
referenced. Paraphrasing (putting other’s ideas into your own words) must be referenced as well. In addition, the following University of Maryland Honor Pledge, approved by the University Senate, should be handwritten and signed on the front page of all papers (or submitted with your email for electronic paper submission), projects or other academic assignments submitted for evaluation in this course: "I pledge on my honor that I have not given or received any unauthorized assistance on this assignment/examination."

**Students with Disabilities**
This course complies with University policy regarding students with disabilities as described in the current Undergraduate or Graduate Catalog. You should let me know at the start of the semester if you have a disability which requires special accommodation on my part.

**Religious Holidays**
Any student's assertion of a religious observance will be taken at face value; advance warning of any classes, tests, etc., to be missed for religious observance should come to me in writing in the first week of the semester.
(http://www.president.umd.edu/policies/iii510a.html)

Missing class or a deadline for a religious observance does not excuse a student from material taught in the class or any course assignments.

**In Case of Inclement Weather or Emergency** which closes the University or otherwise causes the cancellation of class, you should continue with all reading assignments and other work as scheduled unless you hear otherwise from me via email or Canvas posting.

**Graded Material**
Your final grade will comprise the following, in approximately the proportions indicated. You are to read all assignments on the syllabus prior to each day’s class. Bring all assigned course texts to class, including class material read online or posted to Canvas, which you should print out beforehand.

- **Homework/Class participation**: 30%
  (includes quizzes, attendance, contribution to class discussion, participation in online discussions, engagement with reading assignments, other in-class activities, and general professionalism)
- **Artistic project**: 10%
- **Short writing assignments & exercises**: 30%
- **Term Paper**: 30%
List of Required Texts

  ISBN-10: 0544442784  

  ISBN-10: 054792822X  

  ISBN-10: 0618640150  

  ISBN-10: 0618126988  

  ISBN-10: 0547394578  

  ISBN-10: 0739427369  
  (this one is out of print and only available used)

Additional readings will be via handout / Canvas or in online journals.
Course Schedule
(Changes will be promulgated via email or Canvas as well as in class)

Week 1
Sep 3
• Course Intro
• “The Battle of Maldon” (handout/pdf)

Week 2 - Hobbit
Sep 8
• The Homecoming of Beorhtnoth (handout/pdf)
• The Hobbit, ch. 1-8

Sep 10
• The Hobbit ch. 9-19

Week 3 Beowulf
Sep 15
• Beowulf (Tolkien’s pp 13-77)

Sep 17
• Finish Beowulf (Tolkien pp. 77-105) and read commentary pp. 167-186 & 271-5
• Sellic Spel (pp. 355-386) and “The Lay of Beowulf” (415-425)

Week 4
Sep 22
• The Silmarillion (Silm): “Ainulindalë” and “Valaquenta” (pp. 15-32)

Sep 24
• The Lord of the Rings (LOTR) Book 1, ch. 1-6 (I.1-6)

Week 5
Sep 29
• LOTR I.7-12

Oct 1
• LOTR II.1-5

Week 6
Oct 6
• LOTR II.5-10

Oct 8
• LOTR III.1-5

**Oct 10 – Short paper #1 due electronically
Mithril Turtle conference Friday all day
**Week 7**

Oct 13
- *LOTR* III.6-11

Oct 15
- Class cancelled to compensate for Mithril Turtle attendance

**Week 8**

Oct 20

Oct 22
- *LOTR* IV.1-5

**Week 9**

Oct 27
- *LOTR* IV.6-10

Oct 29
- *LOTR* V.1-4

**Week 10**

Nov 3
- *LOTR* V.5-10

Nov 5
- *LOTR* VI.1-3

**Week 11**

Nov 10
- *LOTR* VI.4-9

Nov 12
- *Silm* I-IX

**Nov 14** - Short paper #2 due electronically

**Week 12**

Nov 17
- *Silm XIII-IX* (through *Beren and Luthien*)

Nov 19
- *Silm* XXI-XXIII

**Week 13**

Nov 24
- *Silm* XXIV and *Akallabeth*

Nov 26
- *Sigurd and Gudrún*, “The Lay of the Volsungs” pp 59-180
Week 14
  Dec 1
  • Sigurd and Gudrún, “The Lay of Gudrún” pp 253-308
  Dec 3
  • Smith of Wooton Major & Leaf by Niggle (in Tolkien Miscellany, pp 5-35 & 147-162)
  • Final Paper Due

Week 15
  Dec 8
  • Farmer Giles of Ham (in Tolkien Miscellany pp 37-91)
  Dec 10
  • Sir Orfeo (in Tolkien Miscellany pp 341-355)
  • Course wrap up