



Fall 2018 ♦ ENGL 450/550-001 (#65351/62354)

TTh 11:00-12:15 ♦ MH 207

Dr. Obermeier

Middle English Heroes, Saints, and Lovers

Office Hours: M 10-12 and TH 12:30-2:30 in HUM 227; and by Appointment

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Course Requirements

Undergraduates:

ME Works Presentation	worth 15%
8-10-page paper	worth 30%
In-class midterm	worth 15%
In-class final	worth 15%
Written Responses	worth 15%
Class participation	worth 10%

Graduates:

ME Works Presentation	worth 15%
Literature Review for Research Paper	worth 10%
15-18-page Research Paper	worth 30%
In-class final	worth 15%
Electronic Discussion Forum	worth 15%
Class participation	worth 15%

Grading is done on a standard 0-100 scale. For grading rubrics and scale, see class webpage.

Required Texts

King Arthur's Death. Ed. Larry D. Benson. Tams, 1994.
The Book of Margery Kempe. Ed. Lynn Staley. Norton, 2001.
The Lais of Marie de France. Trans. and ed. Claire Waters. Broadview, 2018.
 Langland, William. *Piers Plowman*. Eds. Elizabeth Robertson & Stephen Shepherd. Norton, 2006.
 Obermeier, Anita, and Gregory Castle. *Guide to Style*. 2018 (CWP).
 Osborn Bokenham. *A Legend of Holy Women*. Trans. Sheila Delany. U of Notre Dame P, 1992.
Sir Gawain and the Green Knight. Eds. Marie Borroff and Laura L. Howes. Norton, 2009.
The York Corpus Christi Play. Ed. Christina Francis. Broadview, 2018.
 Class webpage: <http://www.unm.edu/~aobermei/Eng450550/index450550.html>

Tentative Syllabus

Texts to be read for the day indicated. Both Middle English (ME) texts and modern English translations are provided. We will work from the ME versions, unless otherwise indicated.

Responses are to be handed in on the day indicated.

Links and pdfs of texts that are not in book form are in the web folder for each week.

Week 1

- T 8.21 Introduction to the Course: Historical Background: To 1066 and Beyond.
 TH 8.23 **The Norman Conquest and Its Literary Aftermath: *The Bayeux Tapestry*.**
 Online Bayeux Tapestry versions; Animated Version.

Week 2

- T 8.28 *The Bayeux Tapestry* cont.
Linguistic Background: *English Goes Underground*.
 “Middle English Overview”; “Middle English Grammar”; “Middle English Pronunciation.”
 Middle English language exercise.
 TH 8.30 Introduction to Middle English Literature.
 Read the translation of “The Owl and the Nightingale”; use ME version for reference.
Optional Reading: “The Proverbs of Alfred”; “Poema Morale.”
Graduate Reading: Matlock, “Law and Violence in the Owl and the Nightingale.”
 F 8.31 **Last day to ADD sections and CHANGE credit hours and Grade Mode on LoboWEB.**

Week 3

- T 9.4 Marie de France: *Lais* (47-195). **Response 1 due.**
Optional Reading: Prologues and Epilogues (389-400).
 TH 9.6 *Lais* cont. (196-359); “Dame Sirith”; “The Land of Cockayne.”
Optional Reading: Love Relationships (377-88).
Graduate Reading: Fischer, “Culture, Ethnicity, and Assimilation in Anglo-Norman Britain: The Evidence from Marie de France’s *Lais*.”
 F 9.7 **Last day to drop course without a “W”.**

Week 4

- T 9.11 **Chivalry and Romance: *King Horn***; “Epic Romance Handout.”
Optional Reading: Finlayson, “Definitions of Middle English Romance.”
Graduate Reading: Speed, “The Saracens of King Horn.”
- TH 9.13 *Floris and Blancheflour*. **Response 2 due.**
Graduate Reading: Czarnowus, “Bodies Enslaved in *Aucassin et Nicolette* and *Floris and Blancheflour*.”

Week 5

- T 9.18 **Margery Kempe and the Mystics:**
Video Presentation: *Visions of Prophecy, Voices of Power*.
The Book of Margery Kempe (1-41 top); *The Constitutions of Thomas Arundel* (187-96).
- TH 9.20 *The Book of Margery Kempe* cont. (41-67). **Response 3 due.**
Optional Reading: Nicholas Watson (299-301); *The Book of Saint Bride* (207-18); Lynn Staley (236-42).
Graduate Reading: Hsy, “Kissing Lepers and Same-Sex Desire.”

Week 6

- T 9.25 *The Book of Margery Kempe* cont. (78-108, 128-32; 180-84); *The Life of Marie d’Oignies* (218-22).
Optional Reading: Karma Lochrie (243-56); Clarissa W. Atkinson (225-36); David Aers (256-63); Kathleen Ashley (264-76); Gail McMurray Gibson (276-84); Sarah Beckwith (284-87); Caroline Walker Bynum (288-98).
- TH 9.27 **Visionary Literature: *The Shewings of Julian of Norwich***. **Response 4 due.**
Optional Reading: *The anchoress’s Rule*.
Graduate Reading: Walsh, “Universal Salvation in the Theology of Julian of Norwich.”
Presentation: “The Isle of Ladies” (Marybeth, Monica)

Week 7

- T 10.2 William Langland, *Piers Plowman*: Prologue, Passus I-II (2-37).
Optional Reading: “Whore of Babylon” (372); ME Plague Responses (427-28); Statutes of Laborers and Pleading (428-30); Chaucer, “General Prologue” (453-62); “Parliament of Mice and Rats” (488); “Summary of the Poem” (495-502).
- TH 10.4 *Piers Plowman*: Passus III-V (37-83). **Response 5 due.**
Optional Reading: Salter and Pearsall, “Allegory and Realism” (514-22); Hanna, “Dating of the A, B, C Versions” (591-).
Graduate Reading: Farrell, “Problem of Piers Plowman.”

Week 8

- T 10.9 *Piers Plowman*: Passus V-VII (83-122).
Optional Reading: Kane, “Who Is William Langland” (12-13);
Graduate Reading: Barrson, “William Langland: A London Poet.”
Midterm Exam Prep.
- TH 10.11 Fall Break. No Class.

Week 9

- T 10.16 **Midterm Exam for Undergraduates.**
Blue books are optional, but some form of paper is required.
Meeting for about Literature Review with Grads in HUM 324.
- TH 10.18 *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, lines 1-1125. **Response 6 due.**
Optional Reading: Hieatt, “*Sir Gawain: Pentangle, Luf-Lace, Numerical Structure*” (Borroff).
Graduate Reading: Nastali, “*Jessie Weston and the Green Knight.*”
Presentation: “*Story of Judith*” (Adrian, Jessica, Victoria)

Week 10

- T 10.23 **Magic and Fantasy:** *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, lines 1126-end.
Optional Reading: Carruthers, “*The Duke of Clarence and the Earls of March*” (Borroff).
Graduate Reading: Ralph, “*An Animal Studies and Ecocritical Reading of SGGK.*”
- TH 10.25 *The Weddyng of Syr Gawen and Dame Ragnell.* **Response 7 due**
Graduate Reading: Leech, “*Feminine Usurpation of Male Authority.*”
Presentation: “*The Knightly Tale of Gologras and Gawain*” (Jessie, Matt, Sam P.)

Week 11

- T 10.30 *Sir Orfeo; Sir Gowther; Merlin’s conception and birth section of the Prose Merlin.*
Graduate Reading: Huber, “*Redeeming the Dog: Sir Gowther*”; Spyra, “*The Liminality and the Fairies of Sir Orfeo.*”
- TH 11.1 **The Arthurian Legend:** *The Alliterative Morte Arthure* (lines 3218-3580, 3712-end)
Graduate Reading: Dean, “*Sir Gawain in the Alliterative Morte.*”

Week 12

- M 11.5 **Graduate Literature Review Due at Midnight.** Email submission in .doc or .docx format.
- T 11.6 *Stanzaic Morte Arthur* (lines 1-1639). **Response 8 due.**
- TH 11.8 *Stanzaic Morte Arthur* (lines 1640-2675).
Graduate Reading: Knepper, “*A Bad Girl Will Love You to Death.*”
Presentation: “*The Wallace*” (Allison, Samantha G., Tess)
- F 11.9 **Medieval Banquet.** 6 pm. Detailed invite to follow.
Last Day to DROP without Dean’s Permission on LoboWeb.

Week 13

- T 11.13 *Stanzaic Morte Arthur* (lines 2676-end)
Graduate Reading: Whetter, “*The Stanzaic Morte and Medieval Tragedy.*”
- TH 11.15 Presentation: Lyrics from Harley MS. 2253 (Allie, Kalila, Scooter)
Presentation: “*Sir Degare*” (Lukus, Nick, Stefan)
Presentation: Oton de Granson’s “*Cinq Balades Ensuiuans*” (Eva, Heather, Stephanie)

Week 14

- T 11.20 **Saints Lives:** Osbern Bokenham, *A Legend of Holy Women: Prologue and Legends*, esp. Margaret, Anne, Faith, Agnes, Dorothy. **Response 9 due.**
Graduate Reading: Horobin, “Politics, Patronage, Piety in the Works of Osbern Bokenham.”
- TH 11.22 Thanksgiving. No class.

Week 15

- T 11.27 Osbern Bokenham cont.: Mary Magdalen, Katherine, Cecilia, Agatha, Elizabeth.
Graduate Reading: Spencer, “Etymology, Genealogy and Hagiographical Auctoritas in the Works of Osbern Bokenham.”
Presentation: “The Adulterous Falmouth Squire” (Christopher, Nicodemus, Ryan)
- TH 11.29 **Medieval Drama:** Video Presentation: *From Sanctuary to Stage. The York Mystery Plays*, esp. *Fall of Man; The Flood; Joseph’s Trouble about Mary.*
Graduate Reading: Fitzgerald, “The Domestic Scene: Patriarchal Fantasies.”

Week 16

- T 12.4 *The Nativity; Woman Taken in Adultery and the Raising of Lazarus; First Trial Before Pilate.* **Response 10 due.**
Graduate Reading: Jobling, “The Pilate of the York Mystery Plays.”
- TH 12.6 *The Crucifixion; The Harrowing of Hell; The Last Judgment.*
Video Presentation: *Highlights of the York Mystery Plays.* **Final Exam Review.**
- SA 12.8 **Papers due at Midnight.** Email submission in .doc or .docx format.
- T 12.11 **Final Exam:** 12:30-2:30 in MH 207. Blue books are optional, but some form of paper is required.

Course Objectives

This course is an introductory sampling of medieval literature (and some art) produced in England and the immediate Continent between 1066 and 1500. We start this historical, linguistic, and literary enterprise with the *Bayeux Tapestry*—art with text—fighting alongside Anglo-Saxon warriors. Then we will pray with English saints, sleuth with historians, learn the art of courtly love from medieval knights and ladies, look at the nature of God with mystics, and watch biblical drama unfold. The original texts are in Latin, Anglo-Norman, and various dialects of Middle English, which we will study in modern English, in bilingual facing-page translations, and the easier ones in Middle English. The texts cover various secular and religious genres, including epic, debate, saints’ lives, *fabliau*, *lais*, romance, drama, allegory, and lyrics. The goal of the course is to highlight the variety and range of texts of the Middle English period, and to place those writings in their cultural, linguistic, and historical contexts. When appropriate and available, visual and aural material will be presented both to complement the written text and to deepen the overall experience of medieval culture.

Learning Outcomes

At end of the course, students should be able:

–to understand individual texts on the syllabus and their developmental connections

- to evidence knowledge of the history of Middle English literature
- to apply modern critical theories and evaluate how applicable they are to Medieval Studies
- to conduct research using appropriate methods and tools for Medieval Studies
- to write competent analytical response and research papers
- to identify, analyze, and synthesize the acquired knowledge and skills in tests and papers
- Specifically for graduate students:
- to come up with original research questions and execute them according to the principles above

Course Policies

1. Tests and Papers: Separate instructions will be handed out for each test and paper. The final is closed book and consists of short ids, passage ids, and essay questions. I will distribute a study guide before the test. Paper instructions will be on the class website. Sample papers are on the course website and are password protected.

2. Attendance is mandatory. Since your progress in the course will depend a great deal on what we discuss in class, I expect class attendance and participation (actual contributions to the class discussion). I will pass out attendance sheets, and it is your responsibility to sign the sheets. So, if the sheet passed you by, come up to the desk and sign at the end of class. Half of your participation grade is based on attendance. Every missed class will drop your participation grade 5 points. **Note:** While you are welcome to check with me on what you have missed, I do not “reteach” class periods you missed during my office hours or over email. Please consult with your fellow students for notes.

3. Undergraduate Written Responses: You are expected to write a 1-page response for each session indicated, discussing the readings for that day or since the last response. These responses should be **typed** pieces, expressing your thoughts and reactions to the text. They also help me see where an entire class might be lost, or what you are particularly interested in. In the past, I have really enjoyed reading about your thoughts; I get the feeling that I am sharing your experience. Do not be afraid to express puzzlement and unfamiliarity, or even delight and interest. I am interested in your critical reactions to the text but do not need mere retellings of the texts you read.

If you need some guidance, analyze why you think certain characters, themes, developments, motifs, etc. are significant. What do they mean in the context and culture they are used?

4. Class Discussion and Participation: One of my teaching philosophies is student ownership of text along with critical thinking. In order to facilitate good class discussion and involvement of all students, I have devised several short individual and small group warm-up exercises trying to cull out the significance of each text. It is not enough to retell “the story,” although sometimes things might be confusing and clarification is necessary. The emphasis is on analysis.

5. Graduate Discussion Forum: The discussion forum is designed to provide an additional opportunity for scholarly exchange, especially discussion of interesting secondary material we don’t have time to treat in class. The benefit here is that your thought processes do not happen in a vacuum, as everyone receives everyone else’s responses and can respond to individual opinions, if so desired. You are supposed to post **FIVE** times per semester and respond **FIVE**

times to the posts of others. You pick the five weeks in which to post and the five weeks in which to respond. You may post more often, if you wish.

Format: Students read the essay(s) assigned for the week, paying particular attention to content, methodology, and argument. Don't be afraid to critique a certain approach or methodology.

Undergraduates are welcome to participate in or follow the graduate blog but are not required to.

6. Middle English Works Presentation:

Effective speaking in the public arena is a highly prized skill both in the academic and business world. Presentations should be done by teams of three students. You should pick a Middle English work that is **NOT** on the syllabus and that you are interested in. You then introduce the class to that work in a 15-minute presentation. If possible, relate it to material, themes, and characters on the syllabus. A one-page handout with major descriptors and/or connections might be helpful, including a works cited page. Handouts can also be distributed via email or included in the weekly folder on the website. You should be prepared to answer questions from the class as well as ask questions of the class. We will schedule these presentations throughout the term, **please email your choices to me by 9.10.2018.** For inspiration, consult <http://d.lib.rochester.edu/teams/text-online>.

7. Plagiarism: *Don't do it! For clarification, see statements #102-7 in Guide to Style.*

8. Letters of Recommendation: I receive many requests for letters of recommendations for graduate school admission, job applications, scholarships, etc. I am happy to write these when asked but have two requests: 1) Your work needs to be on a level that I can recommend; 2) You need to keep the work you do in this class so I can reference specifics when needed.

9. The English Department affirms its commitment to the joint responsibility of instructors and students to foster and maintain a positive learning environment.

10. Accommodation Statement: Accessibility Services (Mesa Vista Hall 2021, 277-3506) provides academic support to students who have disabilities. If you think you need alternative accessible formats for undertaking and completing coursework, you should contact this service right away to assure your needs are met in a timely manner. If you need local assistance in contacting Accessibility Services, see the Bachelor and Graduate Programs office.

11. Cell Phones: No cell phone use or texting in this class. Turn your phones off.