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**Course Title: English 313: Medieval English Literature**

(I taught this course in Fall 2017 and an honors section in Spring 2018)

**Enrollment:** 35 to 42 Students

**Course Description: English 313:** Old and Middle English literature exclusive of Chaucer, including such authors and works as *Beowulf*, *Judith*, *The Dream of the Rood*, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, *The Travels of Sir John Mandeville*, Julian of Norwich, Margery Kempe, and the mystery plays, among others. We will consider issues of religious belief, monstrosity, ethnicity, race, religion, and sex, attending closely to the texts' historical, cultural, and political environments. Students will be asked to consider how narratives in the Middle Ages both reflect and shape beliefs and anxieties about the social and historical moments in which they were created. Class activities will involve lecture, discussion, individual and group work. Grades are based on short in-class essays, quizzes, two papers, and class participation.

**Learning Outcomes:** At the end of the semester, students will be able to do the following:

1. Learn to read certain texts written in Middle English in the original language, and acquire some fluency in reading Middle English over the course of the semester
2. Understand these works as expressions of individual and human values within their historical and social context.
3. Respond critically to medieval literature by analyzing the authors' rhetorical and literary techniques.
4. Apply these methods and techniques to the production of original student writing.
5. Articulate individual, scholarly, and critical responses to these works by reviewing relevant scholarship in the area on essays and exams.
6. Develop a thesis or argument by collecting evidence through textual analysis as well as scholarly citation.
7. Recognize the intercultural elements in Old and Middle English literature.

**Grading Scale**

900-1000 points A

800-899 points B

700-799 points C

600-699 points D

599 points and below F

**Grading:**

| Major Grade Categories/Assignments   | Percentage of Grade |
|--|---------------------|
| Consistent Participation in Teamwork Activities, Peer Review, and In-class Discussions | 10%                 |
| Short Essay Assignments  | 10%                 |
| Quizzes (7 total, 5 counted, 40 points each; unannounced)                              | 20%                 |
| Essay 1  | 20%                 |
| Research Paper Thesis, Outline, and Bibliography                                       | 10%                 |
| Research Paper   | 30%                 |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>100%</b>         |

**Texts:**

- Joseph Black et al., eds., *The Broadview Anthology of British Literature*, Volume 1, *The Medieval Period*, 3rd ed. (Toronto: Broadview Press, 2015).
- Selections on eCampus Course Platform which will include secondary sources as well as selections from Hildegard von Bingen. *Scivias*, Trans. Columba Hart and Jane Bishop, New Jersey: Paulist Press, 1990; Julian of Norwich. *Revelations of Divine Love*. Trans. Father John-Julian, OJN. Brewster: Paraclete Press, 2011; and *Joan of Arc: By Herself and Her Witnesses*. Trans. Edward Hyams. Lanham: Scarborough House, 1994.

**English 313 Course Schedule:**

| Topic  | Dates  | Readings and Assignments  |
|--|--------|---|
| <b>Introduction to the Medieval Period: History, Culture, and Language</b> | Week 1 | Introductions<br><br><b>ESSAY 1 ASSIGNED</b>  |
|  | Week 1 | “Introduction to the Medieval Period,” “History, Narrative, Culture,” “Before the Norman Conquest”;<br><i>Exeter Book Riddles</i> # 43, # 44, # 45, # 47, # 85, # 86, # 95. |
|  | Week 2 | Old English Elegies: <i>Dream of the Rood</i> ; <i>The Wanderer</i> ; <i>The Wife’s Lament</i> ; <i>The Ruin</i>  |
|  | Week 2 | Middle English Lyrics: “Summer is icumen in,” “Foweles in the frith,” “Maiden in the mor lay,” “Adam lay ibounden,” (257)   |
|  | Week 3 | <i>Sir Gawain and the Green Knight</i> (Part I)   |
|  | Week 3 | <i>Sir Gawain and the Green Knight</i> (Part II)  |

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| <b>Kingship, Knighthood, and Chivalry</b>          | Week 4  | <i>Sir Gawain and the Green Knight</i> (Part III)  |
|  | Week 4  | <i>Sir Gawain and the Green Knight</i> (Part IV)   |
|  | Week 5  | “Crises of the fourteenth Century”;<br>Sir Thomas Malory: <i>Le Morte Darthur</i> (Book I)   |
|  | Week 5  | Sir Thomas Malory: <i>Le Morte Darthur</i> (Book 7); “Guinevere's Politics in Malory's ‘Morte Darthur’”  |
|  | Week 6  | Sir Thomas Malory: <i>Le Morte Darthur</i> (Book 8); “Purple Hearts and Coronets: Caring for Wounds in Malory”   |
|  | Week 6  | Marie de France: <i>Chevrefueil</i> ; <i>Lanval</i>  |
| <b>Women and the Middle Ages</b>                   | Week 7  | <b>WRITING WORKSHOP</b>  |
|  | Week 7  | <b>ROUGH DRAFT AND GROUP PEER REVIEW</b>   |
|  | Week 8  | Women in the Middle Ages, the antifeminist tradition and responses to it:<br><br>“Concerning Women’s Vices”;<br>“Against Women Unconstant”;<br>“Abuse of Women”<br><br><b>ESSAY 1 DUE</b>  |
|  | Week 8  | Testing the Boundaries: Hildegard von Bingen and Joan of Arc:<br><br><i>Joan of Arc: By Herself and Her Witnesses</i> ; Hildegard of Bingen selections from <i>Scivias</i> ; “The Contours of Female Piety in Later Medieval Hagiography”<br><br><b>ESSAY 2 ASSIGNED</b> |
|  | Week 9  | Christine de Pizan: <i>The Book of the City of Ladies</i> , “In Defense of Women,” “Judith,” “Criticism of Emperors,” and “The Song of Joan of Arc”  |
|  | Week 9  | Margery Kempe  |
|  | Week 10 | Julian of Norwich  |
|  | Week 10 | Marie de France <i>Yonec</i> ; <i>Bisclavret</i>   |
| <b>Devils, Monsters, and the Monstrous “Other”</b> | Week 11 | <i>Beowulf</i> (lines: 1-1847)   |
|  | Week 11 | <i>Beowulf</i> (lines: 1038-1849)  |
|  | Week 12 | <i>Beowulf</i> (lines: 1850-3182)<br><br><b>WORKING THESIS, OUTLINE, AND ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY DUE</b>  |
|  | Week 12 | <i>Judith</i> (117-127)  |

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|--|---------|---|
|  | Week 13 | <i>The Travels of Sir John Mandeville</i> |
|  | Week 13 | <i>Sir Orfeo</i>                          |
|  | Week 14 | Towneley Judgment Play                    |
|  | Week 14 | <b>WRITING WORKSHOP</b>                   |
|  | Week 15 | <b>ROUGH DRAFT AND GROUP PEER REVIEW</b>  |
|  | Week 15 | <b>FINAL PAPER DUE</b>                    |