

ENGL209.70 – PAST TIMES: LITERATURE AND HISTORY

Gastle – Spring '19 – “Getting Medieval”

Dr. Brian W. Gastle
Office: Coulter 410; 3922

ENGL 209.01 | CRN 11569 | MW 4:00-5:15 | Coulter 301

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Office Hours

TW 1:00-2:00

by appointment – see below

Required Texts

- *Literature of the Western World Vol. 1*. Fifth Edition. Prentice Hall, 2001. [RENTAL]
- Supplemental required readings available in Blackboard.



Course Description

This course addresses the relationships between literature and history (both as disciplines and as texts traditionally assigned to those disciplines). Basically, we will be reading literature and analyzing it within its historical context. This course is taught differently by each instructor (and often differently by individual instructors) so be sure you are prepared to focus on the time frame associated with your chosen section. This semester in this class we'll be focusing on medieval literature, using the classic film *Monty Python and the Holy Grail* as an organizing structure for our investigation of medieval literature in ah historical context. Goals of the course include:

- To read and assimilate these important literary, cultural, and historical writings
- To become familiar with techniques of reading, interpreting, analyzing, and discussing written texts, especially significant Literature from the past and the relationship between Literature and History
- To engage in the exploration of the significance of human modes of being, thought, and values in their lives. (P4)
- To interrogate texts that embody humanity's attempts to understand itself. (P4)

Student Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Examine critically various cultures through historical and contemporary contexts at the local, national, and/or global levels. [**Liberal Studies Outcome #7: Awareness of Various Cultures**];
- Demonstrate the ability to critically analyze arguments (verbally and in writing);
- Formulate a rationale for the relevance of the study of Literature in a historical context in today's (their) world;
- Demonstrate a rudimentary understanding of some of the texts and issues that characterize medieval (especially Medieval English) literature and history.

Readings: Most classes will require assigned readings of between 5-20 pages. You should set aside about an hour to read the material. Don't rush. Take notes on what happens. And, if you have time, re-read to consider what is important/interesting in the work. Especially long readings are noted in the schedule.

Tentative Schedule

WW = Textbook

BB = Readings available in Blackboard

1	Scene 2: “Bring Out Your Dead” - The Plagues of 1348+	
M 01/14	Introduction to Literature and History	
W 01/16	Plague Society: Art, Literature and History	Boccaccio's <i>Decameron</i> 1st Day (WW 1878 – 1888)
2		
M 01/21	MLK Holiday - No Class	
W 01/23	Plague Society: Psychological Realism	Chaucer's <i>Book of the Duchess</i> (BB)
3		
M 01/28	Plague Society: Allegory and the Social Compact	<i>Decameron</i> Day 10 Tale 10 (WW 1906-1915) – Tale of Patient Griselda
W 02/03	Courtly Love	Andreas Capellanus (WW 1819-1825)
4	Scene 3: “Come and see the violence inherent in the system!” – Class and Estates Satire	
M 02/04	You are What You Look Like: Physiognomy	Chaucer's <i>Canterbury Tales</i> Gen Pro (WW 1674-92)
W 02/06	You are What You Look Like: Physiognomy	Chaucer's <i>Canterbury Tales</i> Gen Pro (WW 1674-92)
5	Scene 4: “The Black Knight always triumphs!” – Medieval Romance & Fabliau	
M 02/11	Romance: Love and War: Myth and Reality	Chaucer's “Knight's Tale” from the <i>CT</i> (BB - longer reading)
W 02/13	Fabliau: Critique of the Romance Tradition	<i>Decameron</i> 9.6 (BB)

6		
M 02/18	Fabliau – requitals 1	Miller’s Prologue and Tale (WW 1692-1708)
W 02/20	Fabliau – requitals 2	Chaucer “Reeve’s Tale” (BB)
7		
M 02/25	Romance: Allegiance to Lord and Love	Marie de France <i>Bisclavret</i> (WW 1335-41)
W 02/27	Romance – Dysfunctional Families	Marie de France <i>Yonec</i> (WW 1341-1353)
8		
M 03/04	Exam 1 Review and Essay Preparation	Review and Essay Preparation
W 03/06	EXAM 1	EXAM 1
9	Scene 11: “Oh, it is a lonely life -- We are just not used to handsome knights.” – Arthuriana I	
M 03/11	Spring Break	
W 03/13	Spring Break	
10		
M 03/18	Intro to Arthuriana - <i>Lancelot</i>	Chretien de Troyes <i>Lancelot</i> (BB – LONG reading)
W 03/20	The Quest, Love, and Honor	Chretien de Troyes <i>Lancelot</i> (BB – LONG reading)
11		
M 03/25	The Impossible Question	Gower’s “Tale of Florent” (BB)
W 03/27	The Impossible Answer	Wife of Bath’s Prologue and Tale (WW 1708-1734)
12		
M 04/01	The Personal is Political	<i>The Wedding of Gawain and Dame Ragnelle</i> (BB)
W 04/03	Romance – Transgressive Relationships	Marie de France <i>Eliduc</i> (BB – longer reading)
13		
M 04/08	Identity – Personal and Political	<i>Sir Gawain and the Green Knight</i> (WW 1613-70 – at least Parts 1 & 2 1615-1640)
W 04/10	Defeating the Peril	<i>Sir Gawain and the Green Knight</i> (WW 1613-70)
14		
M 04/15	More Revisions – Political and Personal	<i>The Turk and Sir Gawain</i>
W 04/17	No Classes	
15	Scene 11: “And here in Castle Anthrax, we have but one punishment for setting alight the grail-shaped beacon . . .” – the really dirty stuff that also is highly moral . . . really . . .	
M 04/22	Fabliau – Transgressive Relationships	<i>Decameron</i> Day 5 Tale 10 (WW 1900-1906) – Pietro and his wife Research Paper Due
W 04/24	Morality of Immorality	<i>Decameron</i> 3.10 (WW 1888-1894)
16		
M 04/29		
W 05/01	The End	Review for Second/Final Exam

Requirements

Midterm (Exam 1)	Final (Exam 2)	Research Essay	Quizzes	Attendance
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- **Final Grade:** All five of these components will be weighted equally. The lowest component grade will be dropped. I.E. Your final grade will be the average of the four highest component grades (each worth 25%)
- **The “Quiz” grade** will include other small assignments throughout the class. I usually drop the lowest 2 or 3 quiz grades and average the rest for this course grade. Reading quizzes will be given at the beginning of almost all classes.
- **Attendance** is one of the five grades. If you do not attend class, or your attendance grade is your lowest grade, it will not be averaged into your final grade. Attendance: Your attendance grade will drop by one full letter grade for each class you miss after your first absence. 0-1 absences = A; 2 absences = B; 3 absences = C; 4 absences = D; 5+ absences = F
- While there is no separate grade for participation, regular, consistent, and informed class participation may increase your final attendance grade.
- **Grading Scale:** A+ (98+/4.0); A (92 to <97/4.0); A- (90 to <92/3.67); B+ (88 to <90/3.33); B (82 to <87/3.0); B- (80 to <82/2.67); C+ (78 to <80/2.33); C (72 to <77/2.0); C- (70 to <72/1.67); D+ (68 to <70/1.33); D (62 to <68/1.0); D- (60 to <62/0.67); F (<60; 0.00)