



\*\*\*PRELIMINARY SYLLABUS: SUBJECT TO CHANGE\*\*\*

## HL2001: MEDIEVAL LITERATURE

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HSS 03-59

Seminar: Wednesdays, 1430-1730, TR+107

This course provides a comprehensive introduction to Middle English literature. We will read a wide variety of genres and subjects, from the aggressive debate of 'The Owl and the Nightingale' to adventurous medieval romances, and from the tragedy of *Troilus and Criseyde* to the religious comedy of the Second Shepherds' Play. As we explore this diversity, we will consider early English literature in the context of important historical and cultural changes during the Middle Ages.

Selected texts will be read in Middle English with the help of a glossary. No experience reading Old or Middle English is required.

### Course Texts:

Geoffrey Chaucer, *Troilus and Criseyde*, trans. by Barry Windeatt (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

Julian of Norwich, *Revelations of Divine Love*, trans. by Barry Windeatt (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

Other texts will be made available online.

### Assessment:

Creative Assignment (due 21 March)	30%
2,000 Word Research Essay (due 2 May)	40%

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Presentations	20%
Participation	10%

The essay should engage critically with the texts and with scholarly debates about them. It should be polished and fully referenced. It should make a clear and well-argued claim that is supported by close reading of the text and of relevant outside sources. All paragraphs should be related to this topic and follow a coherent, persuasive structure. Points should be fully developed and supported with specific evidence. As the major written assignment for this course, your essay will be submitted through Turnitin.

For the creative assignment, you will choose a medieval text to adapt into a form of your choice (e.g. film, radio play, comic book, short story). This will require you to think about the relative importance of various elements of the medieval work, as well as how they would have been received by their original audience. The creative assignment will be submitted along with a short essay (500 words) explaining the choices you have made for your adaptation.

You will present in class on the literary texts and historical sources under discussion, situating them within the broader academic field. You will also present your own research in progress as a mock conference.

The participation grade will reflect your commitment to the class as evidenced by attendance, preparation of readings, contribution to discussions, and productive responses to others' ideas. Read the assigned texts thoroughly, making notes as you go. Note questions and problems that occur to you, and be ready to share these ideas in class.

### **Course Policies:**

**Attendance and Participation:** The success of any seminar depends on the active participation of all its members. Barring illness or emergencies, you must attend every seminar. You must arrive on time, having done the required readings and any assigned work, and be ready to participate in the class discussion. Failure to do so will reduce your participation grade significantly. If you need to miss a class you must get in touch with me *before* that week's meeting.

**Late Work and Extensions:** if your essay is late, it will be marked down by one third of a letter grade for each day that it is overdue (i.e. a paper that would have received a B will receive a B-). No work will be accepted more than three days late. Extensions will be granted only in exceptional circumstances, including documented illness or genuine emergency. You can earn a two-day extension if you work on your paper with a writing coach at the LCC Communication Cube.

**Seeking Help Outside Class:** you are encouraged to use any form of legitimate aid to help you write papers and research topics that interest you. Obvious sources of legitimate assistance include your tutors, the coaches at the LCC Communication Cube, and the subject librarians at the library. If you work on a paper with a writing coach, you are eligible for a two-day extension. Please speak to me if you would like to take advantage of this!

**Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty:** Don't do it! If I find that you have misrepresented someone else's work as your own you will fail the

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assignment and possibly the course. If you are unsure of how or when to cite a source, please ask me or refer to the university's academic integrity resources online.

### Questions?

Feel free to come to me if you have any questions! Most importantly, if you feel that you're falling behind in the course for any reason, please talk to me. The sooner we discuss any obstacles to your success in this class, the more likely it is that we will be able to fix them.

### COURSE SCHEDULE

1. *The Owl and the Nightingale* (17 January)
2. *King Horn; Havelok the Dane* (24 January)
3. *Sir Orfeo; Sir Gowther; Sir Launfal* (31 January)
4. Geoffrey Chaucer, *Troilus and Criseyde* (Books 1-3) (7 February)
5. Geoffrey Chaucer, *Troilus and Criseyde* (Books 4-5) (14 February)
6. Thomas Hoccleve, *My Compleinte* and *Series* (21 February)
7. Thomas Malory, *Le Morte d'Arthur* (28 February)

### RECESS WEEK

8. In-class presentations of creative work (14 March)

**\*\*\* Creative Project Due: 21 March \*\*\***

9. *The Second Shepherds' Play* (21 March)
10. 'The Awntyrs off Arthure'; John Lydgate, 'St Austin at Compton'; 'St Erkenwald' (29 March)
11. Julian of Norwich, *Revelations of Divine Love* (4 April)
12. *Pearl* (11 April)
13. Conclusion and Research Presentations (18 April)

**\*\*\* Research Essay Due: 2 May \*\*\***