

HL3044

The Legends of King Arthur



Week 1: Arthur's Early Development

Geoffrey of Monmouth, *History of the Kings of Britain* (selections);
Layamon, *Brut* (selections)

Week 2: Tristan and Isolde

The Old Norse *Saga of Tristram*

Week 3: Lunar New Year holiday

Week 4: Lancelot

Chrétien de Troyes, *Lancelot, the Knight of the Cart*;
Ulrich von Zatzikhoven, *Lanzelet*

Week 5: Perceval

Chrétien de Troyes, *Perceval, the Story of the Grail*;
The Old French *Didot-Perceval*

Week 6: Parody

The Old French *Lai du cort mantel* (Lay of the Short Mantle);
The Occitan *Jaufre*

Week 7: Malory's *Le Morte Darthur* (I)

Thomas Malory, *Le Morte Darthur**



Arthur drawing the sword from the stone, from British Library, Add MS 10292, f. 99r (c. 1316).

Recess

Week 8: Malory's *Le Morte Darthur* (II)

Thomas Malory, *Le Morte Darthur**

Week 9: Alfred Tennyson: Tragedy and Allegory

Alfred Tennyson, *Idylls of the King*

Week 10: T. H. White: Reinventing Arthur's Beginnings

T. H. White, *The Sword in the Stone*

Week 11: Mark Twain: Reinventing Arthurian Society

Mark Twain, *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*

Week 12: J. R. R. Tolkien: Reinventing Arthur's End

J. R. R. Tolkien, *The Fall of Arthur**

Week 13: Arthur and Modern Media

(No reading)

*Asterisked works will be the only texts for which scans are not provided. These can instead be purchased online or in the student bookshop.



A.P. 'The Sword in the Stone' John Lawrence '37

John Lawrence's illustration of Arthur pulling the sword from the stone in the Folio Society edition of T. H. White's *The Sword in the Stone* (1938).

Who was King Arthur, and how did he evolve into the household name that he is today? Where did the legends of his knights originate, and how did they develop over time? How widespread were the Arthurian legends across medieval Europe, and what made them so appealing to authors of English literature in more recent centuries? How did these later authors draw on and adapt the Arthurian traditions of the past? These are some of the questions to be explored on this module, which surveys the development of the long Arthurian tradition through several of the major narratives involving King Arthur and his knights, stretching from their medieval origins to modern literary adaptations. All texts will be read in excerpts, and medieval texts will be studied in translation.

Assessment:

Participation:	10%
Presentations:	10%
Mid-term essay (due end of Week 8, Friday, 10 March):	40%
Final essay (due end of Saturday, 8 April):	40%

Late submissions received within twenty-four hours of the deadline will be given a reduced grade; submissions received thereafter will not be accepted without a documented reason.

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Lancelot and Guinevere in conversation, from British Library, MS Add. 10293, f. 199 (c. 1316).