



HL2001
Introduction to
Medieval Literature



Katherine Hindley
khindley@ntu.edu.sg
HSS 03-77

Online office hours by appointment

Seminar: Tuesdays, 1430-1730, LHS-TR+34

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).

Other texts will be made available online.

Assessment:

Creative Assignment (due 7 March)	30%
2,000 Word Research Essay (due 17 April)	40%
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 at an in-class mini-conference.

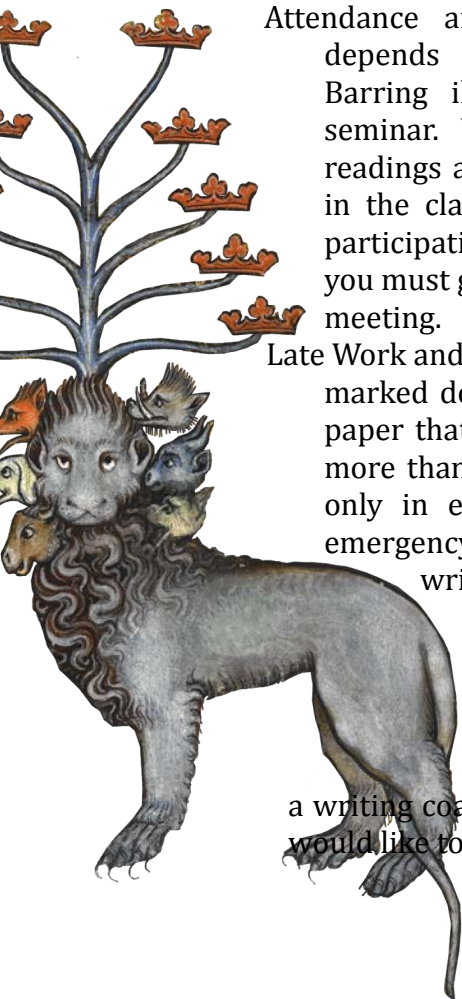
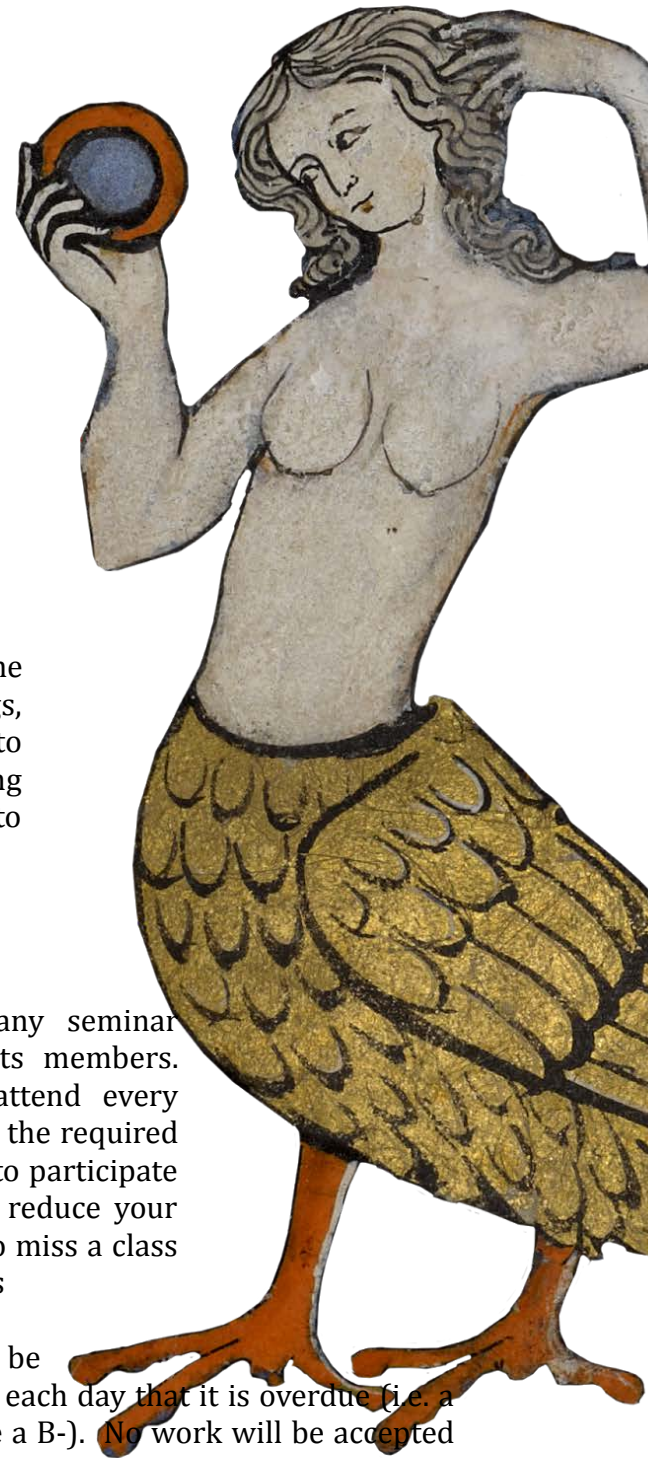
The participation grade will reflect your commitment to the class as evidenced by attendance, preparation of readings, contribution to discussions, and productive responses to others' ideas. Read the assigned texts thoroughly, making notes as you go. Note questions and problems that occur to you, and 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 without prior permission. 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.

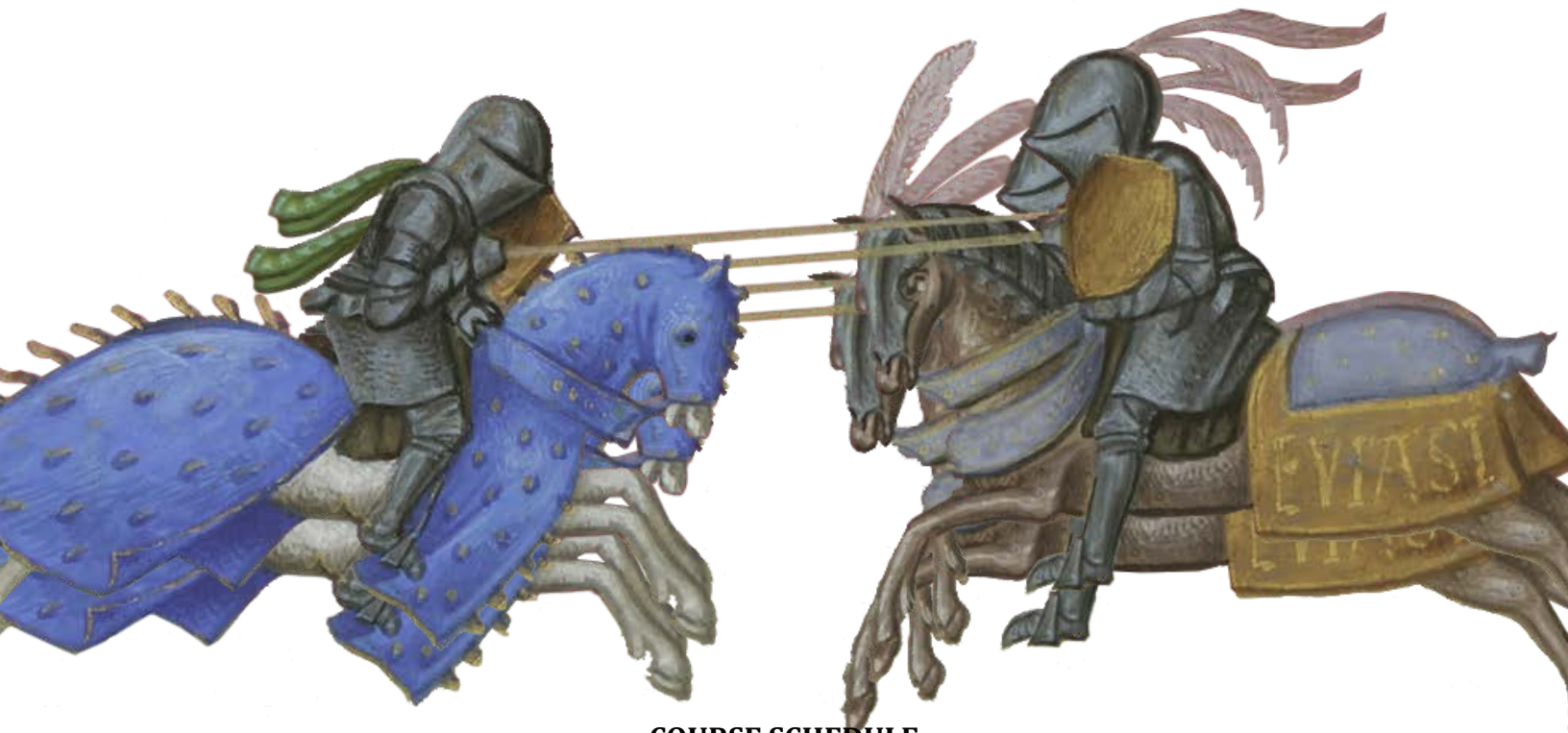
Seeking Help Outside Class: you are encouraged to use any form of legitimate aid to help you write papers and research topics that interest you. Obvious sources of legitimate assistance include your tutors, the coaches at the LCC Communication Cube, and the subject librarians at the library. If you work 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!





running 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* (10 January)

Since the language of this text is difficult we will read it in translation. Choose between a [close prose translation](#) and a [freer verse translation](#). The first forty lines of the poem in the original language are [here](#): read through them alongside your chosen translation to get a sense of the poet's own words.

2. *Sir Orfeo* (17 January)

3. Chinese New Year: no class

4. *Sir Gowther* (31 January)

5. Geoffrey Chaucer, *Troilus and Criseyde* (Books 1-3) (7 February)

6. Geoffrey Chaucer, *Troilus and Criseyde* (Books 4-5) (14 February)

7. Presentations of creative work (21 February)

RECESS WEEK

creative project due 7 March

8. Thomas Hoccleve, *My Compleinte* and *Dialogue* (7 March)
9. Selections from Thomas Malory, *Le Morte d'Arthur* (14 March)
10. ['The Awntyrs off Arthure'](#) (21 March)
11. [*The Second Shepherds' Play*](#) (28 March)
12. *Pearl* (4 April)
13. Conclusion and Research Presentations (11 April)

research essay due 17 April