

ENGH 421/ENGH 625;Spring, 2016
Rutledge: A430R ; E-mail: rutledge@gmu.edu.
Office hours: Office hours: M and W 5:30-6:30;
and by appointment.

The Literatures of Medieval England

Accounts of the Norman conquest written by the victors and (a rare occurrence) by the conquered; abductions, betrayals, and a woman made of flowers; ironic, quirky love stories; and the story of a hopeful kingdom that was doomed to fail. There is more to the early literature of England than *Beowulf*, *The Canterbury Tales*, and the Arthurian retellings in Malory's *Works*. Medieval England supported strong literary cultures in three major language groups--English, Celtic, and Anglo-Norman French, and the legends from these groups were the sources for Arthurian literature, contemporary fantasy, and writers such as Willaim Butler Yeats and John Millington Synge.

We will examine "letters" in the largest sense of that word: not only lyrics and romances, but also histories and egregious pseudo-histories, a hagiographical text or two, and the Bayeux Tapestry. We will conclude the course with one or two modern fictional works about the period we have studied.

Many of our primary and secondary sources are available on line. The Bayeux Tapestry will be made available both in hard copy and in a digital version that also includes several of the relevant historical texts

This course requires a great deal of reading, and participation in our discussions is essential; we can guarantee that the latter will be decidedly opaque without the former. Secondary readings are required unless otherwise specified (as "see also"). For background material, the [Labyrinth](#), [ORB](#), and [Netserf](#) are the best WWW sources. You should also examine the Medieval Filing Cabinet, a hypertext of sources relevant to this course at: <http://mason.gmu.edu/~rutledge/medfc/newmedfc.html>.

Requirements: Much reading, several short "reading papers" (20%); two extended essays (4-5 pp.; 30%); one research-based longer paper (12-20 pp; 25%); and a final examination (25%). All work must be completed in order to receive a satisfactory grade in the course.

All material to be handed in must be typed. **ALL papers** are due at the beginning of class on the date indicated and cannot be submitted late or made up. **No papers in my mailbox or e-mail submissions at any time.** This course will require much reading and discussion, and it is crucial that you keep up with the work. You must complete all assignments to receive a satisfactory final grade ("A"- "C-") in the course.

This syllabus is available on Blackboard and line at <<http://mason.gmu.edu/~rutledge/421-625f2016.htm>>. You may be required on occasion to download texts from links in the syllabus; you will need to work on campus or use your personal account when

off campus in order to reach some of the links in the syllabus. Even if you use another e-mail service, you should activate your GMU account and have messages forwarded ([instructions](#)). The university sends important deadline and other information through the GMU account. You are encouraged to use e-mail if you have queries about class work or if emergencies occur, but e-mail is no substitute for conferences. **You may not submit any assignment by e-mail unless specifically directed to do so (no "last-minute" or "just in case" e-mail submissions), and unreadable messages will not count.**

ALL work is subject to the Honor Code of the University. See the appended statement about [plagiarism](#).

The [GMU Writing Center](#) can provide assistance for specific writing problems. It is **not** an editing or "quick-check" service.

Classroom decorum: Until class begins, you may use electronic devices. Once class begins, you may use laptops*only* for note-taking (browsers only when directed). Hand-held devices must be silenced and may not be used once class is in session.

The last day to add a class is 1/26/2016.

The last day to drop a class without dean's permission is 2/19/2016.

(phc.) indicates a text on e-reservers (link on the Blackboard page).

* indicates a text on reserve in JLC Library.

** indicates a text provided by the instructor.

There are also supplementary materials on the [course materials](#) page (there is also a link on the Blackboard page).

Students as Scholars: This course is designated as a "scholarly inquiry" course. thus, it will serve to acquaint you with some of the tools you will use in your research (RS)-designated course.

University Class Cancellations: in the event that the University cancels classes (usually due to inclement weather), any written assignments that are due that day should be submitted by class time via e-mail (as an attachment, not pasted into the message) so that timely submission will be on record. You are responsible for providing hard copy on or before the next class session.

TEXTS

Davies, Sioned (tr.) *The Mabinogion*

Gilbert, Dorothy (tr), *Marie de France: Poetry*

Kinsella, Thomas (tr), *The Táin*

Geoffrey of Monmouth, *The History of the Kings of Britain*

Liuzza, R.. M. (ed and tr.), *Old English Poetry: An Anthology*

Shepherd, Stephen, *Middle English Romances*

History and Story: Narrating the Conquest

January 25

Introduction: Whose Conquest? The languages of the British Isles. Research tools: introduction.

February 1

R. Allen Brown (ed.), *The Norman Conquest**: [William of Jumièges and William of Poitiers](#) see the links on the Blackboard Course Content page). **Note:** The *Bayeux Tapestry Digital Edition** (available on line and on computers in the JLC) provides a more complete selection of the texts by William of Jumièges and William of Poitiers (At the bottom of the screen, use "background/library").

Hayden White, "[The Value of Narrativity](#).." Note: if you are not on campus, search for this JSTOR article through the library database portal.

Reading Paper: If William of Jumièges and William of Poitiers were writing today, their texts might be described as "creative nonfiction, *i.e.*, nonfiction narratives that use techniques of description and structure usually not expected in, for example, a traditional history textbook. Discuss two examples from each text that present "literary" strategies. (2 pp.)

8

In Liuzza: "The Wanderer," "The Wife's Lament," "Wulf and Eadwacer."
PAPER #1 ASSIGNED.

15

In Luzza, "Advent (Christ)," sections I-V, "The Dream of the Rood," and *Judith* (as the editor notes, the first sections of the poem--possibly--have been lost).

Post-Conquest Narratives

22

The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle and *The Bayeux Tapestry*. Use the *Bayeux Tapestry Digital Edition**, available on line (disable FlashBlock for the program) and on computers in the JLC library. Use "background/library" tab and select the *Chronicle*. Read the entries for 1066. See also H. Block, *A Needle in the Right Hand of God* (res.)

In-class discussion using the *Bayeux Tapestry Digital Edition**: (Wilson, *The Bayeux Tapestry in Color* will also be on print reserve). You must examine panels 7-13; 56-103; 110-126; and 140-end (pay attention to the action in the border) *before* class. Link to the [Animated Bayeux Tapestry](#).

Reading Paper: Select one politically significant segment of the Tapestry that

includes borders that are not purely repetitive ornament. Discuss not only the relationship between the central register and the borders, but also the horizontal transitions before and after your chosen scene. You must not simply describe and summarize; you must discuss the narrative logic of your choice. (2 pp.)

29

Geoffrey of Monmouth, *History of the Kings of Britain*, parts 1-2; 3 (pp. 138: "Maximianus developed an obsession with power..."-end); 6-7. There is a list of Geoffrey's most important Roman and post-Roman kings on the Course Materials page. See also the article by Alan MacColl, "The Meaning Of 'Britain' In Medieval and Early Modern England." *Journal of British Studies* 45.2 (2006): 248-69 (search the library catalog for the link to this journal); it is a good survey of the politics of the term "British." **PAPER #1 DUE.**

March 7-11 Spring Break .

Celtic Myth and Legend

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The Mabinogi. Read "Branches" 1-2, and 4: "Pwyll, Prince of Annwn," "Branwen, Daughter of Llyr," and "Math, Son of Mathonwy." Supplementary texts on the [Course Materials page](#): *Mabinogi* structures and motifs; and Welsh triads. Read B. Roberts (e-res.) for an overview. See also relevant articles in Sullivan, *The Mabinogi: a Book of Essays* (res.)

PAPER #3 (topic selection) ASSIGNED.

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The Táin. Before reading the *Táin*, read the story of "The Exile of the Sons of Uisliu" and the stories of Cúchulainn's begetting, upbringing, and training which precede the main narrative. See also P. Kelley, "The *Táin* as Literature" (e-res.) for an overview. **PAPER #2 ASSIGNED.**

Reading Paper: In addition to the wide-ranging action of the epic itself, there are smaller subplots such as the one involving Cúchulainn and Ferdia. In what ways is this narrative a critique of the warrior ethos despite its celebration of extreme prowess--give two examples of the latter? See note 34 for an explanation of the *gae bolga*. (2 pp.)

28

Middle-English lyrics: a [selection](#) (see the [Course Materials](#) page) of the various categories of this extensive genre in medieval English literature. .

Romance Narratives in England

April 4

Anglo-Norman romance: Marie de France, *Lais*: Prologue, *Laüstic*, *Yonec*, *Lanval*. Read also *Sir Landevale* (in Shepherd). **Proposal for paper #3 DUE.**

11

Marie de France, *Le Fresne*, and *Eliduc*. The Middle English [Lay Le Freine](#). **PAPER #2 DUE.**

18

The romance in Middle English: *Havelok* and *The Weddyng of Syr Gawen and Dame Ragnell...* in Shepherd.

Reading Paper: Discuss one example of from each lay that presents courtship and marriage as being as much political as amorous. (2pp.)

25

Sir Orfeo and *Sir Launfal* (in Shepherd). **Final version of paper #3 DUE.**

May 2

Conclusions.

Final examination: 5/9/2016, 7:30-10:15 pm

PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism means using the exact words, opinions, or factual information from another person without giving that person credit. Writers give credit through accepted documentation styles, such as parenthetical citation, footnotes, or endnotes; **a simple listing of books and articles at the end of a document is not sufficient**, nor does a rearrangement of another person's phrasing (paraphrase) release one from the obligation to document one's source. **One must document paraphrased material just as one documents direct quotation.** Plagiarism is the equivalent of intellectual theft and cannot be tolerated in the academic setting.

If you have questions about documentation, ask your instructor. When in doubt, document.

(Adapted from an English Department Statement)

GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR PAPERS

1. Select a title that clearly reflects the thesis of your paper. Double-check to be sure that you have defined your topic and kept the essay focused on it.
2. Underline titles of novels and plays, use double quotation-marks for short stories

and poems.

3. Use parenthetical citation (not footnotes), e.g., (author ##) or (title ## when referring to more than one work by the same author); note that no comma separates the page-number from the rest of the information. For non-indented quotations of poetry, indicate line-breaks with a "/"; cite lines (ll. #-##). For plays, cite act, scene, and lines (I, ii, #-##). For biblical references, cite book, chapter, and verse (Deuteronomy #:#-##). Include a "Works Cited" list at the end of your paper. The assignments in this course do not require the use of secondary sources, although you may use the essays provided in the reader.

4. When quoting, indent passages longer than 5 lines (double-space). Avoid excessive use of extended quotations; they are not a substitute for analysis, nor should they be considered self-evident. When describing or paraphrasing a text, use the "historical present" tense for your verbs.

5. PROOFREAD. Final drafts of papers should be typed. Use a header on the upper right corner (name--#) of each page after the first; most word-processors make this very easy. Center the title on a cover-sheet, and include the following information in the lower right corner:

Name
ENGH 421 (or ENGH 625)
Rutledge
Date

This helps to avoid misplaced papers.