Fall 2011

**ENG 225: The Age of King Arthur**

*MWF 12-12:50 in 300 Villard*

*Instructor: Professor Stephanie Clark*

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*email: sclark11@uoregon.edu*

*office hours: M 2-4, W 2-3 or by appointment*

*(if my office door is ajar, feel free to drop in)*

*course website: on Blackboard*

*Writing Tutor: Alice Hyde, ahyde4@uoregon.edu*

**Part One: Course Description and Goals: Love and Identity**

Dan Savage’s popular sex advice column “Savage Love” might seem an odd place to begin a class on Medieval Literature. In Benjamin J. Dueholm’s recent analysis of the ethics of Savage’s advice column, he notes that Savage tends to insist that sexual inclinations … are immutable and even dominant characteristics of any personality. Some desires may be impossible to fulfill, others are flagrantly immoral, and most any can be destructive when pursued without regard for the kinds of ethical guidelines Savage lays out. But for Savage, no matter how we direct its expression, our sexual self is our truest self. *(Washington Monthly, March/April 2011)*

Is our sexual self our truest self? This class will query that modern supposition by reading and analyzing medieval literature that presents different angles on the topics of love and identity. In particular, we are interested in medieval understandings of what love is (a topic that wouldn’t be complete without considering the love of and for God), the value given to sex, and in gaining a sense of what lies at the root of personal identity for medieval people. Our texts for this term will include an array of medieval literatures, including Latin church teaching, French and English chivalric romance, lyric, English literature of affective piety, and the first autobiography in English.

As an introduction to the literature of the Middle Ages set against the backdrop of medieval culture, this course is designed to present a more extensive selection of accessible and representative texts from the Middle Ages than is available in ENG 220, “Introduction to the English Major,” as well as to offer an introductory window on the Middle Ages to non-literature majors. Students will gain skills in attentive analytical reading and in writing about this literature. Most texts will be read in translation, but a few short works will be presented in Middle English, allowing students to glimpse the beginnings of modern English. In addition to developing the skills of reading literature with care and insight, this class will cultivate an appreciation of a culture that is markedly different from ours in some ways, and that in other ways served as the foundation for modern society.

**Grading Breakdown:**

- **Response Essay:** 5%
- **Short Essays:** 15%
- **Long Essay with proposal:** 25%
- **Personal Essay:** 10%
- **Daily Quizzes:*** 15%
- **Final Exam (optional**: 15%
- **Textual Annotations:** 5%
- **Participation:** 10%

*In lieu of midterm.*
**If you opt not to take the final exam, your daily quizzes will be worth 30% of your grade.**

**Required Texts:**
Course readings are posted on Blackboard. You are required to print the readings out, annotate them, and bring them to class.


Recommended:
Hacker, Diana. *Rules for Writers*, 6th ed. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2010. ($32 on Amazon. If you do not currently own a style book, you should buy this. Earlier editions won’t have the latest word on citing electronic sources, but they’ll do for most things.)

**PART TWO: SYLLABUS**

Readings and assignments are listed on the day they are due. Texts marked “bonus” are not required reading.

**Week 1**

| M Aug. 26 | Introduction: The Medieval World |
| W Aug. 28 | DUE: Response to Menand (please see detailed instructions online). |

**UNIT 1: Philosophical and Social Background**


**Week 2**

| M Oct. 3 | Thomas Aquinas, excerpts from *Summa Theologica*, in *Basic Writings of Thomas Aquinas*, vol. 1, trans. Anton C. Pegis (New York, 1945), Question 20; Question 60, articles 1-4; Question 92, article 1-3; Question 98. Online. |

DUE: Short Essay 1 on Augustine, Aquinas, or Andreas Capellanus.

UNIT 2: Romance

Week 3
W Oct. 12 “Erec and Enide,” cont., pp. 29-57 (through paragraph ending, “Cadoc of Carlisle rode off with his young lady … to report the news to King Arthur and the queen”).
DUE: Short Essay 2 on “Erec and Enide.”

Week 4
W Oct. 19 “The Knight of the Cart,” cont., pp. 201-31 (through paragraph ending, “When the king heard this oath, he felt no joy”).
DUE: Short Essay 3 on “The Knight of the Cart.”

Week 5
TUESDAY, October 25: Essay Proposal Due.
W Oct. 26 Middle English Lyric: #54, “Love is soft and love is sweet and speaks in accents fair;” #89, “Love hurts me with its craving;” #81, “When I see blossoms thronging;” “In Praise of Mary;” “Sweet Jesus, King of Bliss;” #21, “A maid of Christ made warm request” Ancrene Riwle (excerpt); “Abuse of Women;” #74, “The tears of weeping wet my cheek;” #82 and #83, “The heart of man can hardly know.” All online.
DUE: Short Essay 4 on “Lanval” or one or a pair of the lyric poems.

Week 6
M Oct. 31 Malory, cont., pp. 310-20, 329-34, 346-50, 388-94 (this are the Lancelot chapters of the Sangrail section).
W Nov. 2 Malory, cont., pp. 403-64.
F Nov. 4 Malory, cont., pp. 468-527.
DUE: Short Essay 5 on Malory.

Week 7
M Nov. 7 Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, Fits 1 and 2.
W Nov. 9  
Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, Fit 3.

F Nov. 11  
Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, Fit 4.
DUE: Short Essay 6 on Sir Gawain and the Green Knight.

**Week 8**

M Nov. 14  

W Nov. 16  

DUE THURSDAY, November 17: Long Essay

F Nov. 18  

**UNIT 3: Mysticism**

**Week 9**

M Nov. 21  

W Nov. 23  

DUE: Short Essay 7 on Chaucer, Petrarch compared to Chaucer, The Cloud of Unknowing, or Julian.

F Nov. 25  
NO CLASS, Thanksgiving Holiday

**Week 10**

M Nov. 28  

W Nov. 30  

F Dec. 2  

DUE: Personal Essay: How has this class influenced your thinking on the topic of love and identity? (Please see detailed prompt online).

Collected Short Essays (please see detailed instructions online).

**Final:** Friday, Dec. 9 at 10:15am (optional)