ENG 225: THE AGE OF KING ARTHUR
SYLLABUS

This is an introduction to the literature of the Age of King Arthur — the Middle Ages. We will read poetry, quests, adventures, and comic stories, set against the backdrop of medieval culture. We’ll read most texts in translation, with a few short works in Middle English, which will give us an opportunity to glimpse the beginnings of modern English. Our goal is to learn to appreciate medieval literature and culture in its depth, variety, and richness.

Learning Outcomes for this course. This course will help you to:
1. read literary and cultural texts with discernment and comprehension and with an understanding of their conventions.
2. draw on relevant cultural and historical information to situate texts within their cultural, political, and historical contexts.
3. speak and think knowledgeably about the literature, culture, and beliefs of the Middle Ages, and about commonalities and differences between our culture and theirs.

Texts:
Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, trans. Marie Boroff (any edition by Boroff)
The Book of Margery Kempe, ed. Barry Windeatt (Penguin edition)
These are available at the UO Duck Store. Used editions are also available very cheaply (starting at around $2 plus postage) at sites like Half.com, Abebooks.com and Amazon.com, and probably at the two branches of the Smith Family Bookstore in Eugene (try them first!).
Other texts will be available electronically via Canvas.

**Grading:**
- Two papers: 25% each
- Three quizzes: 15% each
- Attendance, preparation, and engagement: 5%

I will take attendance at the beginning of each class, at 4:00 or very shortly thereafter. If you come in later, you will *not* be marked as present, but I encourage you to come to class anyway!

*There is no final exam in this class.*

In the unthinkable event of plagiarism, you will fail the course. Please review the university policies on academic dishonesty at:
- http://pages.uoregon.edu/tpayne/EG595/plagiarism.pdf
- http://researchguides.uoregon.edu/citing-plagiarism/plagiarism.

If you have a documented disability, you’re invited to let me know, and we’ll discuss accommodations for this class in conjunction with Disability Services.

**Schedule:**

**Week 1:** An introductory taste of medieval variety

April

**Tu 2:** Introduction. “The Corpus Christi Carol” and “The Three Ravens/The Twa Corbies” (Winterfylleth/Pied Pipers/Ray Fisher)

**Th 4:** *The Partridges* (handout provided in class; no need to read ahead)

**Week 2:** Legends and Adventure

**Magic**

**Tu 9:** *Sir Orfeo* (pp. 215-29) (on Canvas; print out, read, and bring to class)

**Th 11:** Selections from *The History of the Kings of Britain*, pp. 166-69, 205-21, 237-61: Merlin and King Arthur (on Canvas as KingArthur1; print out, read, and bring to class)

**Week 3**


**Week 4:**


**First quiz.**

**Th 25:** *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, book 1

**Week 5**

**Tu 30:** *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, books 2-3

**May**

**Th 2:** *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, book 4

**Week 6:** Sex and Mayhem
Tu  7: *The Sacristan* (pp. 87-137) (on Canvas; print out, read, and bring to class)
Th  9: *The Four Wishes of St. Martin* and “I have a new garden” (On handout; no need to read ahead.) **First paper is due today.**

**Week 7: The Medieval Experience**
Tu  14: Medieval Experience Day. Attendance is especially required today!
Th  16: “Pity for Mary” and “I Sing of A Maiden” (Both provided in handouts; no need to read ahead.) **Second quiz.**

**Week 8: The Quest for God**
Tu  21: *The Book of Margery Kempe*, chapters 1-38
Th  23: Further discussion of *The Book of Margery Kempe* (same chapters)

**Week 9**
Tu  28: *The Seventh Seal* (instructions given in class). Discussion.
Th  30: *The Seventh Seal* discussion.

**Week 10: Moving Poems to Remember**
June
Tu  4: “Peace,” “I live in great sorrow,” “Western Wind,” and “Maiden in the moor lay.” (All provided in handouts; no need to read ahead.)
Th  6: Conclusions and summing up. **Second paper due. Third quiz.**

**Workload:**
This is a 4-credit course. The federal definition of a credit hour specifies 3 hours of work per credit hour per week. In other words, a 4-credit course like this means 12 hours per week total: 3 hours in class, and 9 hours outside of class. Thus you should expect to spend 3 hours outside of class for every hour in class — more on weeks that papers are due, of course, and less in other weeks. Plan your time accordingly! If you have commitments that may not allow you to spend enough time on classwork, or to attend class regularly, you may wish to consider taking this class another term, when your time is freer. The bonus for spending all this time in the Middle Ages: you will have the experience of taking a weekly journey to a fascinating place and time!