MEDIEVAL ROMANCE
Prof. Laskaya

Textbooks:
The Lais of Marie de France, ed. and trans. Hanning and Ferrante
The Middle English Breton Lays, ed. Laskaya & Salisbury (TEAMS)
Floris and Blancheflour (provided for you via Canvas)
Havelok the Dane (provided for you via Canvas)
The Romance of Silence, trans. Roche-Mahdi

Resources: The Middle English Dictionary, available online; some reading materials provided online and/or on Canvas.

*TEAMS volumes are available online; however, you will likely find it best (for learning and classroom activities) to print copies, if you decide to use the online text. The volumes are produced “at cost” by an educational, nonprofit, university press. Since I co-edited one required book, please note that TEAMS editors receive no royalties or financial gain from their editions.

Course Description
This course examines Middle English Romances and French Breton Lais that exerted considerable influence on medieval English literature. Most readings will be in ME (Middle English). The course is designed for advanced undergraduate English Majors and fulfills the advanced elective required in pre-1500 literature. Advanced students in other majors are also welcome. I encourage you to review course texts the 1st day of class to be sure Middle English will not present undue difficulty, since we will move very quickly with the ME texts. The course requires close reading of the ME materials; quizzes may require you to create short modern translations of Middle English. Students will, in teams, occasionally take leadership roles in discussion. Discussion, punctuated with occasional lectures, will predominate. The course will explore literary, cultural, archival, and historical frameworks, as well as interpretive and linguistic features of texts. We will probe these frameworks and our own responses, locating questions about the texts that will lead us beyond the apparent simplicity of the surface narrative often found in Middle English Romance.

Learning Outcomes In addition to gaining an understanding of medieval romance, a genre that has had significant influence on the development of literature in English, the English Department’s assessment procedure is built around six desired learning outcomes:

1. read literary and cultural texts with discernment and comprehension and with an understanding of their conventions;
2. draw on relevant cultural and/or historical information to situate texts within their cultural, political, and historical contexts;
3. perform analyses of literary and other cultural texts considering different frameworks for interpretation;
4. write focused, analytical essays in clear, professional and grammatical prose;
5. employ logic, creativity, and interpretive skills to produce original, persuasive arguments;
6. employ primary and secondary sources, with proper acknowledgment and citation, as they contribute to a critical essay’s thesis. [In our course the emphasis will be on primary texts with discussion serving as the main ‘secondary source’ for you to negotiate. Some secondary/scholarly articles may be examined.]

7. ENG 425 requires students to participate actively within discussion, to work effectively both within whole class and smaller group settings, and to focus on presenting ideas clearly orally and in writing.

8. ENG 425 also requires students to read several primary texts in their original Middle English, & learn about vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation of this earlier form of English as a language. Middle English is not Old English; it lies between Old English (Beowulf) and Early Modern English (such as Shakespearean English). Old English qualifies at the UO as a foreign language.

NB: Medieval Studies Students will find these outcomes congruent with those of the MDVL program. Those learning outcomes are available here: [http://pages.uoregon.edu/midages/courses](http://pages.uoregon.edu/midages/courses)

**Contact information and office hours for Prof Laskaya**

Prof. Laskaya (she, her, hers), email: [laskaya@uoregon.edu](mailto:laskaya@uoregon.edu)

Office hours (via Zoom): Mondays 12:30-1:30; Wednesdays 10-noon, and by individual appointment. Zoom room for Office hrs and appointments: 928 0848 2904

**Strategies for Success:**

*Communication is KEY.* Check Canvas and your uoregon email nearly every day for updates concerning all your courses to be sure you keep track of assignments and the course schedule. Ask questions when you have them and, when possible, connect with other students in the course.

Creating a study schedule has been shown to be helpful for students. To stay on track, use a calendar, phone app (reminder), or a paper agenda to keep track of due dates and study times.

It will help you to **be active in the course and with the reading** if you reread course material regularly. Give yourself some ‘thinking time’ beyond reading. Take notes on class sessions and readings.

Be sure to study, think about, and make notes for yourself addressing each module’s study questions. Even if class sessions do not always focus on every study question in a particular module, those questions will help you understand the course material and be better prepared for written assignments and discussions.

Write down your own questions about (and responses to) texts, class sessions, or discussions. If possible, **write on the text in your own handwriting** (studies show this is far better than keyboarding). If a reading is posted on Canvas, download it, so you can **physically annotate or gloss reading** before and perhaps after class. Call, text, or message another student enrolled in our course or speak with a friend or family member about what you are learning. Put what you learn into your own words and reflect on it. Comparing notes with a study partner or a small group can assist you with the course; please feel free to collaborate as you learn (however, see caveat under ‘academic integrity’ below).

If you need further help, the UO offers study skills and time management assistance. Check out [https://engage.uoregon.edu/](https://engage.uoregon.edu/) or [https://owl.uoregon.edu/](https://owl.uoregon.edu/) The UO has compiled a list of other support services you can access remotely, including tutoring, technology troubleshooting, advising, counseling, and more: [https://uess.uoregon.edu/](https://uess.uoregon.edu/)
Useful Resources when Reading, Writing, and Citing
For unfamiliar words, https://www.merriam-webster.com offers a high quality online dictionary; it is also a standard source to assist you with your own writing. You can also access this resource through the UO library online catalog.

Nota Bene (abbreviated as ‘NB’ means ‘Note well!’): For Middle English texts in the original language, neither the Merriam-Webster dictionary nor the OED (Oxford English Dictionary) are reliable or preferred. If you want to explore specific Middle English words we encounter, please consult The Middle English Dictionary (MED) from the University of Michigan (available free online): https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/dictionary

The MED can be difficult to navigate, because standardized spelling did not exist in the Middle Ages; contact Prof. Laskaya if you need assistance using this free online resource.

Requirements: **Prerequisite: UofO Junior Standing.
Attendance, Steady Preparation, Willingness to participate in class.
Reading and translating Middle English.
Informal writing: inside and/or outside of class (may be unannounced)
Quizzes (lowest quiz score dropped)
Two interpretative papers (submitted on Canvas)
Final Exam: the registrar has scheduled our exam for 12:30 p.m. Tuesday, June 7th.

Additionally, as in the world beyond the University, all work should be completed on time, and all requirements, including regular attendance and preparation, must be completed to Pass this course, whether you take the course for a grade or P/NP. The lowest quiz score will be dropped; quizzes and in-class work cannot be made up except when students are away on official university business (i.e., music, debate, dance or athletic events organized by and sponsored by the UO). Illness will not usually be a reason to make up quizzes. Extended illnesses may require a withdrawal from the course. The Final exam will not be given individually outside the university's scheduled time for finals, except in accord with UO policy.

Grades
English Majors must take ENG 425 for a grade, and it must be passed with a solid ‘C’ grade to count toward English Major requirements. Final course grades will be based on*:

30% Quizzes, short assignments, activities in class including in-class discussion questions, occasional small group work. (Lowest quiz score will be dropped when figuring final course grades.)

40% 2 Formal Interpretive Papers (20% each)

30% Final Exam

*Consistent attendance is assumed. Failure to attend class regularly, prepared to participate, will result in a lower course grade, regardless of grades on written work. All major assignments and requirements must be completed to Pass the course.
**Grading Scale**

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<th>Grade</th>
<th>Score Range</th>
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<tr>
<td>A+</td>
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<td>A</td>
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Assignments are due by the day/time indicated on the syllabus. Late assignments will be docked approximately 1/3 of a letter grade for each day they are late, unless explicit arrangements have been made in advance with your instructor (see “Extensions” below). Assignments given extensions but submitted after the agreed submission date/time will be judged late.

**Extensions** You may ask for an extension; the earlier the better. If you contact me about this, please let me know how long an extension you are requesting. Using email, we will confirm the date and time limits of the extension in writing. This allows me to maintain equity among the extension requests and eliminate misunderstandings. Stay in touch.

**Canvas site:**
The syllabus, course assignments, some readings, and general course information will be available throughout the term on Canvas and/or through e-reserve. Please check Canvas regularly. If I send you email, it will usually be on Canvas or to your uoregon email account, so be sure to check Canvas and your uoregon email regularly. Also note that if you send me an email from hotmail, comcast, or some other server, it may get caught in UO spam filters and never make it into my mailbox, so sending email from Canvas or your uoregon email account is always wise.

**SCHEDULE** (subject to slight changes: see Canvas for up-to-date information)

**Week one**
- **U 3/29** Intro to course/materials. The Genre of Romance and the Late Middle Ages
- **H 3/31** The Breton Lai: Marie de France, Prologue and Guigemar

**Week two**
- **U 4/5** The Breton Lai: *Equitain, Le Fresne, Bisclavret* [quiz #1] Come to class having prepared and studied readings in accord with ‘reading questions’ posted on Canvas for Week 2.
- **H 4/7** Marie de France, *Lanval; Les Deus Amanz; Laustic; Milun*

**Week three**
- **U 4/12** Marie de France, *Yonec and Eliduc* [reading quiz #2]
- **H 4/14** ME Breton Lays, *Sir Launfal*; reading Middle English

**Week four**
- **M 4/18** *MED assignment due*
- **U 4/19** Middle English *Sir Launfal* vs. MdeF’s *Lanval*
- **H 4/21** *Emaré*, (possibly also secondary readings provided on BB) [reading quiz #3]

**Week five**
- **M 4/25** *Paper #1 due submitted on Canvas by 4 p.m.*
- **U 4/26** conclude *Emaré; Sir Gowther* [reading quiz #4]
- **H 4/28** “
Week six
U  5/3  Sir Orfeo [reading quiz #5]
H  5/5  Orfeo continued; secondary readings on Orfeo provided on BB

Week seven
U  5/10  Chivalric Romance: Havelock the Dane, [reading quiz #6]
H  5/12  Havelock the Dane cont.

Week eight
U  5/17  Havelock the Dane concluded. [quiz or homework #7]
H  5/19  Floris and Blancheflour available from TEAMS online [reading quiz #8]

Week nine
*M  5/23  Paper #2 due by 4 p.m.
U  5/24  Roman de Silence [reading quiz #9]
H  5/26  Roman de Silence

Week ten
U  5/31  Roman de Silence [reading quiz #10]
H  6/2  Roman de Silence; continuing questions, final exam prep

Final Exam: Currently scheduled for Tuesday 12:30 p.m. June 7th.

Participation
Come to class lecture and discussion sessions having read/reviewed the assigned material and prepared reading/study questions, if they are posted in the current week’s module. Please arrive to class sessions on time, with appropriate materials on hand (course readings and implements for taking notes); be ready to focus on the day’s activities. Class sessions may not be copied, taped, or videotaped unless provided official UO accommodation requirements or if covid resurges and all instructors are required to do so.

Your focused questions and responses to specific issues, readings and passages under discussion are important, as is careful listening and responding to the material and ideas circulating in real time in the classroom discussion.

The participation grade (see “Grades” below) rewards students who take an active and engaged role in class meetings, who are willing to contribute thoughtfully and constructively to the collaborative process of in-class dialogue, who listen well, and who contribute in a collegial and respectful way. Participation can take many forms: asking questions, offering ideas, making room for others to contribute, listening well, responding to the precise issue under investigation, and/or visibly paying attention. Conversely, you can hurt your participation grade by talking over others; surfing or using technology for non-class activities; disrupting presentations, discussions, or other learning activities; not listening; or by not treating others with generosity and respect.

Please pay attention for the duration of class sessions and do not prevent others from doing so. Surfing the internet or working on other tasks while lecture or discussion is underway will inhibit your own learning and can easily interfere with other students' focus. Any activity that disrupts or distracts others from course material obviously may inhibit teaching and/or learning. Read or reread the UO Code of
Conduct regarding our campus community’s classroom and learning expectations. Please be considerate and respectful of those around you and online with you.

**Attendance**
We are returning to pre-pandemic expectations. ENG 425 is discussion-based, and, coupled with oral and written Middle English language practice, this means regular attendance is mandatory. What is regular attendance? Normally in upper division courses I teach, just 3 absences are allowed (about 15% of a two-day a-week class). For Spring term 2022, regular attendance means attending class at least 80% of the time. Since absences for illness, job interviews, family needs, and anything other than a UO-sponsored activity will still count as absences because our course is discussion-based, use absences sparingly and wisely. More than 4 absences (20% of our class sessions) will reduce the final course grade by one full grade for each day beyond those four. Obviously, since we are no longer working with hybrid remote/in-class formats, recordings of class will not be made (and these are ineffective for capturing a discussion-based class anyway), and so class sessions cannot typically be made up other ways. If, for some reason, our course moves online, the whole class will still meet synchronously via zoom and attendance policies will continue. If your life upends and attendance and academic performance might drop your final course grade below a solid C, consider a withdrawal. For students with health or personal emergencies, the absence policy will still hold; however, do note that I am usually willing to support a petition for ‘retroactive withdrawal’ if you should need that.

Attending class and participating regularly and consistently is a way you demonstrate your commitment to your own education. **This is particularly important for an English Major, for whom the close engagement with texts and interpretive concepts is paramount.** Class sessions, as well as written work, provide opportunities for you to participate and demonstrate your commitment to your English Major and your bachelors’ degree education. Additionally, English Majors are typically expected to listen well, speak well and write well, often better than the average adult (by the UO, the ENG department, and the broader public world). Listening well and speaking well are abilities best practiced live and our class sessions are the place where that will happen. And you are devoting yourself to a field that values skills desperately needed in our world right now!

**COVID Protocols:**

*Academic Disruption: In the event of a campus emergency that disrupts academic activities, course requirements, deadlines, and grading percentages are subject to change. Information about changes in this course will be communicated as soon as possible by email, and on Canvas. If we are not able to meet face-to-face, students should immediately log onto Canvas and read any announcements and/or access alternative assignments. Students are also expected to continue coursework as outlined in this syllabus or other instructions on Canvas.*

*In the event that the instructor of this course has to quarantine, this course may be taught online during that time.*

*Staying Safe in Classes: As the University of Oregon continues in-person instruction, instructors and students play a key role in keeping our community healthy and safe.*

*Prevention: To prevent or reduce the spread of COVID-19 in classrooms and on campus, all students and employees must:*
  * Comply with [vaccination policy](#)
  * [Wash hands](#) frequently; use hand-sanitizer
- Complete daily self-checks
- Stay home/do not come to campus if feeling ill or symptomatic
- Individuals with no symptoms or mild symptoms can get tested at McArthur Court through UO's Monitoring and Assessment Program. Masks are required at COVID-19 testing sites including in line outside.
- Visit the Exposure Scenario page for information on reporting cases.

**Support:** The following resources are available to you as a student.

- University Health Services or call (541) 346-2770
- University Counseling Center or call (541) 346-3277 or (541) 346-3227 (after hrs.)
- MAP Covid-19 Testing
- Corona Corps or call (541) 346-2292
- Academic Advising or call (541) 346-3211
- Dean of Students or call (541)-346-3216

**Resilience Planning:** In the event of a campus-wide disruption that impacts our course, note that academic activities, course requirements, deadlines, and grading percentages are subject to change. Information about such changes in our course will be communicated as soon as possible by email, and on Canvas and will reflect UO academic policies. If we are unable to meet in person, students should immediately log onto Canvas and read any announcements and/or access synchronous online class sessions or alternative assignments. Students are also expected to continue coursework as outlined in this syllabus or other instructions on Canvas. In the event that the Professor contracts covid or has to quarantine, we may need to switch to an online format for a period of time.

**Academic Integrity:** The University of Oregon values academic honesty. Students are informed of the University’s policies and expectations about conduct and academic honesty when they matriculate. You are here because you clearly have the ability to engage your own mind in rigorous intellectual work. If you need a quick review of our campus community's assumptions about academic integrity and conduct, see the Conduct Code on the UO website: [https://dos.uoregon.edu/conduct](https://dos.uoregon.edu/conduct)

Writing assignments in ENG 425 will be analytical and ask you to apply what you're learning in our course; they will not require outside research, though may involve some secondary sources provided to you on Canvas. You may find yourself curious about something or wanting more information at times; great—read on, and bravo for curiosity! However, students will not receive higher grades simply because they read beyond course materials or use research in papers or exams.

Please consult our library's website: [https://researchguides.uoregon.edu/citing_plagiarism/styleguides](https://researchguides.uoregon.edu/citing_plagiarism/styleguides) for information on documentation, should you need it, and for discussions of how to avoid plagiarism. Feel free to contact me, if you have any concerns about documentation and/or academic honesty. For this course, an honest and obvious effort to document is absolutely critical and far more important than commas, abbreviations, or 'correct' formatting. Either MLA or Chicago Style provide acceptable resources and formats for advanced work in literature.

**Course policy on Academic Integrity:** All work submitted in this course must be your own and be written exclusively for this course. Any use of sources (ideas, quotations, and paraphrases) beyond our lectures and discussion must be properly documented. This includes ideas you get from your classmates (discussion and kicking ideas around is encouraged, so long as you document where discussion with a peer has impacted your argument). Also document any ideas you get from websites as well as books and
other media. You are not allowed to cut and paste from internet sites into your paper. N.B. Most internet essays aimed at students are not written at the college level. Lifting material from this work, even in the case that you are not caught, often results in a lower grade. In cases of clearly established plagiarism or cheating, a final course grade of “F” will be recorded, and all incidents will be reported to the Office of Student Conduct, as required by the University.

In other words, rely on your own grey matter, and wrestle well, yourself, with the course material. Protect the integrity of your own work and that of others’.

**Inclusion and Accessibility**

This is an inclusive learning environment. I will do my best (in accord with UO and ENG department policies) to assist any student facing challenges. I recognize our primary texts are drawn from white, hetero-dominant cultural material and encourage you to think about ways each may directly, or subtly, contribute to (or resist) oppressive power dynamics. Because our primary texts come from a distant historical period, they offer a challenge to our 21st century world views and so challenge us to listen and read thoughtfully.

Listening and responding thoughtfully to others is a central tenet of literary study. Our discussions and materials will help you hone your close reading skills and will help us reflect on issues of power, ethics, aesthetics, and meaning that arise in the primary material, given the textual features and historical contexts of each text. Being willing to rethink our initial assumptions and reactions to readings is central to the intellectual project of the university, regardless of field. The work we do this term can apply to your subsequent readings of texts from any historical period, any human community, as well as any communication you hear, see, or read, whether literary or not.

Please notify me by the end of week 2 if there are aspects of the instruction or course design that result in disability-related barriers to your participation, so that we may make accommodations in line with what the Office for Accessible Education recommends. It is your responsibility to contact the Accessible Education Center (formerly Disability Services) in 164 Oregon Hall at 541-346-1155 or uoace@uoregon.edu for resources and support. If your work with AEC determines you may need accommodations anytime after the first class session, it is important for you to meet with me within a week of meeting with the AEC to discuss details of the accommodations.

**A note about student names and pronouns:** Class rosters provide instructors with only students’ legal names. Please let me know (in person or by email) if the names or pronouns we have for you are not accurate. And do alert me if I am not pronouncing your name correctly. It is important that we are all addressed correctly and respectfully.

**Course Content**

You should be aware that the texts we will read this term deal with adult themes and subject matter. Encountering, analyzing, and discussing aesthetic, political, and cultural differences—including differences that challenge and even offend current day beliefs and ideals—and learning about the histories that helped shape current urgent debates, struggles, and conflicts are essential aspects of the discipline of the English major and the work of majoring in English. The English Department faculty believe that cultivating these skills will help best prepare students to live as effective and ethical citizens. To develop these skills, remember that it is vital each of you is able to take interpretive risks and explore arguments—arguments you may continue to revise or may move away from. Similarly, each one of us needs to be respectful of viewpoints with which we may disagree strongly.