

**Oakland University**  
**College of Arts and Sciences**  
**Department of English**

**ENGLISH 3200 (crn 44686): BRITISH MEDIEVAL LITERATURE (4)**

Fall 2018      268 South Foundation Hall;      T 6:00 – 9:20 p.m.

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Office: ODH 519  
Office Hours: T and R 4:45 to 5:45 p.m.  
and by appointment.

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course will introduce students to the first eight centuries of British literature through careful study of a few extraordinary and compelling literary works.

Students who complete this course successfully will be able to:

- describe the three major periods in the development of the English language
- explain how medieval British literature reflects the various cultures (social, religious, literary) of medieval Britain
- research medieval literary topics
- identify formal characteristics of medieval British literature

**TEXTS**

**Important note on the texts:**

You are expected to have the editions of the required texts listed below. For several of the works there will be assigned readings in the introductory material or the appendices of the books which would not be available in a different edition. Also, I have selected these translations for their accuracy and readability. Quotations of the works that appear on quizzes and exams will be drawn from these translations.

**Every student is expected to bring a copy of the week's assigned text(s) to every class session.**

Boethius, *The Consolation of Philosophy*, Penguin, ISBN 978-014044780-4  
*Beowulf*, translated by R. M. Liuzza, 2nd ed., Broadview, ISBN 978-1554810642  
Selected Old English poems, on the course moodle site.  
Geoffrey Chaucer, *Troilus and Criseyde*, translated by Neville Coghill, Penguin,  
ISBN 978-0140442397  
*Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, translated by Simon Armitage,  
Norton, ISBN 978-0393334159  
*Pearl*, translated by Simon Armitage, Norton, ISBN 978-0871407184  
Sir Thomas Malory, *Le Morte d' Arthur*, vol. 2, Penguin, ISBN 978-0140430448.  
*Everyman and Medieval Miracle Plays*, Everyman, ISBN 978-0460872805  
*The Bedford Glossary of Critical and Literary Terms*,  
Bedford, ISBN 978-0312461881

**IMPORTANT NOTE ON COMMUNICATION**

**When contacting me, always identify yourself and the course in which you are enrolled. Always use (and regularly check) your Oakland University email.**

If you have a schedule conflict, or a problem with an assignment, or any concerns about the course, **please contact me as soon as possible**. It is much easier for me to assist you when you communicate in advance or promptly following some unforeseen circumstance. You have my office phone, the English Department phone, and my email address—do not hesitate to use them.

**CLASS PARTICIPATION AND ETIQUETTE**

**Students are expected to come to each class with their copies of the assigned texts and having done the assigned reading carefully.**

The classroom experience is a vital component in a literature class. Literature is public and social, not private and personal. Regular attendance (which includes arriving and departing on time) and participation in class are essential to the course. **During class, students are expected to remain awake, alert, and attentive.**

**Except in the case of an emergency, please do not leave the room while class is in session.**

**Cell phones may not be used during class. Be sure to silence all cell phones while class is in session**

**NOTE ON ACADEMIC CONDUCT:**

We all derive information from other sources: instructors, fellow students, books, websites, etc. As an ancient expression puts it, we are dwarves standing on the shoulders of giants; we see farther than they, but only because they have lifted us up. Honesty requires us, of course, to acknowledge the work and thought of others that has contributed to our own work (i.e., respect the giant). The basic principles of such acknowledgement are expressed in the Oakland University statement on "Academic Conduct Regulations," which is available on the Dean of Students web page.

<https://www.oakland.edu/deanofstudents/policies/>

Be sure to familiarize yourself with this policy. Understand that any suspected act of plagiarism (using the ideas of others without acknowledgment) on an assignment for this class will be turned over to the Academic Conduct Committee and may result in a no credit for the course, as well.

**ASSIGNMENTS**

It is possible (though unlikely) that the following list of assignments and grade percentages may change during the semester. Any such changes would be announced in class and on the course Moodle site at least one week in advance.

<b>Annotated Bibliography:</b>	10% of the course grade
<b>Papers:</b>	
Close Reading Paper (3 pages):	10% of the course grade.
Interpretive Essay (6-8 pages):	20% of the course grade
<b>Exams:</b>	
Midterm exam:	20% of the course grade
Final exam:	25% of the course grade
<b>Class participation:</b>	15% of the course grade

The class participation grade will include attendance, performance on quizzes, in-class and on-line writing assignments, and contributions to in-class and on-line discussions.

**NOTE:**

**The annotated bibliography, both papers, and both exams must be completed in order to receive credit for the course.**

**More than two absences may result in no credit for class participation;**

**More than three absences may result in a no credit for the course.**

**SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

**The Office of Disability and Support Services** provides support to students who may have issues that interfere with their ability to successfully complete their coursework.

<https://wwwp.oakland.edu/dss/>

121 North Foundation Hall

248-370-3266

email: [dss@oakland.edu](mailto:dss@oakland.edu)

**Veteran Support Services** provides a wide range of support and advice to OU students who are veterans, service members, or dependents of veterans.

<https://wwwp.oakland.edu/veterans/>

116 North Foundation Hall

248-370-2010

email: [vss@oakland.edu](mailto:vss@oakland.edu)

**The Gender and Sexuality Center** serves the OU community, particularly women and LGBTIQ communities, by fostering an atmosphere of inclusion and understanding around issues of sexuality and gender.

<https://oakland.edu/gsc/>

49D Oakland Center

248-370-4333

email: [gsc@oakland.edu](mailto:gsc@oakland.edu)

**CLASS SCHEDULE**

**Readings must be completed before class on the day listed.** The schedule and reading assignments may be altered with advance notice, but I expect we will follow this schedule closely. Additional short readings may also be added as the semester progresses. **Students are responsible for material they may have missed through absence (including possible schedule changes).** I strongly encourage you to get to know your classmates and even form regular study groups. In the event that a class session is cancelled for weather or other emergency, always refer to the syllabus and keep up with this schedule.

**Where only the title of a work appears below, the entire work must be completed before arriving at class, in addition to any supplementary readings indicated.**

- Sept. 11**     *Introduction to British Medieval Literature*  
 Old English Poetry Selections (on course moodle site)  
                   "The Dream of the Rood"  
                   "The Wanderer"  
                   "The Seafarer"
- 18            *Intellectual Foundations*  
                   Moodle Discussion--No classroom meeting  
                   *Bedford Glossary*: "classic, classical"; "medieval";  
  
                   Boethius, *Consolation of Philosophy*:  
                   The "Preface," pp. viii-ix, and "Introduction," pp. xi-xxii;  
                   Books I-V
- 25            *Old English Narrative: Epic*  
                   *Bedford Glossary*: "Old English Period"; "epic";  
  
                   *Beowulf*, completed.  
                   Introduction, "*Beowulf* Between Song and Text"  
                   and "*Beowulf* Between Court and Cloister," pp. 18-36;  
**Translation exercise due**
- Oct. 2**            *Middle English Narrative: Chaucer's Masterpiece*  
                   *Bedford Glossary*: "Middle English Period"  
                   (including the entries for the highlighted terms)  
                   Courtly Love Readings on Moodle site  
  
                   Geoffrey Chaucer, *Troilus and Criseyde*, "Introduction," pp. ix-xxv;  
                   Books One and Two

- Oct.** 9 Chaucer, *Troilus and Criseyde*, Books Three and Four  
and "Introduction," pp. xxv-xli
- 16 Chaucer, *Troilus and Criseyde*, Book Five
- 23 *Middle English Narrative: Romance*  
*Bedford Glossary*: "medieval romance"; "romance"
- Readings on the Moodle site
- Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*  
(I am not assigning the "Introduction"; if you wish to read it and  
you've never read SGGK before, I strongly advise reading the poem first.)
- (Fri.) 26 **Close Reading Paper due on Moodle**
- 30 **Midterm Exam**  
Bring Blue Books
- Nov.** 6 *Middle English Narrative: Dream Vision*  
*Bedford Glossary*: "dream vision"
- Pearl*, including the "Introduction"
- (Fri.) 9 **Bibliography due (5 items) on Moodle**
- 13 *Middle English Narrative: Arthurian Prose Romance*  
Readings on Moodle site
- Sir Thomas Malory, *Le Morte d'Arthur*, Books XVIII-XIX
- 20 *Middle English Narrative: Arthurian Prose Romance*  
Sir Thomas Malory, *Le Morte d'Arthur*, Books XX-XI
- (Wed.) 21 **Annotated Bibliography due on Moodle**

**Nov. 27**     *Medieval Drama: The Corpus Christi Drama*  
*Bedford Glossary*: "mystery play"; "miracle play"  
Readings on Moodle site

*Everyman and Medieval Miracle Plays*, "Introduction  
*Abraham and Isaac*, pp. 49-64  
*The Second Shepherd's Pageant*, pp. 75-104

**(Fri.) 30**     **Interpretive Essay due on Moodle**

**Dec. 4**     *Medieval Drama: The Morality Play*  
*Bedford Glossary*: "morality play"  
Video on Moodle site

*York Crucifixion Pageant*, pp. 137-148  
*Everyman*, pp. 195-225

**11**     **Final Exam: 7:00-10:00 p.m.**  
Bring Blue Books