

The Cultures of Chivalry  
**King Arthur for love and profit**

English 1320-001C (5975) / MDVL 3329 (6122)-001C

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Spring 2018

12:30 TTH 157 D

259 Dallas Hall (214.768-2949)

Office Hours: 2-4 W & by appointment

***Courage! Honor! Intensity! Valor! Armor! Love! Romance! Youth! = CHIVALRY***

*King Arthur is the most popular and most frequently revived Western hero from the Middle Ages to the current moment. This course examines aspects of the Arthurian story—Camelot, the knights of the Round Table, the Holy Grail—from its roots in the Middle Ages to its flourishing today. We focus our work on **love**—romantic love, family love, and love of friends—and **profit**—how stories of King Arthur can teach us to understand **power** and succeed in politics and even business organization.*

*In this course, we study the development of chivalric mentalities in literature, history, and culture from the Middle Ages to modern times. This course moves back and forth from the flowering of chivalry in twelfth-century Western culture to the current moment. Stories of King Arthur form the central thread around which we weave studies of chivalric education and variation, of chivalric rejection and renewal. As a general guide to the Middle Ages, use Judith Bennett's <http://www.medievaleuropeonline.com/general.html>*

**Course Objectives: You get several kinds of UC credit for this course** (CA, HC, OC). So what do I hope you learn? First, my object is for students to find pleasure in aesthetically satisfying and complex texts about a figure that inspires and challenges the imagination. Next, my object is to help you develop further your critical thinking skills (analysis, synthesis, and evaluation) as well as your verbal and written communication skills. I introduce students to critical thinking and questioning through the examination of some major works of medieval north European and English culture about the Arthurian legendary, as well as to larger literary and historical narratives and movements; you develop skills used in the humanistic study of history and literature, including close reading, study of primary texts, critical reading of relevant scholarship, and *interdisciplinary* writing about history and literature.

**Requirements:** It's important that we all be *there* there! Attendance is required: if you miss more than two (2) classes, you receive an automatic administrative drop from course. Readings must be finished by the time assigned; quizzes will be given if necessary (you'll know why) at random and account for 10% of the final grade—if quizzes prove unnecessary, then this component will be assigned to class participation. There will be no substitutes or make-ups. Other components of the final grade are: four in-class debates (40%); two panel presentations (20%); term examination (10%); comprehensive final exam (20%).

*Panel discussions:* Twice during the semester, each student will take part in leading a panel discussion, in which four students briefly present a topic related to the reading (context, content, significance x2), and the rest of the class responds. Class discussion will be the responsibility of presenters and audience. Panelists will present a polished performance with a clear argument and a class handout.

*Final Exam:* The final exam will be comprehensive. It will consist of multiple sections that will require you to identify concepts, characters, and historical figures; to comment on selections from the course readings; and to compose a long essay.

*Learning Outcomes and Final Examination Demonstration of Course Objectives:* Through a variety of questions you answer in your final examination, you will be able to recount and explain at least **five** major (1) events, (2) dates, (3) historical figures, (4) works of literature, (5) historical and literary 'receptions' and interpretations, and (6) religious and philosophical and general ethical attitudes towards power, kinship, religion, and cultural memory typical of the medieval cultures which produced and shaped the stories of King Arthur and the Round Table.

*Books—use only these editions and versions.*

Chrétien de Troyes, *Arthurian Romances*, trans. D.D.R. Owen ISBN 978-0345277602;  
Geoffrey of Monmouth, *History of the Kings of Britain*, trans/ed Faletra (Broadview) ISBN: 978-1-55111-639-1;  
Heldris of Cornwall. *Silence: A Thirteenth-Century French Romance*, trans. Sarah Roche-Mahdi (East Lansing: Colleagues Press, 1992) ISBN 978-0870135439;  
*The Mabinogion*, trans. Sioned Davies (Oxford University Press) ISBN-13: 978-0199218783;  
Sir Thomas Malory's *Morte Darthur*, trans. Dorsey Armstrong (Parlor Press) ISBN 978-1602351035;  
Mark Twain, *Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* (Norton) ISBN 978-0-3-9395-137-0.  
*On-Line Readings as assigned.*

## Syllabus

Jan 23 The Nature of the Arthurian Corpus: Texts and Bodies

Jan 25 Origins of Arthurian Stories?

(Faletra, *History of the Kings of Britain*, Appendix A & C; Gildas, pp. 218-228)

Jan 30 Foundational Stories: Geoffrey of Monmouth, Inventor or Translator?

*READING:* Geoffrey of Monmouth, *History of the Kings of Britain*  
(Faletra, *History of the Kings of Britain*, Intro, 8-38; plus pp. 38-97)

*DEBATES:*

Feb 1 Foundational Stories: Rome, Britain, and *translatio imperii*

*READING:* Geoffrey of Monmouth, *History of the Kings of Britain* (98-162);  
*Recommended:* Geoffrey Ashe, "The Origins of the Arthurian  
Legend," in *Arthuriana* 5.3 (Fall 1995) [in OLR]

*DEBATES:*

Feb 6 Arthurian In(ter)ventions

*READING:* Geoffrey of Monmouth, *History of the Kings of Britain* (163-217)  
and Appendix D;

*Recommended:* Geoffrey Ashe, "The Origins of the Arthurian  
Legend," in *Arthuriana* 5.3 (Fall 1995) [in OLR]

*DEBATES:*

Feb 8 British Traditions: Red Gold

*READING:* *How Culhwch won Olwen* (in *The Mabinogion*)

*DEBATES:*

Feb 13 British Traditions: Barbarians and the Barbered

*READING:* *How Culhwch won Olwen* (in *The Mabinogion*)

*DEBATES:*

Feb 15 Untraditional French Tales

*READING:* Heldris of Cornwall, *Silence*, 2-173

*DEBATES:*

Feb 20 Contentment in Cross Dressing?

*READING:* Heldris of Cornwall, *Silence*, 174-315

*DEBATES:*

Feb 22 *Term Examination*

Feb 27 French Traditions: Trajectories of Desire

*READING:* Chrétien de Troyes, *Erec and Enide* (in *Arthurian Romances*)

*DEBATES:*

*PANEL:*

Mar 1 French Traditions: Objects of Desire

*READING:* Chrétien de Troyes, *Yvain* (in *Arthurian Romances*)

*DEBATES:*

*PANEL:*

Mar 6 French Traditions: Anxiety and Desire

*READING:* Chrétien de Troyes, *Yvain* (in *Arthurian Romances*)

*DEBATES:*

*PANEL:*

Mar 8 French Traditions: Desire and the Other

*READING:* Chrétien de Troyes, *The Knight of the Cart, or Lancelot* (in *Arthurian Romances*)

*DEBATES:*

*PANEL:*

## Spring Break

Mar 20 English Traditions: Boy to King

*READING:* Malory, *Tale of King Arthur* (3-53)

*DEBATES:*

*PANEL:*

Mar 22 Birth, Boy, Sorcery, and Fratricide: The Oath and its Meanings

*READING:* Malory, *Tale of King Arthur* (54-103)

*DEBATES:*

*PANEL:*

Mar 29 From Boy to Emperor

*READING:* Malory, *Tale of the Noble King Arthur and King Lucius* (104-134)

*DEBATES:*

*PANELS:*

Apr 3 'He passed all other knyghtes'

*READING:* Malory, *Tale of Sir Lancelot du Lake* (135-156)

*DEBATES:*

Apr 5 Identity and its discontents

*READING:* Malory, *Tale of Sir Gareth* (157-200)

*DEBATES:*

*PANELS:*

Apr 10 Outer Worlds of Camelot

*READING:* Malory, *Tale of Sir Tristram* (201–342)

*DEBATES:*

*PANELS:*

Apr 12 The Diaspora of Knighthood

*READING:* Malory, *Tale of Sir Tristram* (342–452)

*DEBATES:*

*PANEL:*

Apr 17 Perfection and other Forms of Boredom

Malory, *Noble Tale of the Sankgreal* (453-537)

*DEBATES:*

*PANEL:*

Apr 19 Love and Other Forms of Poison

*READING:* Malory, *Tale of Lancelot and Guenevere* (538-589)

*DEBATES:*

Apr 24 Flourish Your Heart in this World

*READING:* Malory, *Death of King Arthur* (590-636)

*DEBATES:*

*PANELS:*

Apr 26 Flourish Your Heart in *what* World

*READING:* Malory, *Tale of King Arthur* (3-53)

*DEBATES:*

May 1 Is Chivalry Dead Yet?

*READING:* Mark Twain, *Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*  
Chapters 1-18

*DEBATES:*

*PANEL:*

May 3 Manuscripts with the Boss

*READING:* Mark Twain, *Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*  
Chapters 19–64

*DEBATES:*

*Academic Dishonesty:* Academic dishonesty is a completely unacceptable mode of conduct and will not be tolerated in any form. All persons involved in academic dishonesty will be disciplined in accordance with University regulations and procedures. Discipline may include suspension or expulsion from the University. Scholastic dishonesty includes but is not limited to cheating, plagiarism, collusion, the submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an examination for another person, any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student or the attempt to commit such acts.

*Disability Accommodations:* Students needing academic accommodations for a disability must first be registered with Disability Accommodations & Success Strategies (DASS) to verify the disability and to establish eligibility for accommodations. Students may call 214-768-1470 or visit <http://www.smu.edu/alec/dass> to begin the process. Once registered, students should then schedule an appointment with the professor to make appropriate arrangements.

*Attendance Policy:* Religiously observant students wishing to be absent on holy days should notify me in writing at the beginning of the semester, and should discuss with me in advance acceptable ways of making up any work missed because of the absence.

*Excused Absences for University Extracurricular Activities:* The SMU policy states that "Students participating in an officially sanctioned, scheduled University extracurricular activity should be given the opportunity to make up class assignments or other graded assignments missed as a result of their participation. It is the responsibility of the student to make arrangements with the instructor prior to any missed scheduled examination or other missed assignment for making up the work. (University Undergraduate Catalog)." *Note that "should" is not "must."* I do not subscribe to this silly request that would permit students to miss class for other university activities (sports, etc.). **Class comes first.** Class always comes first. If you miss one class before the end of add/drop period, you will be automatically dropped from the course. If you have conflicts, talk to me personally.