

Fall 2015 ♦ ENGL 306-001 (#52891) COMP 306-001 (#54276)  
TR 3:30-4:45 ♦ DSH 226

**Dr. Obermeier**

**Arthurian Legends: Medieval to Modern**

Office Hours: M and R 10-12 in HUM 227, and by Appointment

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### Required Texts

- \*Lacy, Norris J., and Geoffrey Ashe. *The Arthurian Handbook*. 2nd ed. Garland, 1998. (AH)
- \*Lacy, Norris J., ed. *The Lancelot-Grail Reader*. Garland, 2000. (LGR)
- \*Malory, Sir Thomas. *Le Morte Darthur*. Ed. Helen Cooper. Oxford UP, 1998.
- \*Mitchison, Naomi. *To the Chapel Perilous*. Green Knight, 1999. Get from me.
- Obermeier, Anita, and Gregory Castle. *Guide to Style*. 2015. On class webpage (CWP)
- Tennyson, Lord Alfred. *Idylls of the King*. (CWP).
- \*Twain, Mark. *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*. Penguin, 1971.
- \*Wilhelm, James J., ed. *The Romance of Arthur*. Garland, 2013. (RA)

\* items you need to buy; the other readings are on eReserve: link on class webpage. Password = Morgan (eR)

Class webpage: <http://www.unm.edu/~aobermei/Eng306/index306.html>

Hardcopy Reserve link for further research is also on class webpage.

### Course Requirements

Oral Group Presentation	worth 15 %	Midterm	worth 10 %
1 8-10-page paper	worth 25 %	Final	worth 20 %
Written Responses	worth 15 %	Class Participation	worth 15 %

Grading is done on a standard 0-100 scale. For grading rubrics and scale, see class webpage.

### Tentative Syllabus

(Texts to be read for the day indicated. Responses are to be handed in on the day indicated.)

- T 8.18 Introduction to the Course.  
R 8.20 **Origins: The Arthur of the Chronicles:** *The Arthurian Handbook (AH)*, Ch. I: “Origins” (2-23, 29-35); *Romance of Arthur (RA)*, Ch. 1: “Arthur in the Latin Chronicles” (1-8).
- T 8.25 **Celtic Arthur:** *AH*, Ch. I: “Origins” (23-29); *RA*, Chs. 2, 3: “Arthur in the Early Welsh Tradition” (9-27), “Culhwch and Olwen” (28-57).  
R 8.27 **Arthur of Monmouth:** *AH*, Ch. I: 36-52; *RA*, Ch. 4, “Arthur in Geoffrey of Monmouth” (58-87). Note: there is a mass of detail in Chs. I and II of the *AH*—you are not expected to learn all the names, only to understand the major traditions.
- F 8.28 **Last day to add sections, change classes or change grading option in LoboWEB.**
- M 8.31 !! Email your Group Presentation choices to me.  
T 9.1 **Arthur, Gawain, and Mordred:** *RA*, Chs. 5, 6, 21: “Wace, *Roman de Brut*” (88-99), “Layamon, *Brut*” (100-11), *The Alliterative Morte Arthure* (501-13); *AH*, Ch. II (57-67, 122-4). **Response 1 Due.**
- R 9.3 **Lancelot and Guinevere:** *AMA* cont. (520-41); *RA*, Ch. 7: Chrétien de Troyes, *Lancelot*, or *The Knight of the Cart* (112-38); *AH*, Ch. II (68-71).  
F 9.4 **Last day to drop a course without a grade.**
- T 9.8 **Lancelot and Guinevere** cont.: *RA*, Ch. 7: Chrétien de Troyes, *Lancelot* (139-80); Epic/Romance Handout (CWP). **Bring \$2 for Mitchison book.**  
R 9.10 **Tristan and Isolde:** *RA*, Ch. 12: Bérout, *The Romance of Tristan* (236-81); *AH*, Ch. II (88-91, 100-3); Andreas Capellanus, *De Amore* (CWP). **Response 2 Due.**  
F 9.11 **Last day to change grading options.**
- T 9.15 **Perceval:** *RA*, Ch. 14: Thomas of Britain, *Tristan* (282-93); Chrétien de Troyes, *Perceval*, or *The Story of the Grail: Summary* (CWP), “Perceval Excerpts Part I” (eR), and *AH*, Ch. II (71-76, 92-94).  
R 9.17 **Wolfram von Eschenbach’s Grail:** *RA*, Ch. 8: *Perceval* (181-92); *RA*, Ch. 9: *Parzival* (193-206) and *Parzival Part II* (eR); *AH*, Ch. II (76-81, 97-100). Grail Comparison Chart (CWP).  
**Response 3 Due.**  
**Arthurian Film Festival** in HUM 108, 6:30 pm: Clips from various European Tristan and Isolde films. Feature Film: *Tristan and Isolde* (2006).
- T 9.22 **Merlin:** *The Lancelot-Grail Reader (LGR): The Story of Merlin and The Death of Merlin* (49-92, 415-19). Note that some of this material overlaps with *The Prose Merlin* section in the *RA*, Ch. 17 (324-76)—the same sources, but different translators, and different selections. **Film Response Due.**
- R 9.24 **Vulgate Lancelot:** *LGR: Lancelot*, Pts. I-II (94-141); *AH*, Ch. II (81-88). **Response 4 Due.**
- T 9.29 *LGR: Lancelot*, Pts. III, V (142-79, 232-42, 296-304).

- R 10.1       **Group Presentations.** Instructions on CWP.
- T 10.6       Finish *LGR* sections from 9.24 and 9.29. **Midterm Exam Prep.**
- 10.8-9       Fall Break. Enjoy!
- T 10.13       **Midterm.** Blue books are optional, but some form of paper is required.
- W 10.14       **Arthurian Film Festival** in HUM 108, 6:30 pm: Clips from *First Knight* (1995) and *Mists of Avalon* (2001); Feature Film; *Guinevere* (1994).
- R 10.15       **Vulgate Grail:** *LGR: The Quest for the Grail* (305, 313-363)  
**Malory:** *Le Morte Darthur*, Note on the Text (xiii-xvi), Caxton's Preface (528-30), 3-49. *AH*, Ch. II (128-33). Note: some of this material will be familiar, since Malory is abridging and retelling tales from his sources, many of which you have already read, but we are focusing on what he decides to use, how and why. **Response 5 Due.**
- T 10.20       **Group Presentations.** Instructions on CWP. **Film Response Due.**
- R 10.22       Malory, 50-81, 120-68. Browse through 95-119; Heraldry and Color Symbolism Handouts (CWP). **Response 6 Due.**
- T 10.27       Malory, 240-309.
- R 10.29       Malory, 310-50, 388-414. Browse through 351-87. **Response 7 Due.**
- T 11.3       Malory, 415-44, 460-505; Knighthood Handout (CWP).
- R 11.5       **Victorian Masculinities and Femininities:** Finish Malory 505-27. Tennyson, "The Lady of Shalott" (CWP); *Idylls of the King*, "Dedication" (19-20—eR), "Merlin and Vivien" (142-67—eR); *AH*, Ch. III (152-64). **Response 8 Due.**
- F 11.6       **Last day to withdraw without approval of college dean.**
- T 11.10       **Group Presentations.** Instructions on CWP. **Email Term Paper Proposal to me.**
- R 11.12       **The American Response:** Tennyson cont.: "Guinevere" (269-87—eR), "To the Queen" (301-2—eR), William Morris, "The Defense of Guinevere" (CWP); Twain, *Yankee* 29-77; Twain Preface Paragraph (eR); *AH*, Ch. III (164-65).
- F 11.13       **Arthurian Round Table Dinner, 6:30 pm.** Invitation will be issued.
- M 11.16       **Arthurian Film Festival** in HUM, 6:30 pm: Clips from *Lancelot du Lake* (1974) and *Knight in Camelot* (1998). Feature Film: *Excalibur* (1981).
- T 11.17       Twain, *Yankee* 79-214. **Response 9 Due.**
- R 11.19       Twain, *Yankee* 215-352.
- T 11.24       **Postmodernism:** Twain, *Yankee* 353-410; Naomi Mitchison, *To the Chapel Perilous* 13-49; *AH*, Ch. III (183). **Film Response Due.**
- R 11.26       **Thanksgiving Break**
- T 12.1       Mitchison, 50-146. **Response 10 Due.**
- R 12.3       Mitchison, 147-218. **Review and Final Exam Prep.**
- Su 12.6       **Term Paper Due by Midnight. Email Submission.**

R 12.10      **Final Exam:** 3:00-5:00. Blue books are optional, but some form of paper is required.

### Course Objectives

The Arthurian Legend has been the single most prolific and enduring literary motif in Western literature. This course will investigate the enduring strength and attraction of the Arthurian legends from their pan-European beginnings in the medieval period to contemporary literature popular culture, and film. There is no such thing as one “authentic” Arthurian tradition, only competing accounts and reconceptualizations. We will read masterpieces from the Celtic tradition, Chrétien de Troyes, the French Lancelot-Grail Cycle, Wolfram von Eschenbach, Thomas Malory, Alfred Lord Tennyson, Mark Twain, Naomi Mitchison, and others. This way, we can observe how each new version serves a new authorial, political, or cultural agenda— whether it is to establish a national foundation myth, to endorse specific religious values, to revive medieval values in an industrial age, or to challenge gender stereotypes in modern times. We will also focus on the evolution of other important Arthurian characters, such as Gawain, Tristan, Perceval, Morgan le Fay, Galahad, Merlin, Lancelot, and Guinevere. Our guiding question through the course will be “Why Arthur and his companions, particularly? Why *these* figures, *this* narrative, *this* myth?”

### Learning Outcomes

At end of the course, students should be able:

- to examine firsthand some of the best Arthurian works throughout time
- to be familiar with the various personages surrounding King Arthur
- to understand the historic time periods of the Arthurian legends and those that perpetuated them
- to explore why the Arthurian legends took hold and how they remain popular
- to gain a sense of the evolution of the themes, how and why they transformed
- to make intertextual connections between the medieval and modern versions of the legends
- to conduct independent research using appropriate methods and tools for Medieval and literary studies to give effective oral presentations
- to write competent analytical response and research papers
- to identify, analyze, and synthesize the acquired knowledge and skills in tests and papers

### Course Policies

**1. Attendance** is mandatory. Since your progress in the course will depend a great deal on what we discuss in class, I expect class attendance and participation (actual contributions to the class discussion). I will pass out attendance sheets, and it is your responsibility to sign the sheets. So if the sheet passed you by, come up to the desk and sign at the end of class. Half of your participation grade is based on attendance. Every missed class will drop your participation grade 5 points. **Note:** While you are welcome to check with me on what you have missed, I cannot “reteach” material you missed during my office hours or over email. Please consult with your peers for notes.

**2. The Term Paper** must conform to the presentational guidelines set forth in the *Guide to Style* or the *MLA* and be submitted on time. The paper should represent your best effort and will be graded accordingly. Please note that I encourage you to discuss topics, outlines, and rough drafts with me during my office hours or via email. The paper assignment sheet is on the class webpage.

**3. Tests** are closed book, consisting of short ids, passage ids, and essay questions. I will link a study guide before each exam on the class webpage.

**4. Written Responses:** You are expected to write a 1-page (single- or double-spaced—your choice) response for each session indicated, discussing the readings for that day or since the last response. These responses should be informal, journal-like **typed** pieces, expressing your thoughts and reactions to the text, and turned in to me in hard copy. They also help me see where an entire class might be lost, or what you are particularly interested in. In the past, I have really enjoyed reading about your thoughts; I get the feeling that I am sharing your experience. Do not be afraid to express puzzlement and unfamiliarity, or even delight and interest. I am interested in your untutored, uncritical reactions to the text. We will leave more structured and analytical writing for the formal paper.

If you need some guidance, analyze why you think certain characters, themes, developments, motifs, etc. are significant. What do they mean in the context and culture they are used? Several sample response papers are on the Sample Paper site on the CWP.

**5. Class Discussion and Participation:** One of my teaching philosophies is student ownership of text along with critical thinking. In order to facilitate good class discussion and involvement of all students, I have devised several short individual and small group warm-up exercises trying to cull out the significance of each text. It is not enough to retell “the story,” although sometimes things might be confusing and clarification is necessary. The emphasis is on analysis.

**6. Group Presentations:** Please look at the instructions on the class webpage and email me your choice by 8.31.2015.

**7. Arthurian Film Festival:** Attendance at the film nights counts toward your participation grade. You have to attend **twice** during the semester and write a 1-page response paper for each film night you attend. It should be fun, and there will be dinner-type food and refreshments.

**8. Assignments:** Students must attempt **all** assignments to pass the course; hence you cannot, for instance, skip the final. There will be extra credit opportunities for attending lectures with medieval topics, etc. 5 points on 5% of the overall grade.

**9. Pertinent Websites:** My own website contains a file for this class with links to pertinent Arthurian and other medieval sites. All handouts will be available from the website also.

**10.** The English Department affirms its commitment to the joint responsibility of instructors and students to foster and maintain a positive learning environment.

**11. Equal Access:** If you have a qualified disability that requires some form of accommodation to ensure your equal access to learning in this class, please see me as soon as possible so that we can work together to address your needs.

**12. Laptops:** If you are using a laptop during class time, I require that you email me after class the notes you have taken during class.

**13. Cell Phones:** No cell phone use or texting in this class. Turn your phones off.

**14. Plagiarism.** Don't do it! For clarification, see #102-107 in the *Guide to Style*.