

Paper 1

Content: Write a 5-page paper (plus a works cited page) on one or more work(s) on the syllabus up to the midterm. See **Structure** below. This assignment is not a research paper but seeks to test *your* close-reading and interpreting skills; therefore, you should avoid secondary criticism. You may use handbooks to literature, dictionaries, the Bible, mythology, history, philosophy, literary theories, etc.

Suggestions for Topics

1. Discuss one of the smaller pieces of literature or a section of a larger piece in detail.
2. Do a thematic or structural reading of one of the *Lais* of Marie de France.
3. Compare a small aspect of two works to each other, such as the notion of self-exile in *Ywain and Gawain* and *Sir Orfeo*, or the portrayal of fairyland in *Sir Lanval* and *Sir Orfeo*.
4. Explore the notion of the *Bildungsroman* in one of the chivalric works.
5. Pick a modern critical approach and exemplify it on a work of your choice. You could also write an essay demonstrating how a particular approach would not work with a given text.
6. A topic of your choice cleared with me first.

Format: Please follow the guidelines outlined in the *Guide to Style* containing the format guidelines of the *MLA*, plus instructions on writing papers, sample introductory paragraphs with developed theses, frequent errors in critical writing, and a list of tools for the literature student. Review documentation procedures and follow the distinctions outlined for poetry as well as shorter and longer quotations. Failure to provide the correct format will result in lower grades. Sample English literature papers are also available on my website. Email me for the password.

Structure: I would like to reiterate that you are writing a **formal** paper, both in content and in style. Thus, your paper needs an introduction providing a context and a precisely phrased thesis at the end of the first paragraph (see especially #2-3 in *Guide to Style*). I encourage you to edit, revise, and proofread your papers, striving for coherence, grammatical correctness, and good transitions. First drafts rarely hold up to critical scrutiny. I am available in office hours or via email to discuss ideas, outlines, and drafts of your paper with you before it is due.

Note: The following sections in the *Guide to Style* might be especially helpful for this assignment: **1-10, 28-30, 32, 42-50, 53-62, 72-76, 81-83.**

Due Date: Thursday, 3.29.2007.