

Fall 2009 ♦ Engl. 680 (#34385)

W 4:00-7:30 ♦ HUM 324

Dr. Obermeier

Malory's Morte Darthur: Sources and Successors

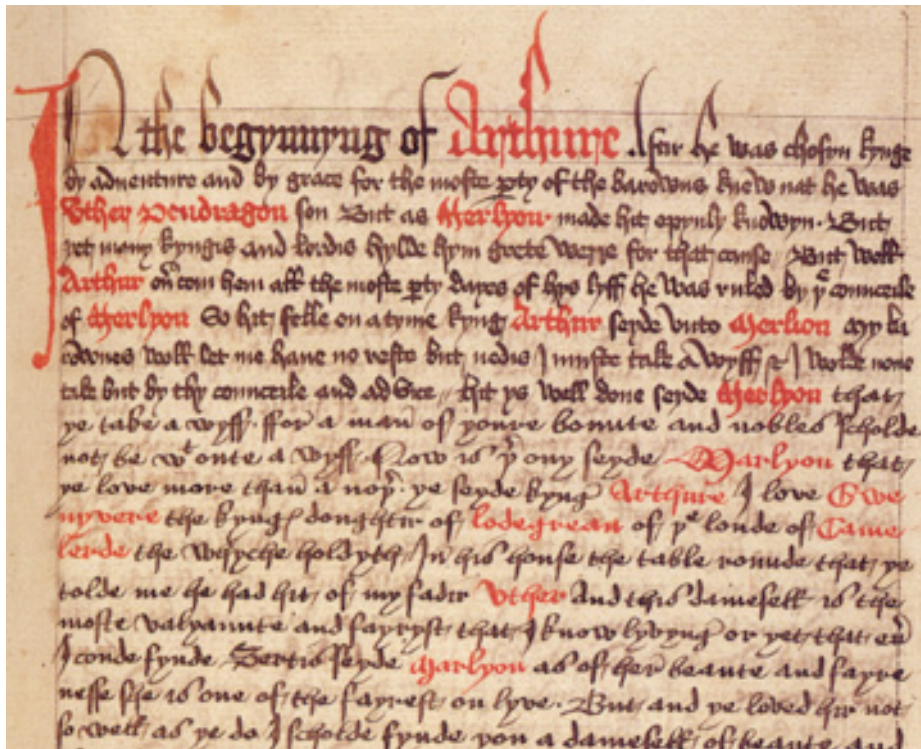
Office Hours: M 10:00-12:00, W 9:00-11:00, Th 2:00-4:00 and by Appointment in HUM 321

☎ and Voice Mail: 505.277.3103

Email: AObermei@unm.edu

Website: <http://www.unm.edu/~aobermei>

Mailbox on office door or in English Department Office via receptionist



Required Texts

Archibald, Elizabeth, and A. S. G Edwards, eds. *A Companion to Malory*. D. S. Brewer, 1996. (CtM).

Lacy, Norris J., ed. *The Lancelot-Grail Reader*. Garland, 2000. (LGR).

Malory, Sir Thomas. *Le Morte Darthur*. Ed. Stephen A. H. Shepherd. Norton, 2004. (LMD).

Optional: *Le Morte Darthur: The Winchester Manuscript*. Ed. Helen Cooper. Oxford UP, 1998.

Mitchison, Naomi. *To the Chapel Perilous*. Green Knight, 1999. Get from me for \$5.

Obermeier, Anita, and Gregory Castle. *Guide to Style*. 2009. On class webpage.

Tennyson, Lord Alfred. *Idylls of the King*. Penguin, 1996.

Twain, Mark. *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*. Penguin, 1971.

Class webpage: <http://www.unm.edu/~aobermei/Eng680/index680.html>

eReserve: <http://ereserves.unm.edu/eres/coursepass.aspx?cid=7703> (Password = Lancelot).

Both eReserve and Hardcopy Reserve links are also on class webpage.

Course Requirements

1 Oral Presentation of an Essay	5%	1 Review of a Scholarly Book	15%
1 Presentation on an Arthurian Work	10%	1 Literature Review	10%
1 Conference Paper Presentation	5%	25-page Research Paper	35%
Active Class Participation	20%		

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

Tentative Syllabus

Texts are to be read for the day indicated.

Sometimes there are four articles listed for the reading. You are responsible for three.

- W 8.26 **Introduction to the course:** Malory's Life. Video Presentations: *Quest for Arthur*; Malory's *Le Morte Darthur: Anatomy of a Legend*; Bonnie Wheeler on "Malory's Vision of History." Caxton's "Prologue" to his edition of the *Morte*.
Batt, "Malory and Rape" (*LMD* 797-814).
Field, "The Malory Life-Records" (*CtM* 115-30).
McCarthy, "Malory and His Sources" (*CtM* 75-95).
- W 9.2 **The Tale of Arthur:** Malory, *Le Morte Darthur* 3-61; *Suite de Merlin* (*LGR* 50-76, 415-19).
Archibald, "Beginnings: *The Tale of King Arthur*" (*CtM* 133-45).
A. G. S. Edwards, "The Reception of Malory's *Morte Darthur*" (*CtM* 241-52).
Whetter, "On Misunderstanding Malory's Balyn" (eR).
- W 9.9 **Morgan le Fay, Gawain, and Pellinor:** Malory, *Le Morte Darthur* 62-112.
Guest Lecture by Prof. Barry Gaines on the Editions and Translations of the *Morte*.
Valerie Shoudt: Heng, "Enchanted Ground: The Feminine Subtext in Malory" (*LMD* 835-49).
Katrina Wilkinson: Holbrook, "Nymue, the Chief Lady of the Lake, in Malory's *LMD*" (eR).
Meale, "'The Hoole Book': Editing and the Creation of Meaning in Malory's Text" (*CtM* 3-17).
- F 9.11 **Last day to drop a course without a grade.**
- W 9.16 **Lancelot, Arthur, and Lucius:** Malory, *Le Morte Darthur* 113-77; *Alliterative Morte* Excerpts in ME (*LMD* 714-18); in translation on eR; *Prose Lancelot* and *Perlesvaus* Excerpts (*LMD* 720-26).
Archibald, "Beginnings: *King Arthur and the Emperor Lucius*" (*CtM* 145-51).
David Lawrence: Barber, "Chivalry and the *Morte Darthur*" (*CtM* 19-35).
Hoffman, "Assimilating Saracens: The Aliens in Malory's *Morte Darthur*" (eR).
Doug van Benthuyzen: Riddy, "Contextualizing *Le Morte Darthur*: Empire and Civil War" (*CtM* 55-73).
- F 9.18 **Last day to change grading options.**
- W 9.23 **The Tale of Sir Gareth:** Malory, *Le Morte Darthur* 178-227.
Armstrong, "Forecast and Recall: Gareth and Tristram" (110-126 eR).
Lisa Myers: Sanders, "Sir Gareth and the 'Unfair Unknown': Malory's Use of the Gawain Romances" (eR).
Bruce Carroll: Tiller, "The Rise of Sir Gareth and the Hermeneutics of Heraldry" (eR).
Ketievia Segovia: Sutcliff's *Sword at Sunset*.
Book Review Workshop.
- W 9.30 **Tristan and Isolde:** Malory, *Le Morte Darthur* 228-357; *Prose Tristan* (*LMD* 726-28); Beroul's *Tristan* (eR). You can skim the lengthy battle scenes, if you like.
Armstrong, "Forecast and Recall: Gareth and Tristram" (127-43 eR).

- Classen, “Female Agency and Power in Gottfried von Strassburg’s *Tristan: The Irish Queen Isolde: New Perspectives*” (eR).
 Cooper, “*The Book of Sir Tristram de Lyones*” (CtM 183-201).
 Kennedy, “Malory’s King Mark and King Arthur” (eR).
David Lawrence: Book review of Hodges’ *Forging Chivalric Communities*.
Doug van Benthuyzen: Book review of Field’s *The Life and Times of Sir Thomas Malory*.
- W 10.7 **Tristan and Palomides**: Malory, *Le Morte Darthur* 357-495; Prose *Tristan* (LMD 728-33).
 Armstrong, “Postcolonial Palomides” (eR).
 Mahoney, Malory’s “Tale of Sir Tristram”: Source and Setting Reconsidered” (eR).
 Radulescu, “Gentry Values in Malory’s *Morte Darthur*” (eR).
Bram Cleaver: Rushton, “Absent Fathers, Unexpected Sons: Paternity in Malory’s *MD*” (eR).
Sarah Rehberg: The Musical *Camelot*.
Valerie Shoudt: Book Review of Armstrong’s *Gender and the Chivalric Community*.
- W 10.14 **The Grail**: Malory, *Le Morte Darthur* 496-587; “Quest for the Holy Grail” (LGR 305-63).
 Field, “Malory and the Grail: The Importance of Detail” (eR).
 Hodges, “Shifting Boundaries: Religious Communities and the Grail” (eR).
 Traxler, “Dying to Get to Sarras: Perceval’s Sister and the Grail Quest” (eR).
 Mann, “Malory and the Grail Legend” (CtM 203-20).
Emilee Howland-Davis: Cornwell’s *The Winter King*.
Janelle Ortega: Book Review of D’Arcy’s *Wisdom and the Grail*.
Sarah Rehberg: Book Review of Lynch’s *Malory’s Book of Arms*.
- W 10.21 **Lancelot and Guinevere**: Malory, *Le Morte Darthur* 588-645; “Lancelot” (LGR 180-234); *Stanzaic Morte Arthur* in ME (LMD 740-44); in translation on eR.
 E. Edwards, “The Place of Women in the *Morte Darthur*” (CtM 37-54).
 Harris, “Evidence Against Lancelot and Guinevere” (eR).
 Hill, “Recovering Malory’s Guinevere” (eR).
Bruce Carroll: Book Review of Kennedy’s *Knighthood in the Morte Darthur*.
Lisa Myers: T. H. White’s *The Once and Future King*.
Katrina Wilkinson: Lawhead’s *Pendragon Cycle*.
- W 10.28 **Eponymous**: Malory, *Le Morte Darthur* 646-98; “The Death of Arthur” (LGR 365-401); *Stanzaic Morte Arthur* in ME (LMD 744-47); in translation on eR.
 Benson, “The Ending of the *Morte Arthur*” (CtM 221-38).
 Field, “Malory and the Battle of Towton” (eR).
Sarah Rehberg: Prendergast, “The Invisible Spouse: Henry VI, Arthur, and the Fifteenth-Century Subject” (eR).
 Whetter, “Generic Juxtapositioning in Malory’s *Morte Darthur*” (eR).
Bruce Carroll: Yeats’ “Time and the Witch Vivien.”
Janelle Ortega: Chesterton’s Arthurian Poetry.
- W 11.4 **Victorian Masculinities and Femininities**: Tennyson, *Idylls of the King*: From “Dedication” to “Merlin and Vivien.”
 Each student will pick an Idyll on which to lead the discussion. Let’s decide by 10.28. in class.
Ketievia Segovia: Brewer, “Interpretations of Malory: Women in Tennyson’s *Idylls*” (eR).
 Jackson, “The Once and Future Sword: Excalibur and the Poetics of Imperial Heroism in *Idylls of the King*” (eR).
 Umland, “Snake in the Woodpile: Tennyson’s Vivien as Victorian Prostitute” (eR).
Emilee Howland-Davis: Book Review of Simpson’s *Camelot Regained*.

- Katrina Wilkinson: Book Review of Svogun's *Reading Romance: Literacy, Psychology and Malory's Morte Darthur*.
Literature Review Due.
- W 11.11 Tennyson, *Idylls of the King*: From "Lancelot and Elaine" to "To the Queen."
 Ahern, "Listening to Guinevere: Female Agency and the Politics of Chivalry" (eR).
 Gilbert, "The Female King: Tennyson's Arthurian Apocalypse" (eR).
Janelle Ortega: Mancoff, "'Pure Hearts and Clean Hands': The Victorian and the Grail" (eR).
Lisa Myers: Book Review of Whitaker's *Arthur's Kingdom of Adventure*.
Valerie Shoudt: Bradley's *Mists of Avalon*.
Paper Abstracts Due. Bring 4 hard copies.
- F 11.13 **Last Day to Drop Course without Approval of Dean.**
- W 11.18 **Conference Paper Presentations.**
- F 11.20 **Screening of *Excalibur*.**
- W 11.25 **Class Rescheduled to Friday 11.20.**
- W 12.2 **The American Response**: Twain, *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*.
 Bowden, "Gloom and Doom in Mark Twain's *Connecticut Yankee*" (eR).
 Obermeier, "Medieval Narrative Conventions and the Putative Antimedievalism of Twain's *Connecticut Yankee*" (eR).
 Rowe, "How the Boss Played the Game: Twain's Critique of Imperialism in *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*" (eR).
Bram Cleaver: Book Review of Thompson's *Gawain: A Casebook*.
Ketievia Segovia: Book Review title TBA.
Doug van Benthuyzen: Lažamon's *Brut*.
- W 12.9 **Postmodernism**: Mitchison, *To the Chapel Perilous*.
Emily Howland-Davis: Amey, "Constructing a Perilous Chapel" (eR).
 Obermeier, "Post-Modernism and the Press in Naomi Mitchison's *To the Chapel Perilous*" (eR).
David Lawrence: Steinbeck's *The Acts of King Arthur and His Noble Knights*.
Doug Clark: Housman's *Life of Sir Aglovalde de Galis*.
Bram Cleaver: Mary Stewart's *Arthurian Saga*.
- M 12.14 **Final Paper Due.** At 2 pm in my office.

Course Objectives

Arthurian legends provide the largest motif cycle in Western literature aside from the Bible. Much of this is due to the enduring popularity and immense influence of Thomas Malory's 15th-century *Morte Darthur*. Sir Thomas Malory—sometimes thief, rapist, would-be murderer, and oft-imprisoned felon—wrote his *Morte Darthur* in prison during the turbulent times of the War of Roses, and thus the *Morte* provides contemporary political commentary through its Arthurian subject. This first major work of secular prose fiction in English is Malory's attempt to intermarry the separate legend cycles of King Arthur, Lancelot, and Tristan along with their warrior prowess and their ill-fated love stories. We are going to read the entire *Morte* with special attention to the literary sources Malory used to create his English Arthurian, such as the French Vulgate Cycle, the *Prose Tristan*, the Middle English *Alliterative* and *Stanzaic Mortes*. We will also devote some time to the post-medieval Arthurian boom in the 19th and 20th centuries that continues unabated in the 21st century: for instance, with Tennyson's *Idylls of the King*, Mark Twain's

Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court, Naomi Mitchison's *To the Chapel Perilous*, and Borman's *Excalibur*, among others.

Learning Outcomes

At end of the course, students should be able:

- to show an in-depth understanding of the *Morte Darthur*
- to demonstrate knowledge of the intertextual connections of the *Morte Darthur* to its medieval sources and its post-medieval successors
- to evidence knowledge of the historical context of the *Morte Darthur* as well as the other texts
- to identify, analyze, and synthesize the acquired knowledge and skills in discourse appropriate for the profession
- to conduct research using appropriate methods and tools for Medieval Studies
- to write competent analytical reviews and research papers
- to gain experience in the oral discourses of the profession
- to come up with original research questions and execute them according to the principles above

Course Policies

1. Oral Report: Each of you will select **one** essay from the syllabus and prepare a 15-minute critical analysis of it to deliver in class. This means you should present on the content of the essay but also evaluate the effectiveness of the structure. The rest of the class will have read the piece, so you should be prepared for discussion of your analysis. Let me know no later than **9.1.2009** via email.

2. Review of a Scholarly Book: A review of a scholarly book, taken from the attached reading list for the course, or from a work you have discovered in the course of your research. This can be either a monograph or a collection of essays (in which case you review the whole collection). You will write a 750-1000-word review, and give a 15-minute informal presentation in class. This assignment has two purposes: i) to give you practice in one of the requirements of the academic profession, and ii) to share with your classmates some of your research discoveries, and perhaps alert them to something they might also find useful. As far as possible, the oral review will be scheduled during the period when we are studying the text with which your critical work is primarily concerned. The written review will be due the following week. Your review should identify the theoretical approach of the author (or authors), outline the main arguments and point out the strengths and weaknesses of the work(s). You could use the reviews in *Speculum*, or another academic journal, as a model, such as *The Medieval Review* (online <http://www.hti.umich.edu/t/tmr>). We will workshop this on 9.23. in class.

3. Presentation of an Arthurian Work: In order to capitalize on the intertextual quality of Arthurian literature, you should pick an Arthurian work, either medieval or post-medieval, that is not on the syllabus and that you are interested in; read it; and in a 15-minute presentation introduce the work to us. If possible, relate it to Malory. A one-page handout with major descriptors and/or connections to Malory might be helpful. We will schedule these presentations throughout the term, so please give your choices to me by **9.9.2009**.

4. Literature Review: You need to write a literature review on the topic of your research paper about 6-8 pages double-spaced (a minimum of 10 sources). Your literature review should be a step in the process to your final paper and thus should be turned in by **11.4.2009**.

Definition of a Literature Review: A literature review is an account of what has been published on a topic by accredited scholars and researchers. Occasionally, you will be asked to write one as a separate assignment, but more often it is part of the introduction to an essay, research report, thesis, or dissertation. In writing the literature review, your purpose is to convey to your reader what knowledge and ideas have been established on a topic, and what their strengths and weaknesses are. As a piece of writing, the literature review must be defined by a guiding concept (e.g., your research objective, the problem or issue

you are discussing, or your argumentative thesis). It is not just a descriptive list of the material available, or a set of summaries, in contrast to an annotated bibliography.

Besides enlarging your knowledge about the topic, writing a literature review lets you gain and demonstrate skills in two areas:

- information seeking:** the ability to scan the literature efficiently, using manual or computerized methods, to identify a set of useful articles and books
- critical appraisal:** the ability to apply principles of analysis to identify unbiased and valid studies.

See the course webpage for several links about Literature Reviews and how to write them. There will also be samples in the sample paper file.

5. Abstract and Conference Paper: We will schedule everyone taking the class for credit for a presentation of his/her research paper of either 15- or 20-minute length. By **10.28.2009**, you produce an abstract of your paper, as you would need to for a regular conference. See instructions on class webpage.

6. Research Paper: The paper writing in a seminar should mirror the process of writing an essay to submit for publication. Hence, you will write one major research paper in several stages. After deciding on a topic, your first task is the already described literature review. Your second step would be to write an abstract of your conference paper (see below). We will also do peer review of your papers. Your third step is to revise the paper and hand in a final version, as if you were submitting it for publication. The paper should be ca. 25 pages long and conform to the *Guide to Style* and/or the *MLA Manual of Style* guidelines. All work must be handed in on the due date, typed, and double-spaced. I will provide several more handouts about abstract and publishable essay writing.

7. 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. Your participation grade will be affected after 2 unexcused absences (from a B+ to a B for one additional absence, etc.). An excused absence is a doctor's note, letter from an employer, etc. If you have an emergency situation, you can leave a message on my voice mail or email. **Note:** While you are welcome to check with me on what you have missed, I do not "reteach" class periods you missed during my office hours or over email. Please consult with your fellow students for notes.

8. Pertinent Websites: My own website contains a file for this class with links to pertinent medieval sites and items on the syllabus that have web links. All handouts will be available from the website.

9. Plagiarism: Don't do it! For clarification, see statements #102-7 in *Guide to Style*.

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. Cell Phones: Please turn them off or put them on vibrate.