ENG 5223: Medieval Literature
Mark Allen
Office Hours: TTh 2:00-3:00
MB 2.478
Th 4:00-5:00
Ext. 5358
and by appointment
mark.allen@utsa.edu

Description: This course provides opportunities to gain knowledge of several major traditions in medieval literature (heroic/chivalric, allegorical, lyrical), with primary emphasis on works written in English and their relations with anterior literatures. Students will have opportunities to explore early English literary history, the intellectual assumptions of the medieval era, and relations between medieval literary and cultural histories. The goals of the course include the expansion of cultural awareness and the cultivation of critical analysis, informed by historical perspective. Successful completion of this course fulfills three of the six hours required in pre-1700 historical period study for the M.A. program in English and the course may fulfill an elective in the English MA and PhD programs.

Texts:
Boethius. Consolation of Philosophy, trans. Richard Green (Dover)
Geoffrey of Monmouth, The History of the Kings of Britain, trans. Michael A. Faletra (Broadview)
Malory, Sir Thomas. Le Morte Darthur, ed. Helen Cooper (Oxford)
Marie de France, The Lais of Marie de France, trans. Burgess and Busby (Penguin)
Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, Patience, Pearl, trans. Marie Borroff (Norton)
Several handouts.

Course Requirements and grading criteria:
--2 papers (25% each), 1 report with annotated bibliography (25%), 1 final examination (25%); all required readings, discussion.

Reading Schedule:
1/13 Introduction
1/20 Beowulf, introduction, poem, and contexts, pp. xv-xxxvii, 3-100 (also note the Glossary of Names, pp. 248-50)
1/27 Beowulf, selected critical essays, pp. 130-211; Old English lyrics and Genesis B (handout)
2/3 Geoffrey of Monmouth, History of the Kings of Britain, Intro and text, pp. 8-217.
2/10 The Lais of Marie de France
2/17 Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, introduction and entire poem
2/24 Sir Gawain and the Green Knight
3/3 Malory’s Morte Darthur, introduction (vii-xxvi) and pp. 3-94
3/10 Malory’s Morte Darthur, pp. 403-527
3/17 SPRING BREAK
3/24 Boethius, Consolation of Philosophy, introduction and entire work
3/31 Pearl, introduction and entire poem
[“Graduate Drop Date” is 3/21 (Deadline for withdrawal with automatic “W”)]

[72x693]ENG 5223
[126x707]3:  Medi
[432x707]Spring, 2011
[72x693]Mark Allen
[360x693]Office Hours:
[432x693]TTh 2:00
[480x693]-
[480x693]3:00
MB 2.478
[432x693]Th
[454x693]4
[460x693]0:00
[475x693]-
[478x693]5:00
Ext. 5358
[72x679]and by appointment
mark.allen@utsa.edu

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4/7        *Piers Plowman*, introduction and pp. 1-77 and 243-47; note the Gloss, pp. 249-59
4/14       *Piers Plowman*, pp. 77-241
4/21       Middle English lyrics and ballads (handout)
4/28       STUDY DAY

Final exam.   Saturday, April 30, 2011, 5:00-7:30 p.m.

**Paper # 1, 8-10 pp. Due no later than Monday, February 11 (5:00 p.m.)**
Select a word, minor character, or short passage from *Beowulf* and assess its place or function in the whole work. You may, for example, wish to investigate the lexical and cultural values of a word like *lof* (praise), *dom* (judgment), of *wyrd* (fate) and demonstrate how the poem capitalizes upon a variety of nuances or how it privileges a single denotation in a particular context. You may wish to assess the value of one or another of the minor actors in the plot or one of the characters alluded to in the narrative, identifying what is known of the character and what he or she contributes to the work structurally or thematically. You may wish to discuss the thematic or narrative contribution of a short, discrete passage to the work as a whole. These (and other) approaches may well encourage research, and if you have questions, please ask. See the bibliographies on reserve, the concordance to *Beowulf* (UTSA library shelves) and notes to Klaeber’s edition (4th ed. on reserve); the OEN bibliography (online bibliography at [http://www.oenewsletter.org/OENDB](http://www.oenewsletter.org/OENDB)) and the MLA bibliography (UTSA Library databases), and the *Oxford English Dictionary* (UTSA Library databases), and the Bosworth & Toller *Dictionary of Old English* (UTSA shelves). Your translation is your primary text, but these reference works will deepen your analysis. MLA format please.

**Paper # 2, 8-10 pp. typed. Due no later than Monday, April 18, 2009 (5:00 p.m.)**
See Paper # 1, substituting *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, *Pearl*, or Malory’s *Morte Darthur* for *Beowulf*. Research materials here include the notes to the scholarly editions and bibliographies of the poems (some are on reserve), annotated guides to research (on reserve), the *Middle English Dictionary* (on UTSA reference shelves and online at [http://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/med/](http://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/med/) [use “Lookups” function]), as well as the *OED*, and the MLA bibliography. MLA format please.

**Report with bibliography, due as per schedule.**
This is an opportunity to explore a topic beyond our syllabus and report your findings to the class. Your presentation will be limited 15 minutes, and I ask you to include an annotated bibliography of essential reading, providing copies for all members of the class. Additional handouts are welcome where appropriate. The format of your presentation is yours to determine, but the bibliography should follow MLA format for documentation. When appropriate, include electronic as well as printed material in your bibliography. The goal of the presentation/bibliography is to introduce your topic and its relation to our syllabus, clarifying (where appropriate) fundamental chronology, the importance of the topic for medieval letters and English literary tradition, essential issues, and interesting sidelights. The topics vary widely, so that your format should adapt accordingly in range and depth. Your primary approach should be descriptive rather than evaluative. If you should choose to use technology in your presentation, do not waste your time—it’s only fifteen minutes—with setup and/or fumbling.

For advice on composing annotations, see “Writing the Entries” in James L. Harner, *On Compiling an Annotated Bibliography* (2000; Z1001 H33 2000). The bibliography should include some 10-15 entries, with entries being ca. 25-50 words for essays and ca. 75-100 words for books. Emphasize clarity and basic, useful information for others who are interested in pursuing your topic.
N.B. In addition to studies available via the reference works mentioned above, there are a number of fine resources for medieval studies available on the Internet. Most but not all of them are conveniently organized for us in the two “metapages” below:
Labyrinth: <http://labyrinth.georgetown.edu>
ORB: Online Reference Book for Medieval Studies <http://www.the-orb.net/>
Luminarium: Anthology of English Literature <http://www.luminarium.org/medlit/>

Disability Services: UTSA offers support services, including registration assistance and equipment, to students with documented disabilities through the Office of Disabled Student Services (DSS), MS 2.03.18. Students are encouraged to contact that office at 458-4157 as early as possible in the semester.

Academic Dishonesty: Students are expected to be above reproach in scholastic activities. Students who violate University rules on scholastic dishonesty, including, but not limited to plagiarism or collusion, are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and dismissal from the University. "Plagiarism" includes, but is not limited to, the appropriation, buying, receiving as a gift, or obtaining by any means another's work and the submission of it as one's own academic work offered for credit. "Collusion" includes, but is not limited to, the unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing academic assignments offered for credit or collaboration with another person to commit a violation of any section of the rules on scholastic dishonesty.