

ENL 320: Medieval Literature
Professor Hill-Vásquez

Sample Syllabus - Subject to Change

Course Description

This course will focus on early English literature but will also include important texts from other areas of Europe in order to flesh out our understanding of the early and late medieval eras. Beginning with the epic *Beowulf*, we will extend our exploration up to approximately 1500, ending with a small sample of the early English religious drama. In addition to discussing the literature itself--which is our primary focus--we will also discuss the climate of ideas in which the literature flourished and participated.

Required Texts (only editions noted are acceptable)

The Longman Anthology of British Literature. Vol. 1A. 2nd ed. New York: Longman, 2003.

The Life of Christina of Markyate, ed. and trans. C. H. Talbot

The Canterbury Tales, ed. Heatt and Heatt

Course Packet Materials (a small copying fee may be necessary)

Grading

The semester grade for this course (A=100-94%, A-=93-89%, B+= 88-85%, B=84-81%, B-=80-78%, C+=77-74%, C=73-71%, C-=70-68%, D+=67-64%, D=63-60%, F=59-0%), based on 400 possible points, will be assigned according to the following:

| | |
|---|------|
| Attendance (2 x 27) | 54 |
| Participation (2 x 27) | 54 |
| Quizzes (5 x 10) | 50 |
| In-Class Writing Assignments (6 x 7) | 42 |
| Paired/Group Presentation and Materials | 50 |
| Synopsis and Analysis | = 20 |
| Paired/Group Presentation Handout | = 15 |
| Paired/Group Presentation | = 15 |
| Individual Presentation and Materials | 40 |
| Individual Presentation Handout | = 20 |
| Individual Presentation | = 20 |
| Responses to Individual Presentations | |
| Essay (7-8 pages) | 70 |
| Take-Home Final Essay Exam | 40 |
| Total | 400 |

Fundamental Requirements

In addition to a large amount of thinking, reading, and writing, you will also be required to participate actively and consistently in class discussion. If you cannot participate actively and consistently in class discussion, you should reconsider your enrollment in this class. Furthermore, in order to succeed in this class, you must think deeply and analytically, and you must express unique and original ideas that are meaningful, purposeful, and significant. You must focus on intellectual inquiry and discussion. You must be intellectually engaged. You must be responsible for your own learning. You must respect the learning process and all members of the class. You must attend class regularly, prepare carefully for each class

session, and take responsibility for both your accomplishments and shortcomings. You must work very hard.

Requirements of Literary Analysis

All literature courses are really courses in culture, history, philosophy, religion, sociology, etc., and this course will be no exception. You will be required to examine each assigned text carefully and closely as a document of cultural influence, one that both reflects and shapes its culture. In order to succeed in this class, you must think deeply and analytically about the texts and issues we will study and you must create responses and essays that express interpretations that are meaningful, purposeful, and significant. A passing piece of writing will develop observations, opinions, and comparisons into meaningful analysis that demonstrates a new idea. A passing piece of writing must contain a specific, meaningful argument that demonstrates complex, original thinking and encourages further thought. Do not simply make observations or state opinions. Avoid basic and familiar ideas. Avoid mere summary and description. Avoid saying the same old things. Avoid merely pointing out similarities and/or differences.

Attendance and Participation

You will receive 2 points for each day you attend class. You must arrive on time and stay for the entire class period to receive 2 points (e.g., if you arrive late and/or leave early, you will not receive more than 1 point for attendance, and you may, in fact, receive no points). You will then receive a maximum of 2 additional points for participation in classroom discussions and group work. For class meetings which do not include class discussion and/or group work (rare), each student will receive 2 points as long as they are attentive and participate in whatever activity is scheduled and/or unfolds. Much of our time together will be spent in discussion so you are expected to participate actively during class sessions. Participation will figure heavily in final grading; to achieve a "C" or higher in this course, you must be prepared for discussion for each class meeting. Do not, therefore, get behind in your reading and work. Be prepared for every class session with interesting ideas and comments. If you treat yourself, your abilities, and the texts you study with seriousness and dedication, the course will be challenging and rewarding for all of us.

You are allowed one "free" attendance day. That is, if you miss one class meeting, you will still receive 2 points for attendance, but you will not receive any points for participation. There will be no other "excused" absences. Alternatively, see "Attendance and Participation 'Make Up' Policy" below. Your "free" attendance day can not be combined with the below "Make Up" Policy. If you miss more than five classes, however, you will automatically fail the course.

Attendance and Participation "Make Up" Policy

If you miss a class meeting, you may attempt to make up the points by completing a three-page analytical essay, with an argument, based on a topic of my choice (usually a text from the class meeting missed). In order to exercise this option, you must let me know by the next class meeting, following the missed class meeting, that you wish to write the three-page essay. I will then assign you a topic. The essay will then be due one week later at the beginning of class. *Make sure you indicate at the top of your essay that you are submitting it for possible attendance and participation points.* You may exercise this option for only two missed class meetings. Any additional class meetings cannot be "made up."

More on Responsibility

If you experience a situation that absolutely must preclude you from meeting course expectations, inform me as quickly as possible either before the situation occurs (if you know about it in advance) or immediately after the situation occurs (if it is unexpected). It is your responsibility to keep me informed. In addition, review the policies on Attendance, etc. above.

Quizzes

Students will complete seven in-class quizzes based primarily upon reading comprehension. If you miss a quiz, you may attempt to make up the points by completing a three-page analytical essay--with an analytical argument--based on one of the quiz questions. In order to exercise this option, you must let me know by the Thursday following the missed quiz that you wish to write the three-page essay. I will then assign you a topic. The essay will then be due by the following Tuesday at the beginning of class. *Make sure you indicate at the top of your essay that you are submitting it for possible quiz points.* You may exercise this option for only one missed quiz. Any additional quizzes cannot be "made up." Quiz 1 will be a practice quiz which may be used for extra credit points (up to 10).

In-Class Writing Assignments

Throughout the semester, you will complete a series of brief in-class writing assignments, usually based on the reading due for the class meeting. If you miss an in-class writing assignment due to an absence, you may "make it up" if you consult with me by the next class meeting and turn it in by the following class meeting (or earlier). You may exercise this option one time only.

Paired / Group Presentation

While each of you will be required to present your ideas and contribute to class discussion throughout the semester, each student will participate in one formal and prepared presentation based on 2 texts we will read for the course. Working with 1-2 other students, you will present your ideas and analysis of these texts to the class and will be responsible for determining the direction of class discussion.

Paired / Group Presentation Synopsis and Analysis

Consult the Course Schedule for the due date for your Synopsis and Analysis. On the due date assigned for your Synopsis and Analysis, you must provide, at the beginning of class, one copy for me and one copy for each of the other members of your Presentation Group/Pair. Your Synopsis and Analysis must follow all Format Requirements. A late Synopsis and Analysis will lose two points per day (not class meeting). This includes those turned in after the beginning of class and/or those not abiding by Format Requirements.

Essay (7-8 pages)

Drawing from your work on your Synopsis and Analysis and your Paired/Group Presentation, you will develop an analytical essay based on two primary texts read during the semester: one text from your Paired/Group Presentation and one of your own choice. You may choose to write your essay on both texts from your Presentation if you wish. In addition to developing an interesting and original analysis of the texts as well as a central, controlling argument, your essay must include reference to at least two secondary sources (which may include those read for the course during the semester). Proper MLA citation is required as is adherence to all Format Requirements. The Grading Rubric will figure heavily in my grading of these essays.

"Late" essays will lose 5 points per day (not per class meeting). Essays which do not follow Format Requirements will be returned to the student and the late paper penalty will apply until the essay is resubmitted in the appropriate format.

Individual Presentation

Near the end of the semester and before the deadline for your Essay, you will present your initial work on your essay and lead the class in a brief discussion. Your Individual Presentation is an important step

toward helping you compose a successful essay. In addition, each student will hand in a written response to each Individual Presentation.

Format Requirements

If for some reason, you manage to turn in an Essay, etc., that does not follow the Format Requirements, I will deduct a number of points to be determined at my discretion.

Take-Home Final Essay Exam

Distributed during Week 14, your essay exam will be due the Tuesday of Finals Week. Your essay exam must follow all Format Requirements. No exams will be accepted beyond the deadline listed on the Course Schedule.

Office Appointments

I will be happy to meet with you either during my scheduled office hours or at another time that is convenient for both of us. We can accomplish a lot if we both work hard during an appointment. I love to discuss ideas, new approaches, responses to readings, etc., outside of class.

Plagiarism

When you plagiarize you steal humanity's most important resource: ideas. You cannot present someone else's ideas as your own without plagiarizing (that is, stealing). You must document even the shortest of phrases, sentences, all quotations, and all notes, citations, and references used. If you plagiarize in this course, you will likely fail the course.

Students With Disabilities

If you need accommodations because of a documented disability, and/or if you have medical information to share with me, please discuss this with me before our second class meeting. If you have not already obtained proper documentation from Disability Support Services, I will be happy to direct you to the appropriate office. Please feel free to e-mail me as well.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Sample Schedule - Subject to Change

Please note that readings for a survey course are extensive; we will not always have sufficient class time to discuss in depth all of the assigned readings. Nevertheless, you are responsible for all readings listed on the Course Schedule and quizzes, in-class writings, and other required work for the course will draw upon any and all readings--even those we do not cover in class.

LA=Longman Anthology, Vol. 1A
LCM=Life of Christina of Markyate

CT = *Canterbury Tales* (ed. Heatt and Heatt)
CP = Course Packet

Week 1

T 9/7

Course Introduction

Handouts: Syllabus & Course Schedule; Format Requirements; Student Information
Survey; In-Class Work Texts

In-Class Work on LA 1-10 ("The Middle Ages" handout)

In-Class Work on "Wulf and Eadwacer" (handout)

In-Class Work on "The Wife's Lament" (handout)

Th 9/9
Due: LA 1-10 ("The Middle Ages")
Due: LA xii-xxiv ("Political and Religious Orders"; "Money, Weights & Measures")
Due: LA 150-53 ("The Wanderer")
Handouts: Paired/Group Presentation; Essay; Essay Grading Rubric
Over the weekend, as part of your homework, examine the text options for your Paired/Group Presentation and Group Presentation Text Essay. Select three texts with which you would like to work.

Week II

T 9/14
Due: LA 27-51 (*Beowulf*, 1. Grendel)
Due: Possible selections (3) for Group Presentation Text
Quiz 1
Sign Up for Paired/Group Presentations
Handout: CP - Leyerle, "The Interlace Structure of *Beowulf*"

Th 9/16
Due: LA 51-73 (*Beowulf*, 2. Grendel's Mother)

Week III

T 9/21
Due: LA 73-92 (*Beowulf*, 3. The Dragon)
Due: CP - Leyerle, "The Interlace Structure of *Beowulf*"
Due: Synopsis and Analysis Assignments for Members of Paired/Group Presentation 1
In-Class Writing 1

Th 9/23
Due: LA 120-24 (*Judith*)
Due: LA 153-55 ("Wulf and Eadwacer" and "The Wife's Lament")
Due: Paired/Group Presentation 1

Week IV

T 9/28
Due: LA 131-46 ("Ethnic and Religious Encounters" - selected texts)
Due: LA 125-30 ("The Dream of the Rood")
Quiz 2
Due: Paired/Group Presentation 2

Th 9/30
Due: LA 11-22 ("The Middle Ages," cont.)
Due: LA 159-77 ("Arthurian Myth in the History of Britain")

Week V

T 10/5
Due: CP - Petroff on Christina of Markyate
Due: LCM 35-117
In-Class Writing 2

Th 10/7
Due: LCM 117-93
Due: Synopsis and Analysis Assignments for Members of Paired/Group Presentation 3

Week VI

T 10/12 Due: LA 176-92 (de France, from *Lais*)
Due: LCM 35-79
Due: Paired/Group Presentation 3
Quiz 3

Th 10/14 Due: CP - Borroff on *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*
Due: LA 192-218 (*Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, Parts 1-2)

Week VII

T 10/19 Due: LA 218-48 (*Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, Parts 3-4)
Due: Synopsis and Analysis Assignments for Members of Paired/Group Presentation 4
In-Class Writing 3

Th 10/21 Due: LA 249-59 (Malory, from *Morte Darthur* - Prologue, "Miracle of Galahad")
Due: CP - Petroff on Beguines and Marie d'Oignies
Due: CP - excerpt from *Life of Marie d'Oignies*
Due: Paired/Group Presentation 4

Week VIII

T 10/26 Due: CP - Petroff, "Women and Spirituality in Medieval Italy" (focus on Angela information)
Due: CP - excerpt from Angela of Foligno's *Book*
Due: CP - Lewis, "The Wound in Christ's Side"
Due: LA 22-26 ("The Middle Ages," cont.)
Due: LA, 279-84 ("Geoffrey Chaucer")
Quiz 4

Th 10/28 Due: LA 301-02 (Introductory Information - Prologue to *Canterbury Tales*)
Due: LA 2-41 (Prologue)
Due: CT 42-89 (*Knight's Tale*)

Week IX

T 11/2 Due: CT 89-145 (*Knight's Tale*, cont.)
Due: Synopsis and Analysis Assignments for Members of Paired/Group Presentation 5
In-Class Writing 4

Th 11/4 Due: LA 259-79 (Malory, from *Morte Darthur* - "The Poisoned Apple; "The Day of Destiny")
Due: LA 364-65 (Introductory Information - *Franklin's Tale*)
Due: CT 296-337 (*Franklin's Tale*)
Due: Paired/Group Presentation 5

Week X

T 11/9 Due: LA 321 (Introductory Information - *Miller's Tale*)
Due: CT 146-81 (*Miller's Tale*)
Due: Synopsis and Analysis Assignments for Members of Paired/Group Presentation 6
Quiz 5

Th 11/11 Due: LA 529-30 (Introductory Information - Margery Kempe)

Due: CP - excerpt 1 from *Book of Margery Kempe*
Due: LA 337 (Introductory Information - *Wife of Bath's Prologue and Tale*)
Due: CT 183-239
Due: Paired/Group Presentation 6

Week XI

T 11/16 Due: LA 384 (Introductory Information - *Pardoner's Prologue and Tale*)
Due: CT 338-69
Due: CP - McAlpine, "The Pardoner's Homosexuality and How It Matters"
Due: Synopsis and Analysis Assignments for Members of Paired/Group Presentation 7
In-Class Writing 5
Handout: Individual Presentations and Responses to Individual Presentations

Th 11/18 Due: LA 506-7 (Introductory Information - York *Crucifixion*)
Due: CP - York *Crucifixion* (and look over LA 508-14)
Due: CP - excerpt 2 from *Book of Margery Kempe*
Due: Paired/Group Presentation 7
Quiz 6

Week XII

T 11/23 Essay Conferences (Briggs 223)

Week XIII

T 11/30 *In-Class Writing 6*
Individual Presentations - Essays

Th 12/2 Individual Presentations - Essays

Week XIV

T 12/7 Individual Presentations - Essays

Th 12/9 Essays Due
Take-Home Final Essay Exam Distributed

Week XV (Finals Week)

T 12/14 Take-Home Final Essay Exam Due by noon in Briggs 223. If you turn it in earlier, you must turn it into my mailbox in Briggs 122. You must, in addition, have an administrative assistant note the date **and time**.