

Spring 2017

ENG338+338L: "Arthurian Literature: Medieval and Modern"

Tuesdays 14:15-16:00 (see syllabus for specific dates) / HF 301

Instructor: Laura Saetveit Miles

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This course will explore one of the most popular and influential themes in English literature: King Arthur and the knights of the Round Table. We will cover the foundational texts in the Middle English tradition, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, the *Alliterative Morte d'Arthur* and Malory's *Le Morte Darthur*, and discuss issues of sexuality, violence, nationalism, and literary form. While the fourteenth-century poems *Sir Gawain* and the *Alliterative Morte Arthure* represent the variety of poetic versions of Arthurian legend, Malory brings us into the height of medieval interest in Arthur in the fifteenth century, with his engaging prose work among the earliest printed volumes in England, by Caxton in 1485. Then we will fast-forward to some nineteenth- and twentieth-century poems and short stories that reach back hundreds of years for their material: what changes between medieval and modern Arthurian literature? How can we learn about the social and cultural concerns of each period, as filtered through tales of knights and ladies? Alongside the primary texts we will read both contextual criticism on the broader Arthurian tradition as well as criticism on the texts themselves. Because the medieval texts will be read in modernization, glossed original Middle English, or in facing-page translation, no prior Middle English experience is needed. Optional film night at the end of the semester will be of *Monty Python and the Holy Grail* (1975).

Course format: The course is a joint ENG338 (10 stp) and ENG338L (15 stp) course, with extra readings and an extra seminar meeting for the L students. L students will also be expected to make presentations on their extra readings.

Exam format: School exam, Tuesday 2 May, 9:00. For regular students the exam is 4 hours; for L students the exam is 6 hours.

PRIMARY TEXTS

Fourteenth-fifteenth century

Sir Thomas Malory, *Le Morte Darthur: The Winchester Manuscript*. Ed. Helen Cooper. Oxford and New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1998. ISBN: 978-0-19-953734-1 **[buy at Akademika]**

Sir Gawain and the Green Knight. Ed. James Winny. Broadview, 1992 [facing page translation]. ISBN: 0-921149-92-1 **[buy at Akademika]**

Nineteenth century

Alfred Lord Tennyson, "The Lady of Shalott" (1833) [poem]

<http://tinyurl.com/h2qhzpz> (ProQuest Literature Online via library subscription)

Alfred Lord Tennyson, "Sir Galahad" (1834) [poem]

<http://tinyurl.com/hnr5rtr> (ProQuest Literature Online via library subscription)

Elizabeth Stuart Phelps, "The Lady of Shalott" (1879) [short story]

<http://d.lib.rochester.edu/camelot/text/phelps-lady-of-shalott>

Elizabeth Stuart Phelps, "The Christmas of Sir Galahad" (1871) [short story]

<http://d.lib.rochester.edu/camelot/text/phelps-christmas-of-sir-galahad>

Twentieth century

Wendy M. Mnookin, "Guenevere Speaks" (1987) [poem]

Valerie Nieman Colander, "The Naming of the Lost" (1989) [poem]

Both pp. 476-488 in *Modern Arthurian Literature: An Anthology of English and American Arthuriana from the Renaissance to the Present*, ed. Alan Lupack. Routledge, 1992.

[both available via Litteraturkiosk]

SECONDARY TEXTS

Elizabeth Archibald and Ad Putter, eds. *The Cambridge Companion to Arthurian Legend*. Cambridge, 2009. [hereafter CCAL]

<https://doi.org/10.1017/CCOL9780521860598>

Carolyn Dinshaw. "A Kiss is Just a Kiss: Heterosexuality and Its Consolations in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*." *Diacritics* 24: 1994, 205-226.

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/465173>

Laurie A. Finke and Martin B. Schichtman, "No Pain, No Gain: Violence as Symbolic Capital in Malory's *Morte d'Arthur*." *Arthuriana* 8: 1998, 115-134.

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/27869341>

Jennifer A. Gehrman, "'I am half-sick of shadows': Elizabeth Stuart Phelps's Ladies of Shalott." *Legacy* 14: 1997, 123-136.

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/25679230>

Carl Plasa, "Cracked from Side to Side": Sexual Politics in "The Lady of Shalott." *Victorian Poetry* 30: 1992, 247-263.

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/40002467>

Tison Pugh, "Queer medievalisms." In *The Cambridge Companion to Medievalism*, 196-209. Edited by Louise D'Arcens. Cambridge, 2016.

<https://doi.org/10.1017/CCO9781316091708.015>

Tison Pugh and Angela Jane Weisl, "Medievalisms: The Magic of the Middle Ages." In *Medievalisms: Making the Past Present*, 1-11. Routledge, 2013. **[available via Litteraturkiosk]**

Additional required texts for the L students (optional for regular students)

- Rick Godden, "Prosthetic ecologies: vulnerable bodies and the dismodern subject in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*." *Textual Practice* 30 (2016): 1273-1290.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/0950236X.2016.1229910>
- *Stanzaic Morte Arthur*, Part 3 (lines 2770-3965) in *King Arthur's Death: The Middle English Stanzaic Morte Arthur and Alliterative Morte Arthure*. Ed. Larry D. Benson and Edward E. Foster. Rochester: University of Rochester, TEAMS, 1994.
<http://d.lib.rochester.edu/teams/text/benson-and-foster-king-arthurs-death-stanzaic-morte-arthur-part-iii>
- Alfred Lord Tennyson, "The Lady of Shalott" (1833+1842 versions) [poem]
<http://d.lib.rochester.edu/camelot/text/tennyson-shalott-comparison>
- Alfred Lord Tennyson, "Epic, including The Morte D'Arthur" (1842) [poem]
<http://d.lib.rochester.edu/camelot/text/tennyson-epic>
- Elizabeth Stuart Phelps, "The True Story of Guenever" (1876) [short story]
<http://d.lib.rochester.edu/camelot/text/phelps-true-story-of-guenever>