

DUNGEONS & DRAGONS

Spring 2013



No period in history captivates and enthralls contemporary society—and mainstream media—more than the Middle Ages. From *Monty Python* and the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy to the Medieval Times restaurant chain and Universal’s Wizarding World of Harry Potter, residues and recreations of medieval culture are everywhere. The pervasiveness of these so-called medievalisms raises a number of provocative questions: What is the range of meanings assigned to the term “medieval?” What components of the Middle Ages do we remember and romanticize, and what parts do we repress and hope to forget? More importantly, how do representations and recreations of the past reflect of the way we interpret the present and envision the future? This course uses medieval-themed novels, video games, films, and tourist attractions to explore these questions and others.

As noted in the Spring 2013 Schedule of Courses, a \$50 course fee has been added automatically to your tuition for this semester and covers the cost of our field trip to Medieval Times on March 18.

Dungeon Master: Dr. Jana Mathews

Preferred Contact Method: parchment scroll or e-mail: jmathews@rollins.edu

My Lair: Orlando 104

When/Where to find the party: T/TH 11am-12:15pm Sullivan House

Confessions/Pleas for Mercy are taken (Office Hours): M 8:30-11:30am; and by appointment

Disclaimer: This course takes the idea of experiential learning very seriously. If the thought of eating with your hands, dressing up in medieval garb, fighting in a Crusade (ie water balloon fight) or doing other things that may make your stomach turn or eyes roll, this course probably is not for you. If you

already engage in these activities or have harbored a secret desire to do so, then this course definitely is for you!

Required Course Materials

+ Tony Lee, Sam Hart, Artur Fujita, *Outlaw: The Legend of Robin Hood* (0763644000)

+ J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Hobbit* (0618260307)

*J.K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* (043936213X)

*Barry Unsworth, *Morality Play* (0393315606)

*TH White, *The Sword in the Stone* (0440984459)

Access to Blackboard

Rollins email account

+ Available in campus bookstore

* Not available in campus bookstore. Order on Amazon or another online book retailer.

Student Learning Objectives

1. Develop and hone close reading skills

2. Analyze and appraise contemporary critical discourses and theories relating to modern medievalisms

3. Account for and explain the ways in which diverse facets of modern society remember and represent the Middle Ages

Course Assignments

1. Quizzes (10%): All of your work for this course is designed to fulfill one of more of the course objectives. Daily reading assignments and class discussions and activities will prepare you for the quizzes and quizzes model the formats of exams. Early quizzes take the form of passage explications; quizzes assigned later in the semester will take the form of thesis statements and essay outlines. Due to the developmental nature and pacing of this course, I cannot accept late quizzes.

2. Preliminary Exams 1 (20%) and 2 (20%): After honing your close reading skills with a few low stakes quizzes, you will have the opportunity to show off your analytical prowess on a larger stage. In these exams, you will be given 6-8 short passages from our assigned reading and be asked to perform a close reading on 3-4 of your choosing. Each response should be approximately 250-300 words. Despite their brevity, your analyses should be insanely awesome and, of course, represent your best work. These exams also may or may not include short answer components as well.

3. Final Exam (25%): This assignment builds upon the analytical work of previous assignments by asking you to construct 1 or 2 short original argumentative essays on a course topic of your choice. This essay's structure will take the form of several linked close readings of a text of your choice, yoked together by a bold thesis and sexy answer to the "so what" question.

4. TripAdvisor Assignment (5%): TripAdvisor is one of the leading online planning guides for vacationing travelers. Since the Middle Ages is a destination as well as a time period, it seems logical that there should be a "Middle Ages" page on this site. This assignment seeks to fill in this gaping hole in a playful way by asking each of you to create a 750-word historically accurate entry for this page that deals with a topic relevant to individuals who are planning a time-traveling vacation to medieval Europe. Sample topics include: What to Wear; Things to Do; Restaurant Reviews; Top Nightclubs etc...

5. Kingdom Challenges (20%): Teamwork isn't just a buzzword in contemporary society; it was the key to survival in the Middle Ages. Individuals who didn't belong to some sort of group—whether it be a guild, clan, fraternal order, or “house”—typically didn't last very long. In order to ensure your survival in this course, you will need to divide yourselves into kingdoms comprised of 4 people. Choose your teammates strategically because throughout the term, the kingdoms will compete against one another in a number of challenges that require brute strength, but also artistic mastery, intellectual creativity, and a lot of enthusiasm. In other words, picking teammates who share all of your same talents may leave you vulnerable in some of the challenges.

Challenge # 1: The Quest

You can't read/watch *The Hobbit* without wanting to go on your own quest. This challenge is designed to make all of your dreams come true. Each kingdom will submit a number of proposed Hobbit-related puzzles and clues. The best ones will be combined to form a scavenger hunt of epic proportions. The first group to complete the hunt will win the competition.

Challenge #2: Valentine's Day Bard Competition

For this challenge, you will be crooning for a good cause. In the days leading up to V-Day, you will be composing your own medieval-inspired love poetry and selling your services as a professional bard to the larger Rollins community. The funds raised will benefit a local charity (TBD). The kingdom who sells the most singing telegrams will be crowned the champions.

Challenge # 3: Dramarama

Morality Play is a medieval murder mystery that centers on the suspicious death of a young boy. This challenge requires you to write and perform a play about another mystery, this one involving a peculiar medieval manuscript that was donated to Rollins College in the 1950s. The kingdom that writes and performs the best play about the “history” of this manuscript will win the title.

Challenges # 4 and # 5: Battle and Tournament

It's cruel to take you to Medieval Times and not let you play with swords when we come home. This competition will consist of two parts: a battle (think nerf swords) and tournament (think medieval-inspired minute-to-win-it competitions). Each kingdom will be responsible for producing a few brave soldiers who will fight to the death, and a couple of tournament games. The winners of these competitions will be crowned the victors.

Challenge # 6: Medieval Faire

Remember how every district in *The Hunger Games* produced something (ie. coal)? Medieval kingdoms also capitalized on their respective natural resources by converting them into products that could be sold or traded at market. You know what's coming... Your kingdom's task for this competition is to produce a medieval-inspired product to display and trade at our college's first-ever Medieval Faire!!!!!! The kingdom that creates and peddles the hottest commodity (as judged by the SCA folks) will win the competition.

Team Roles (team members will cycle through the roles)

King/Queen: This person is the team leader and is responsible for organizing team meetings, leading group discussions, mediating team conflicts, making final decisions regarding strategy etc.

Herald: This person is the team spokesperson and is responsible for leading in-class presentations (if applicable), publicity (including props, costumes, uniforms), team marketing (ie boasting), and blaming (trash talking).

Peasant: Grunt Laborer. This person serves as the king/queen's right hand man/woman and because of his/her lowly social station, performs a lot of the undesirable/embarrassing parts of the challenge. This person is the soldier, the hawk, the loudest and most aggressive bard etc..

Chronicler: This person keeps a running history of the kingdom. Like all good medieval chroniclers, this person exaggerates the successes and triumphs of the kingdom and minimizes or rewrites its struggles and failures. Each entry (1 per challenge) should be between 3-5 double-spaced pages and should pay homage to the conventions and tropes of medieval literature and culture that we study throughout the term.

Competition Grading

Your grade for each competition will be determined by the quality of work and level of effort that you put into each assignment. I will provide you with grading rubrics before each competition so you know exactly what is expected. Everyone in your kingdom will receive the same grade for each competition, so choose your teammates wisely.

In addition to this grade, teams will compete against each other for points according to the following scale:

1st place: 5 points

2nd place: 3 points

3rd-5th place: 1 point

At the end of the semester, the kingdom members with the most cumulative points will earn 3 points extra credit on their final exam. The members of the second place team will earn 1 point extra credit.

Under this system, it is possible to come in last place in the scavenger hunt but still receive an "A" for the competition. Similarly, it is possible to win first place in the tournament and earn a "B" or "C" on the assignment. In other words, personality alone can't get you through this ☺

All course grades will be calculated using the following scale:

A (94-100) A- (90-93) B+ (87-89) B (84-86) B- (80-83) C+ (77-79); C (74-76); C- (70-73); D+ (66-69); D (64-66); D- (60-63) F (59 and below)

Course Policies/Unsolicited Advice

Attendance

Here's my take on attendance: you have made the commitment to enroll in my course (many thanks) and I take seriously the responsibility to make coming to class each day worth your while. Every classroom discussion and activity correlates to a mode of assessment, so missing class is equivalent to shooting yourself in the foot. Why would you do that? Because sometimes we need systems of accountability to keep us on the straight and narrow, this course abides by the following attendance policy: you are allowed 4 absences without penalty. Your 5th absence may result in your final course grade being lowered by 1 full letter grade. If your miss 6 classes, you will earn a failing grade for the course. No one has ever fallen into this category, so don't be the first! I do not distinguish between excused and unexcused absences, so choose your absences wisely. The only standing exception to

this rule applies to students who are traveling on pre-approved college business (ie. varsity sports team). If you have a disability that may require additional exceptions to this rule, please make an appointment with the Disability Services Office.

Extra Credit

Do you want to boost your grade in this course by doing a little extra outside work? Take your quizzes/exams to the Writing Center! While I don't offer formal extra credit, students who utilize the support and assistance of our fabulous writing consultants always do better on their assignments. There are several fantastic writing consultants on staff who have taken this course from me in the past and thus know "how I roll" including **Andrew Goring** (agoring@rollins.edu), **Mackenzie Gill** (mgill@rollins.edu), **Mandy McRae** (mmcrae@rollins.edu), **Faith Galloway** (fgalloway@rollins.edu), and **Stephanie Sang** (tsang@rollins.edu). You must make your appointments 24 hours in advance for most writing consultants using the Tutoring/Writing Appts link (found in the Campus Logins on the Rollins R-Net page). However, if you wish to utilize the services of any of the above tutors, you may contact them directly.

***Please note that writing consultants have busy schedules and may not be able to accommodate you at the eleventh hour. Wise students will plan ahead and book their appointments well in advance of paper and exam due dates.

Disability Services

Rollins College is committed to equal access and does not discriminate unlawfully against persons with disabilities in its policies, procedures, programs or employment processes. The College recognizes its obligations under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 to provide an environment that does not discriminate against persons with disabilities.

If you are a person with a disability on this campus and anticipate needing any type of academic accommodations in order to participate in your classes, please make timely arrangements by disclosing this disability in writing to the Disability Services Office at (box 2613) - Thomas P. Johnson Student Resource Center, 1000 Holt Ave., Winter Park, FL, 32789. Appointments can be scheduled by calling 407-646-2354 or email: gridgey@rollins.edu

Academic Honesty

This course places a heavy weight on independent thought and original work. For this reason, I take plagiarism very seriously. Forms of plagiarism include, but are not limited to purchasing a paper online, cutting and pasting material from the Internet or other electronic or print source (including Wikipedia), passing off someone else's work (or portions of that work) as your own, and failing to cite external sources. If I suspect that you have cheated on an assignment, I will encourage you to self-report to the Dean of Student Affairs. Depending on the situation, you may fail the assignment, the course, or both. If you have a question or find yourself in muddy terrain, don't hesitate to ask me for help.

With all submitted work, Rollins students affirm their commitment to the Academic Honor Code by including the following pledge followed by their signature:

"On my honor, I have not given, nor received, nor witnessed any unauthorized assistance on this work."

Grading Rubric

To promote fairness in grading, I adhere to the following standard evaluation rubric:

A (90-100)

The “A” essay contains a specific and arguable thesis statement that is sustained and supported throughout the entire essay. The essay displays a defined organizational structure with coherent introduction, body, and concluding paragraphs that are logically and seamlessly integrated by smooth transitional clauses and phrases. Textual citations are incorporated into complete sentences and are accurately cited and thoroughly explained and analyzed. The essay has been edited meticulously and is free of errors in spelling, grammar, usage, and mechanics.

B (80-89)

The “B” essay contains a thesis that is arguable but one that is underdeveloped or inconsistently argued. The paper follows a logical sequence, but individual paragraphs are disjointed, repetitive, confusing, digressive, or predictable. It offers more (or fewer) textual quotes than are necessary and/or fails to perform in-depth analyses of them. This level of essay contains sentences that are clear, but language that is imprecise or clumsy. Minor errors in grammar, spelling, and usage appear.

C (70-79)

The “C” essay lacks a specific thesis or presents one that “disappears” or “multiplies” after the first paragraph. It is overwhelmingly descriptive (plot summary) and contains transitions that are weak or confusing. This essay lacks depth in relation to the topic (penetrating only its surface) and contains numerous errors in grammar, punctuation, and spelling.

D (60-69)

The “D” essay lacks a central and unifying subject. It presents a confused and disjointed discussion of various, sometimes random ideas. Key elements of organization (introductory and concluding paragraphs) are missing or misplaced. Serious errors in spelling, punctuation, and sentence structure and content are present.

F (59 and below)

The “F” essay is submitted late, does not follow the assignment, is plagiarized, or is incomprehensible.

Course Schedule

*****=High Reading Load Day.** We will approach the study of literary texts in the same way that we approach the study of film. Just as it would be awkward and disjointed to watch a 2-hour film in 15-minute increments spaced out over several weeks, it's equally disrupting to discuss a 200-page novel in 50-page linear segments...especially when the bulk of our class discussions and course assignments will be concerned with exploring a text's recurring themes, motifs, obsessions, and concerns. To promote invigorating class discussions that open up new lines inquiry and debate (rather than diffuse or suspend them), I ask that you read the entire text before the first class period that it is assigned. While this will require you to plan ahead and exercise good time management skills, it also will mean that there will be several days where you won't have any assigned reading. How cool is that?!

Week 1

1/15 Course Introduction

1/17 Excerpts from *Mandeville's Travels* (BB); Excerpts from Augustine, *City of God* (BB)

PRACTICE QUIZ DUE

Week 2

1/22 ****The Hobbit* *** (read the entire novel)

1/24 *The Hobbit* **QUIZ DUE**

Week 3

1/29 *The Hobbit* **QUEST CLUES DUE**

1/31 *The Hobbit* **In-Class: Challenge # 1: Quest**

Week 4

2/5 *Outlaw: The Legend of Robin Hood* (read entire graphic novel) **QUIZ DUE**

2/7 *Outlaw: The Legend of Robin Hood*; In-Class Exam Review

Week 5

2/12 In-Class: Medieval Murder Mystery Party **EXAM DUE**

2/14 In-Class: Love Poem Readings **All Day: Challenge # 2-Valentine's Day Bard Competition**

Week 6

2/19 *Morality Play* (read entire novel)

2/21 *Morality Play* **QUIZ DUE**

Week 7

2/26 No Assigned Reading: Meet in the Rare Book and Manuscript Library (Olin Basement)

2/28 No Class-Work on your play

Week 8 Spring Break

Read *The Sword in the Stone*

3/5 No Class

3/7 No Class

Week 9

3/12 Meet in the Rare Book and Manuscript Library. **In-Class: Challenge # 3 Play Performances**

3/14 Aronstein & Coiner, "Twice Knightly: Democratizing the Middle Ages" (BB); Umberto Eco, excerpts from *Travels in Hyperreality* (BB)

Week 10

3/18 **FIELD TRIP TO MEDIEVAL TIMES!**

If you are riding the bus, meet at CFAM at 6:20pm. If you are driving yourself, meet at Medieval Times at 7:30pm to tour the Medieval Village. The show begins promptly at 8:30pm.

For recordkeeping purposes, please advise me in advance of your transportation plans.

3/19 Medieval Times Debriefing; ****The Sword in the Stone**** (read entire novel)

3/21 *The Sword in the Stone*

Week 11

3/26 *The Sword in the Stone*

3/28 **No Class-Work on your exam!**

Week 12

4/2 View *Darkon* in class. Please note that class will run from 11am-12:45pm today. **EXAM DUE**

4/4 No Assigned Reading. In Class: Society of Creative Anachronisms Guest Speakers

Week 13

4/9 The Siege and Capture of Jerusalem Documents (BB) **In-Class: Challenge # 4: Medieval Battle**

4/11 **In-Class: Challenge # 5: Medieval Tournament**

Week 14 Ye Olde Medieval/Renaissance Faire

4/16 In-Class: Faire Presentations

4/18 **Challenge # 5: The faire will be held during Common Hour (12:30-1:30pm) in front of the Cornell Campus Center**

Week 15

4/23 ****Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* (read entire text) ***

4/25 *Harry Potter* **QUIZ DUE**

Week 16 Parting is Such Sweet Sorrow ☹

4/30 Medieval Feast; In-Class Exam Review

TripAdvisor Assignment Due

Monday, 5/6 FINAL EXAM DUE IN THE BOX OUTSIDE MY OFFICE DOOR (ORLANDO 104) BY 10AM.