

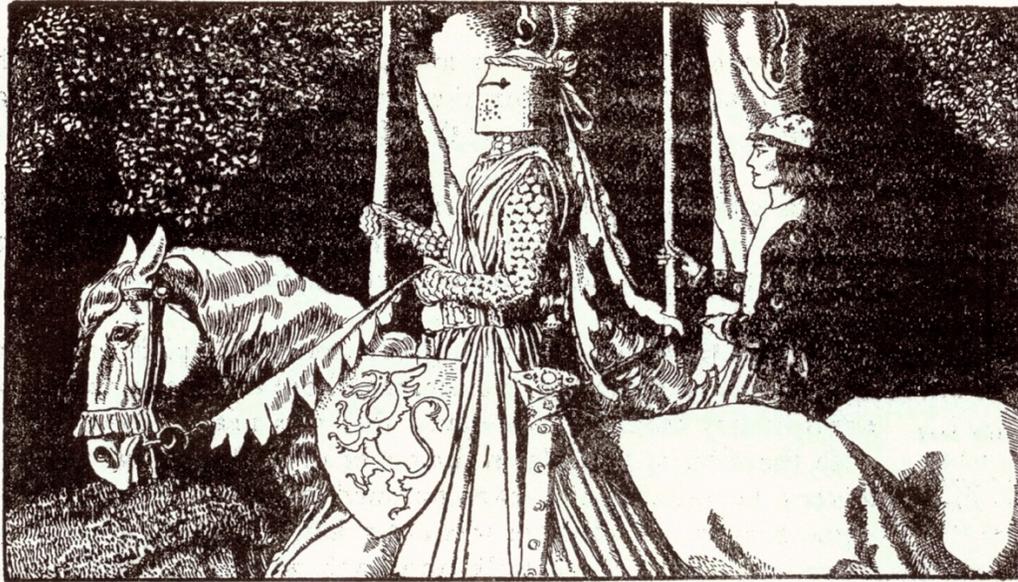
ALL STUDENTS WELCOME! Feel free to email me with any questions or concerns.

King Arthur: Medieval to Modern

Professor Emily Steiner

Fall, 2024

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Description:

From the Middle Ages to the present, stories about King Arthur, the brave deeds of the knights of the Round Table, and Merlin's mysterious prophecies have mesmerized readers and audiences. In this course, we will study nearly 1000 years of literature about King Arthur, beginning with Geoffrey of Monmouth's twelfth-century *History of the Kings of Britain* and *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, and ending with Mark Twain, Alfred Lord Tennyson, and the fantasy fiction classic, T. H. White's *Once and Future King*. We will also be reading authors who repurposed Arthurian literature to think about gender (for example, Elizabeth Phelps' critique of domesticity), colonialism and nationalism (Wales and India), and religious cultures (for example, the medieval Hebrew version of King Arthur). Throughout the course, we will think about what Arthurian legends mean to the way we write history and the ways in which we view our collective pasts and futures.

Assignments include discussion posts, class presentations, and a final research paper or creative project.

Rubrics:

Attendance and participation: 30%

Discussion posts: 30% (see Canvas syllabus for instructions and schedule)

Round Tables I and II: 20% (presentations)

Final research paper or creative project: 20%

Books to purchase: All of these are on reserve in the Penn library or can be purchased inexpensively (used) online. Please use only the editions listed below.

- Chrétien de Troyes, *Arthurian Romances*. Ed. D.D.R. Owen. J.M. Dent, 1993.
- Gottfried von Strassberg, *Tristan*. Penguin Books, 1960.
- Malory, Thomas, *Le Morte Darthur: The Winchester Manuscript*. Ed. Helen Cooper. Oxford University Press, 1998.
- Tennyson, Alfred, *Idylls of the King*. Ed. James Martin Gray. London: Penguin Books, 2004.
- Twain, Mark, *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*. Ed. M. Thomas Inge. Oxford University Press, 1997.
- White, T.H. *The Sword and the Stone*. Harper Collins, 1983
- Winny, James, ed. *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*. Peterborough, Ont.: Broadview Press, 1992.

Schedule:

August 28th Introduction

September 4th Geoffrey of Monmouth, *History of the Kings of Britain*

September 9th Chretien de Troyes, "Eric and Enide"

September 11th Chretien de Troyes, "Yvain or The Knight of the Lion"

September 16th Chretien, de Troyes, "Lancelot or the Knight of the Cart"

September 18th Grail cycle

September 23rd Marie de France, "Bisclavret" and "Lanval"

September 25th Gottfried, *Tristan and Iseult*

September 30th Gottfried, *Tristan and Iseult*

October 2nd *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, Fitts I and II

October 7th *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, Fitts III and IV

October 9th Round Table I (presentation)

October 14th Thomas Malory, *Le Morte D'Arthur* ("The Tale of Sir Lancelot and Queen Guinevere")

October 16th No class – catch up!

October 21st Thomas Malory, *Le Morte D'Arthur* (The Death of Arthur)

October 23rd Caxton Day; Leland, *Defense of Arthur*

October 28th Tennyson, *Idylls of the King* (“Dedication” “The Coming of King Arthur”)

October 30th Tennyson, *Idylls of the King* (“Merlin and Vivian,” “Lancelot and Elaine”)

November 4th Tennyson, *Idylls of the King* (“Guinevere,” “The Passing of King Arthur,” “To the Queen”)

November 6th Tennyson, “The Lady of Shalott”; Elizabeth Phelps, “The Lady of Shalott”

November 11th Elizabeth Phelps, “The Christmas of Sir Galahad” and “The True Story of Guenever”

November 13th Round Table II (presentations)

November 18th Mark Twain, *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* (chapters 1-21)

November 20th Mark Twain, *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* (to end)

November 25th Library Day (important prep for final projects)

THANKSGIVING

December 3th Forbush, “The Knights of King Arthur: How to Begin and What to Do”

December 5th T. H. White, *The Sword in the Stone*

December 9th Final Class

Reading Period: Class Grail Party and Movie Night!!!!