

FMS 120-01: Timeless and Transnational: The Global King Arthur Tradition
Course Syllabus

Instructor: Melissa “Melle” Ridley Elmes
T/R 11:00-12:15 p.m.
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Course Description

Do you or someone you know live on Camelot Drive, drive a Toyota Avalon, or use King Arthur flour to bake cookies? The legend of King Arthur has become so finely interwoven into our everyday lives that it is difficult to imagine the world without Arthuriana in it. In this course we will trace the development of the Arthurian legend from its medieval origins through the literature of our own time, with particular emphasis on its global nature. This course is writing intensive. Written assignments include critical analysis of character and theme; performing close reading of texts; developing a compare/contrast essay on texts from two different cultures; compiling a researched dossier on a student’s knight of choice; keeping track of Arthurian references encountered outside of class and using the results to write a critical reflection on the legend's presence in contemporary culture; and engaging creatively with the material by exploring how students might fit into the Arthurian tradition through reflection on their own strengths and weaknesses and the development of their own knightly identity. By the end of the term, students in this course will have a broad understanding of the complexity and richness of the global Arthurian tradition. They will also have engaged in and successfully negotiated many of the acts required of a college student: critical reading, analysis, and reflection on texts; research; theoretical application; and synthesis.

Course Objectives and Student Learning Outcomes

Course Objectives: By the end of the course, students will be able to:

1. Trace both orally and in writing the development of the Arthurian legend from its medieval origins through the literature of our time in multiple literary genres and forms, and identify and describe some of the characteristics of each literary genre and form. (SLO 2, 4)
2. Describe and analyze both orally and in writing the international and transatlantic nature of the legend as it appears in works from the Welsh, Latin, English, French, German, Norse, American, Canadian, Tagalog, and Japanese traditions. (SLO 2, 4)
3. Identify, compare, and analyze both orally and in writing the presence of universal themes of identity, loyalty, chivalry, courtliness, courage, sacrifice, love, and loss in Arthurian texts. (SLO 3, 4)
4. Provide several explanations both orally and in writing as to why the Arthurian legend continues to be a popular literary subject, with specific supporting reasons and examples. (SLO 2, 3, 4)

These course objectives are designed to align with the broader learning goals of introductory literature courses at UNCG:

Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs): Upon successful completion of this course, the student will:

1. Demonstrate the reading skill required for the student of literary texts. (LG3)

2. Identify and/or describe some of the varied characteristics of literary texts. (LG3)
3. Demonstrate orally, in writing, or by some other means, a fundamental ability to use some of the techniques and/or methods of literary analysis. (LG 1 and LG 3)
4. Identify and/or describe some of the various social, historical, cultural, and/or theoretical contexts in which literary texts have been written and interpreted. (LG3)

Those SLOs labeled (LG3) relate to UNCG's Learning Goal #3 for General Education, which says students will "Describe, interpret, and evaluate the ideas, events, and expressive traditions that have shaped collective and individual human experience through inquiry and analysis in the diverse disciplines of the humanities, religions, languages, histories, and the arts."

Those SLOs labeled (LG1) relate to UNCG's Learning Goal #1 for General Education, which says students will "think critically, communicate effectively, and develop appropriate fundamental skills in quantitative and information literacies."

Writing Intensive (WI) SLOs: Upon successful completion of this course, the student will:

1. Recognize and write in genres appropriate to the discipline(s) of the primary subject matter of the course.
2. Use informal and formal approaches to writing and multiple drafts to deepen their mastery of the subject.

Required Texts

The following texts must be purchased and are available at the University Bookstore:

Abigail Browning and Melissa Ridley Elmes, *Lenses: Perspectives on Literature*, Second Edition
ISBN: 978-0-738-07007-0

Norris J. Lacey and James J. Wilhelm, *The Romance of Arthur*, Third Edition.
ISBN: 978-0-415-78289-0

Helen Cooper, *Le Morte Darthur (the Winchester Manuscript)*
ISBN 978-0199537341

Lord Alfred Tennyson, *Idylls of the King*
ISBN 978-0140422535

Phyllis Ann Carr, *Idylls of the Queen*
ISBN 978-1434442284

Other texts will be available on Blackboard and should be printed out and brought to class on the dates on which we are discussing them.

Other materials:

Please bring paper, pen and/or pencil, highlighter, your textbooks, written assignments, and print outs of assigned readings posted to Blackboard with you to each class session. Failure to come to class prepared with these materials will result in the loss of participation points. Multiple infractions concerning your preparedness for class will result in your being asked to leave and counted absent for the day.

Grading

My grading system is in keeping with university grading policies. UNCG defines an A as excellent; a B as good; a C as average; a D as lowest passing grade; and an F as failure. In adherence to this scale, you should understand that a C means you successfully met the requirements of the course, not that you did poorly, which would be indicated by either a D or an F. Likewise, an A or B indicate that you met and exceeded course requirements. A basic standards sheet is included at the end of this syllabus for your general awareness. Corresponding rubrics will accompany all formal (graded) assignments.

Your final course grade is calculated as follows:

Class Participation: 15% of your final course grade

As a seminar, this class is predicated on the notion that in order to become better critical readers and writers, students must read, think and write about what they read, and discuss and analyze texts both individually and in the company of others. As such, while there will be some lecturing, the majority of class time will be spent actively engaged in activities intended to improve your critical, interpretive, and analytical reading and writing skills, and all students are required to participate both in individual and group endeavors. Class participation will be gauged through attendance, completion of assigned reading and writing prior to class, quizzes, informal writing and assessment assignments, workshopping papers, involvement in class discussions and quality postings to Blackboard discussions. It is necessary to participate actively in class in order to meet the stated student learning outcomes for the course.

Blackboard Discussions: You will be divided into discussion groups to facilitate online discussions. Every week after class on Tuesday a discussion question germane to the topics being covered that week will be posted to Blackboard. You are required to respond to this question by 5 p.m. Wednesday, and then to have responded to and/or elaborated on the postings of at least two of your classmates by 5 p.m. Friday. Blackboard discussions count towards your class participation grade, so be sure your postings are meaningful and consist of more than simple agree/disagree statements or superficial comments. You should aim for between 4 and 6 well-crafted sentences in each posting. (SLO 1, 2, 3, 4; WI 1)

Reading Responses: You are required to write 500-700 word responses (approximately one single-spaced, typewritten page) for your choice of any three of our course readings throughout the term. These responses can consist of personal reflection, elaboration on a discussion thread, or be analytical in nature, but should reflect your own, original thinking on the texts, not simply regurgitation of what we discussed in class. They will be collected, read, and commented on, but not assigned grades. All responses must be completed prior to Week Fourteen. It is appropriate to use these responses as the foundation for your essays. (SLO 1, 2, 3, 4; WI 1 & 2)

Workshopping Papers: The week before each of your two formal essays for this class are due, we will be workshopping your roughdrafts in class. You are required to bring 3 printed copies of your completed roughdraft to class on these days. If your roughdraft is not complete, 10% will be deducted from the final grade on your final draft. If you do not participate in workshopping, you can earn no higher than a grade of “C” on the final paper. (SLO 3; WI 1 & 2)

Reading Quizzes: 5% of your final course grade. There will be reading quizzes for on several of the texts we cover in this course; they are marked on the course schedule for your convenience. Reading quizzes are a measure of whether or not you read; as such, they will comprise basic questions concerning character, plot, author, genre, dates, and the like. The lowest reading quiz grade is dropped. (SLO 1, 2, 3)

Creative Writing: Constructing a Chivalric Identity: 10% of your final grade. As you read and reflect on the knightly figures in the texts assigned in the course, you will begin drafting lists and generating narratives concerning your own chivalric identity—your strengths and weaknesses, your abilities, your motives, and your goals for yourself. Over the course of the term, you will use this material to create your own knightly persona and add yourself into the Arthurian tradition. You will write a brief encyclopedic description of your moniker and deeds, and include an image of your heraldic device; write a short comparison of how you stack up against the other Knights of the Round Table, and craft a short poem about one of your adventures and a short story about one of your tests. Refer to assignment sheet for further instructions. (SLO 1 & 4; WI 1 & 2)

Student-led discussion: 10% of your final grade in the course. You will each sign up to lead class discussion once during the term. On the day for which you sign up, you should come to class prepared with four questions based on the week’s reading and designed to generate discussion. Examples of acceptable student-generated discussion questions will be provided. I strongly encourage you to come see me during my office hours prior to leading class discussion to go over your questions, especially if you are concerned as to whether or not they will meet expectations. (SLO 2, 3, 4)

Essay One: 2-3 pages, 15% of your final course grade Subject: thematic or character analysis, text of choice. Refer to assignment sheet for further instructions. (SLO 1, 2, 3; WI 1 & 2)

Essay Two: 5 pages, 20% of your final course grade Subject: compare/contrast of two Arthurian texts. Refer to assignment sheet for further instructions. (SLO 1, 2, 3; WI 1 & 2)

Failure to turn in any final essay will count against your participation grade as well as the essay grade.

Research Dossier: 10% of your final course grade. Students in this class will compile a research dossier on the Arthurian figure of their choice over the course of the term. The dossier should include at least 8-10 sources, which must be interdisciplinary and multimedia in nature. Possible sources include but are not limited to literary and scholarly texts, artworks, films/television shows, comics, memes, performance works such as drama, opera, or ballet, and music. Students will present their dossiers to the class at the end of the term. Refer to assignment sheet for further instructions. (SLO 1, 2, 3, 4; WI 1)

Midterm examination: 10% of your final course grade (SLO 2, 3, 4)

Final Examination: 10% of your final course grade (SLO 2, 3, 4)

Policies

My basic expectation of you as university students is that you will be in class on time and prepared, that you will participate actively, that you will conduct yourselves responsibly and with respect for everyone in class, and that you will give me your best effort. Beyond that:

Academic Integrity: “Academic integrity is founded upon and encompasses the following five values: honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. Violations include, for example, cheating, plagiarism, misuse of academic resources, falsification, and facilitating academic dishonesty. If knowledge is to be gained and properly evaluated, it must be pursued under conditions free from dishonesty. Deceit and misrepresentations are incompatible with the fundamental activity of this academic institution and shall not be tolerated” (from UNCG’s Academic Integrity Policy). Please review the guidelines and list of violations of academic integrity at <http://sa.uncg.edu/dean/academic-integrity>

Plagiarism: Plagiarism is the most common violation of academic integrity. In its most blatant form, you are plagiarizing when you download a paper off of the Internet, turn in a paper someone else wrote for another class, or have someone else write your essays for you. You are also plagiarizing when you engage in verbatim copying OR paraphrasing from a source without proper acknowledgement. Please familiarize yourself with the university policies on plagiarism: <http://sa.uncg.edu/dean/academic-integrity/violation/plagiarism>. I will be going over proper techniques for citing and documenting sources, you have access to the MLA handbook and your textbook for examples, and you can also look up proper citation on the Internet – there is simply no excuse for plagiarism at the college level. It is better to err on the side of over-documenting; when in doubt, ask!

All papers for this class are to follow the MLA citation guidelines and format.

In my course, a first violation of the academic integrity and/or plagiarism policies as laid forth by the University will result in a grade of “F” on the assignment in question, while two violations will constitute automatic failure of the class.

Accommodations: Students with documentation of special needs should see me about accommodations as soon as possible. If you believe you could benefit from such accommodations, you must first register with the Office of Accessibility Resources and Services on campus before such accommodations can be made. The office is located on the second floor of the Elliott University Center (EUC) in Suite 215, and the office is open 8am to 5pm, Monday - Friday. Telephone: 334-5440; e-mail: oars@uncg.edu.

Attendance: Class attendance is mandatory, and I do not differentiate between excused and unexcused absences. Because “life happens,” you are permitted two (2) absences with no penalty. A 3rd, 4th, and 5th absence will each result in a half-letter grade deduction from your final grade, while 6 absences will result in a non-negotiable failure of the course for the term. Student athletes are not exempt from the attendance policy; if you are an athlete, you are strongly encouraged to check your schedule to determine whether there will be too many conflicts to support your continued enrollment in this section. When absent, you are responsible for all materials missed and for turning in any due assignments before you miss class. ALWAYS check blackboard for updates on assignments and due dates when you are absent from class.

Tardiness: I take attendance at the beginning of class, and we will not hold off on the day's planned activities for latecomers. If you are tardy to class you run the risk of being counted absent for the day. Three tardies constitute an absence. Anything you miss as a result of being tardy cannot be made up and will count against your grade. Leaving early without prior agreement will be marked as an absence as well, and anything you miss as a result of leaving class early also cannot be made up.

Religious Observances: You are by state law allowed two excused absences due to religious holidays. These absences do not count toward the total maximum allowed above. If you plan to miss class due to a religious holiday, you must notify me by email at least 48 hours prior to the absence. You are still responsible for all of the materials you miss and for turning in due assignments before missing class.

Electronic Devices: This is not a technology course. Laptops, cell phones, Ipads, Ipods, MP3 players – whatever electronic devices you possess, don't bring them to class. If you do bring them to class, don't turn them on. Print out hard copies of reading assignments and essay drafts to bring to class with you. In-class writings will be done by hand unless you have a registered disability requiring you to use a laptop. Students who willfully choose to ignore this policy will be called out publicly for disrupting the class; repeat offenders will be asked to leave and counted as absent.

Assignments and Due Dates: Assignments are due on or before their due date, regardless of circumstances. Technological problems, malfunctions, or misunderstandings, are not grounds for excuse or exemption from this policy. If you are absent the day an assignment is due, you must have it in to me before or on that day and by our normal meeting time or it will not be counted. If you are in class the day an assignment is due, it is due at the beginning of class. I do not accept late work. Assignments may be handed in early. If you are struggling, come see me before, not after, an assignment is due.

Discussing/Disputing a Grade: You are required to wait 24 hours from the time you receive a graded paper before discussing it with me. I will not discuss your grades during class time or in front of other students. If you have questions or concerns about your performance in the class, please stop by during my office hours or make an appointment to see me individually.

Need More Help? The University Writing Center, located in MHRA room 3211, is a resource funded by your university activity fee and available to all UNCG students. Bring your writing assignment at any stage of its completion, paper, and pen or pencil, and a staff member will hold a one-on-one consultation with you to help you develop your work. No appointment is necessary; the writing center works on a first-come, first-serve basis. For assignments five pages or fewer in length, you can also use the online writing center by messaging uncgaskthewc@gmail.com through your iSpartan account.

Writing Center Hours: M-R 9am – 8pm, Friday 9am – 3pm, Sunday 5pm – 8pm

Additionally, the Learning Assistance Center is located in McIver Hall, rooms 101-104, and 150. Telephone: 334-3878. E-mail: lac@uncg.edu.

Contacting Me: Aside from my regular office hours or setting up an appointment, the best way to reach me is by email: maelmes@uncg.edu. It is reasonable to expect a response within 24 hours; if you do not hear back from me after 24 hours have passed, please re-send the message. For all communication related to this course, please do me the courtesy of putting your last name and FMS 120 in the subject line, so I

know what this is in reference to; using your UNCG email account will best prevent me from accidentally deleting your message in the mistaken belief that anything from Lovethebruins@hotmail.com must be spam.

In any situation not expressly covered in this syllabus my word... is the last word.

Course Schedule

Please note that every effort will be made to adhere to the schedule as presented here. In the instance that the schedule must be altered you will be verbally informed in class (when possible) and an announcement will be posted on Blackboard. Any changes are intended to benefit or accommodate students, i.e. I will not move the due date of an assignment up or add more reading, but I may move a due date back or drop a reading. It is your responsibility to keep up with any changes made to the syllabus.

Major assignments/due dates are highlighted in Bold Print

Week One (August 18-22): Class Introduction; Arthur in the Medieval Chronicle Tradition (Latin and English); *Lenses*, “Strategies for Reading” pp. 1-7

T 8/19 Go over syllabus; background probe activity (“What do you know about King Arthur?”); background probe activity on student writing experience; “Strategies for reading at the college level” activity.

R 8/21 Arthur in the Latin chronicles (Lacy & Wilhelm pp. 1-9); Arthur in Geoffrey of Monmouth (Lacy & Wilhelm pp. 58-87)

No Blackboard discussions this week.

Week Two (August 25-29): Medieval Chronicles and Romance (English & Welsh); *Lenses*, Character pp. 93-99; Theme pp. 101-108

T 8/26 Wace & Lazamon (Lacy & Wilhelm pp. 88-111); comparing texts

R 8/28 “Culhwch and Olwen” (Lacy & Wilhelm, pp. 28-57); reading quiz #1

Blackboard discussions must be completed by Friday at 5:00 p.m.

Week Three (September 1-5): Medieval Romance, continued (French); Ad Putter, “Finding Time for Romance” [BB]; *Lenses*, Setting, Atmosphere & Mood pp. 123-127; Plot pp. 89-92; Literary research pp. 227-240

T 9/2 Library Orientation: Meet in Jackson Library

R 9/4 “Lancelot, or The Knight of the Cart” (Lacy & Wilhelm pp. 112-180); Arthurian identities in romance; applying critical texts to literary texts to create deeper meaning (Putter)

Blackboard discussions must be completed by Friday at 5:00 p.m.

Week Four (September 8-12): Medieval Romance, continued (German & Norse); *Lenses* Writing Essays For College Literature Classes pp. 209-222

T 9/9 Writing Center Orientation. Meet in the Writing Center.

R 9/11 “Parzival” (Lacy & Wilhelm pp. 193-206), “The Saga of the Mantle” (Lacy & Wilhelm pp. 223-235); reading for literary analysis; student-led discussion

Blackboard discussions must be completed by Friday at 5:00 p.m.

Week Five (September 15-19): Medieval Romance, continued (German & French); *Lenses*, Poetry pp. 11-31

T 9/16 “The Romance of Tristan” (Lacy & Wilhelm pp. 236-281) Student-led discussion

R 9/18 Reading quiz #2; “Lanval” (Lacy & Wilhelm pp. 294-314); “The Hero’s Journey”

Blackboard discussions must be completed by Friday at 5:00 p.m.

Week Six (September 22-26): Monstrosity and Marvels (English & Latin); *Lenses*, Symbolism pp. 139-152; On Irony, pp. 159-166; Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, “Monster Culture: Seven Theses” [BB]

T 9/23 “Sir Gawain and the Green Knight” (Lacy & Wilhelm pp. 409-475); student-led discussion

R 9/25 “Arthur and Gorlagon” [BB]; “Prose Merlin” (Lacy & Wilhelm pp. 324-333); Cohen, “Monster Culture: Seven Theses”

Blackboard discussions must be completed by Friday at 5:00 p.m.

Week Seven (September 29-October 3): Malory, *Morte Darthur* (English); *Lenses*, Long Prose

T 9/30 Workshopping essay one

R 10/2 Sir Thomas Malory’s *Morte Darthur*; Student-led discussion

No Blackboard Discussion this week—focus on essays and studying for the midterm

Week Eight (October 6-10): Malory’s *Morte Darthur*, continued

T 10/7 **ESSAY ONE DUE**; essay reflection; Malory, *Morte Darthur*; student-led discussions

R 10/9 **MIDTERM EXAMINATION**

No Blackboard discussion this week.

Week Nine: Tennyson, Idylls (English); Lenses, Poetry pp. 11-31; Appendix, Poetic Forms

T 10/14 NO CLASS—FALL BREAK

R 10/16 NO CLASS—Professor at Conference. Read *Idylls* & re-read *Lenses* poetry chapter & Appendix A (forms); Stephen Ahern, “Listening to Guinevere: The Politics of Chivalry in Tennyson’s Idylls” [BB]; written assignment to be posted to Blackboard.

No Blackboard discussion this week.

Week Ten (October 20-24): Romantic and Modern Arthur (English, American, Canadian); Lenses, Poetry pp. 11-31; New Historicism pp. 171-178

T 10/21 Reading quiz #3; Tennyson, *Idylls* & “Lady of Shalott” (BB); Wordsworth, “Romance of the Water Lily” (BB)

R 10/23 Arnold, “Tristan and Iseult” (BB); Ciardi, “Lancelot in Hell” (BB); Atwood, “Avalon Revisited” (BB); student-led discussion

Week Eleven (October 27-31): Arthur Beyond the Western Tradition (Tagalog & Japanese)

T 10/28 “Tablante de Ricamonte” [BB]; comparing cultures through texts

R 10/30 “Kairo-ko: A Dirge” [BB], student-led discussion

Week Twelve (November 3-7): Gender and the Arthurian Tradition; Ahern, “Listening to Guinevere”; Lenses, Feminist Theory pp. 189-196

T 11/4 *Idylls of the Queen*; re-read Stephen Ahern, “Listening to Guinevere: The Politics of Chivalry in Tennyson’s Idylls”

R 11/6 *Idylls of the Queen*, cont’d; reading quiz #4; student-led discussion

Week Thirteen (November 10-14): Student presentations; workshopping final essays

T 11/11 Workshop Essay Two; **Create-a-Knight assignment due**

R 11/13 Student Presentations, Research Dossiers

Week Fourteen (November 17-21): Student presentations, continued

T 11/18 Student Presentations, Research Dossiers

R 11/20 Student Presentations, Research Dossiers; **Critical reflections due**

Week Fifteen (November 24-28): Final Thoughts

11/26 **ESSAY TWO DUE; essay reflection;** Exam review & course evaluations

11/27 NO CLASS—THANKSGIVING BREAK

Final Exam, Tuesday, December 9, 12:00-3:00 p.m. Final Essays will be returned at this time.

Grading Standards

In general, everything being graded in this course, from your performance in class writings and discussion to your formal essays, is being considered against the following basic rubric:

A Superior	B Good	C Average	D Limited	F Weak
Clearly exceeds expectations	Exceeds/attempts more or less successfully to go beyond basic expectations	Meets basic expectations	Falls short of basic expectations	Does not meet expectations
Demonstrates mastery of the skill	Demonstrates emerging mastery of the skill	Demonstrates competence in the skill	Demonstrates developing competence in the skill	Does not demonstrate evidence of competence
Polished; very few errors or lapses in grammar, vocabulary, or syntax	Polished; minor errors in word choice, grammar or syntax	Sufficient; several errors in word choice, grammar or syntax that do not interfere with overall coherence	Deficient; errors in vocabulary, grammar, or syntax are of such extent that they interfere with overall coherence	Severely deficient; errors in vocabulary, grammar and syntax preclude comprehension

Words you might associate with each letter grade:

A – superior, demonstrates mastery, skillful and facile use of language and the writing process, polished, coherent, consistent, complex, sophisticated, fluent

B – competent, very good, strong, emerging skillfulness, few errors, demonstrates clear understanding

C – average, adequate, meets expectations, completes assignment, sufficient, generally fine, meets minimum standards, room for improvement

D - below average, weak, insufficient, needs improvement, incomplete, lacking in some essential or major way, does not demonstrate understanding or demonstrates flawed understanding

F – no evidence of understanding or effort, very weak, inconsistent, severely flawed, severely lacking, not done, does not have a clear point or purpose, plagiarized(in the case of an essay).