

English 5700: Medieval Chivalric Romance

Spencer K. Wall

e-mail: spencer.wall@utah.edu

Course Description: To this day, the image of an armored knight charging down the road astride his noble steed is a synecdoche for adventure. But why are adventures found along the road? And why are knights the people to find them?

In this course, we'll read some of the chivalric romances written in the middle ages, romances that both shaped and challenged the generic storytelling tradition of the knight in quest of adventures. At the heart of our journey through these texts, we'll enter the world of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, in which knights and squires are both the subjects of adventure stories and the tellers of stories, storytellers sharing the road to Canterbury with (extra?)ordinary people from nearly every other medieval walk of life. Meanwhile, at the periphery of our quest to understand the medieval chivalric romance genre, on the borders of our course reading schedule, we'll encounter Ancient Greek romance literature that predates the middle ages and its knights; as well as chivalric romance from the later English Renaissance period that adapted and reimagined the medieval tradition.



One of the challenges we will face in our exploration of chivalric romance will be the difficulty of some unfamiliar, older language. But take courage. We'll read the Ancient Greek and the Old French texts in modern English translations. We'll also have a modern English translation for the difficult Middle English of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*; although, this will be a facing page translation, and we will make forays together in class into the original Middle English on the opposite pages. We will read Chaucer in his original Middle English (along with a few other Middle English texts), but since I expect this reading to be particularly challenging, I have limited the amount of it and scheduled ample class time for us to learn how to read it together. As your guide on this journey, I will be a constantly available resource to help you read Middle English. You do not need any previous experience with reading Middle English to succeed in this course.

Required Texts:

- Achilles Tatius. *Leucippe and Clitophon*. Trans. Tim Whitmarsh. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2009. ISBN-13: 978-0199555475
- Chaucer, Geoffrey. *The Canterbury Tales: Seventeen Tales and the General Prologue*. Ed. V. A. Kolve and Glending Olson. NY: W. W. Norton & Co, 2018. ISBN-13: 978-1324000563
- Chrétien de Troyes. *Arthurian Romances*. Trans. William W. Kibler, Carleton W. Carroll. NY: Penguin, 2004. ISBN-13: 978-0140445213
- Malory, Thomas. *King Arthur & His Knights: Selected Tales*. Ed. Eugene Vinaver. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1975. ISBN-13: 978-0195019056
- *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*. Trans. James Winny. Peterborough: Broadview Press, 1992. ISBN-13: 978-0921149927
- Spenser, Edmund. *The Faerie Queene*. NY: Penguin, 1979. ISBN-13: 978-0140422078

Please purchase the editions of the texts that I have ordered (listed above). It is imperative to your success in this course that you use the translations that I have assigned of the works that we will be reading in translation and that you have accurate editions of the text of the works that we will read in their original English.

In addition to reading assignments from the texts above, there will be two additional required reading assignments posted to our course web site on Canvas. These reading assignments will be the short, anonymous Middle English romance *Sir Orfeo* and Chaucer's "Squire's Tale" (oddly not included in the Norton selections from *The Canterbury Tales*).

Grading, Assignments and Attendance Expectations:

100-93% – A	89-88% – B+	79-78% – C+	69-68% – D+	59-0% – E
92-90% – A-	87-83% – B	77-73% – C	67-63% – D	
	82-80% – B-	72-70% – C-	62-60% – D-	

reading response papers (7 total)	70% of total course grade
weekly participation	30%

You will receive writing prompts for short (1 page) papers, based on the assigned reading, regularly throughout the semester (I'll usually assign the prompts the day we begin discussing a new text, and the papers will usually be due the Friday of the week we finish reading it).

Grading, Assignments and Attendance Expectations: (continued)

To further encourage your engagement with the course and its material, there will be weekly participation assignments. There will be two assignments each week (except Thanksgiving week, when there will be one), assigned in conjunction with our Tuesday and Thursday class meetings, and both assignments will be due Fridays (submitted on Canvas) for a weekly participation grade. The assignments will most often take the form of take-home quizzes/worksheets, though we will also do some other participation activities from time to time, as part of the two weekly assignments, such as online forum discussions (in Canvas) and drafting exercises for the papers.

Attendance:

The weekly take-home quizzes will cover the lecture and discussion material from class meetings, not just the reading material. Therefore, you will need to attend class meetings to pass these assignments.

If you are forced to miss class meetings due to health complications, in this time of global pandemic, you must contact me within a reasonable time frame and arrange with me to receive the lecture material in an alternative format and/or to complete an alternative participation assignment. I will determine what is appropriate as make-up work on a context-specific, case-by-case basis. As necessary and appropriate, we may consult with English departmental advisors and/or the Center for Disability and Access (CDA) to insure your needs are met and that any attendance-related accommodations are properly handled. For more information about CDA services, see the section of this syllabus on “Course Policies” below.

If you anticipate now that you will not be able to attend a majority of the in-person class meetings for this course, you should not take this course. In-person attendance is a required component of this course. Due to the pandemic situation, this requirement will be flexibly interpreted in short-term situations that require accommodations. But the attendance requirement cannot be waived long-term. If you are unable to attend in-person class meetings generally, but this in-person course will help you fulfill graduation requirements, you should consult with an English departmental advisor about alternative ways to fulfill those requirements.

Please note that the University has cancelled class meetings for all courses, campus-wide, for the weeks of 28 September-9 October and the week of 30 November-4 December. During these weeks, class instruction for all courses will be conducted online, not in-person. During these online-only weeks, I will still assign participation assignments through Canvas on Tuesdays and Thursdays, and they will still be due on Fridays. The only change will be that in these weeks, the assignments will be significantly more reading intensive, because I will write out lecture material and incorporate it into the assignments, rather than deliver that material in class.

Grading, Assignments and Attendance Expectations: (continued)

Late Work:

If you need an extension on a paper deadline (for any reason or no reason at all), please arrange it with me before the original deadline lapses (so that we can decide together on something reasonable). There will be no late penalty for any paper turned in after the original deadline, as long as you submit the paper by your new extended deadline. However, if you do not arrange an extension with me, I will accept late papers only for 3/4 credit.

The purpose of the participation assignments is to encourage and track your regular attendance and engagement with the course, so I will not accept them late, except in the case of health emergencies discussed with me and (when appropriate) the CDA. Please note that in this time of pandemic, a health emergency may take the form of a problem with your own health but also may entail a problem with the health of a dependent or close associate, requiring your temporary absence from class meetings.

Course Schedule:

Please read the material listed for each day on this schedule before coming to class on that day (or before beginning the Canvas activities on the weeks when class meetings have been cancelled by the University), and please bring the reading material with you to class meetings.

I may make changes to the reading assignments on this schedule, as well as other elements of the course, including assignment deadlines, as the semester progresses and our needs as a course evolve.

I include the above disclaimer about schedule changes on every syllabus for every course I teach, but this semester, due to the pandemic, it is more likely than normal that some adjustments and changes will need to be made. I will do everything in my power to notify you, online and in class meetings, of any changed expectations. But be prepared to be flexible, and do be advised that this semester, you will need to have a reasonable level of access to and comfort with online resources and technology to keep up with the course and its changes. Check Canvas regularly and make sure the University has an e-mail address on file for you that you regularly check.

Prologue: Romance Before the Medieval

T (8/25)	Introduction
H (8/27)	Achilles Tatius, <i>Leucippe and Clitophon</i> , Books 1-2
T (9/1)	Achilles Tatius, <i>Leucippe and Clitophon</i> , Books 3-5
H (9/3)	Achilles Tatius, <i>Leucippe and Clitophon</i> , Books 6-8

Weeks 3-4: Medieval Chivalric Romance Before Chaucer

- T (9/8) Chrétien de Troyes, *Arthurian Romances, Erec and Enide*
H (9/10) Chrétien, *Erec and Enide*
- T (9/15) *Sir Orfeo* (reading available on Canvas)

Weeks 4-10: Medieval Romance in the Age of Chaucer

- H (9/17) Geoffrey Chaucer, *The Canterbury Tales*, "The General Prologue"
- T (9/22) Chaucer, "The General Prologue"
H (9/24) Chaucer, "The Knight's Tale," Part 1
- T (9/29) Chaucer, "The Knight's Tale," Part 2
NO IN-PERSON MEETING – CANVAS INSTRUCTION ONLY
- H (10/1) Chaucer, "The Knight's Tale," Part 3
NO IN-PERSON MEETING – CANVAS INSTRUCTION ONLY
- T (10/6) Chaucer, "The Knight's Tale," Part 4
NO IN-PERSON MEETING – CANVAS INSTRUCTION ONLY
- H (10/8) Chaucer, "The Wife of Bath's Prologue"
NO IN-PERSON MEETING – CANVAS INSTRUCTION ONLY
- T (10/13) Chaucer, "The Wife of Bath's Tale"
H (10/15) Chaucer, "The Squire's Tale" (reading available on Canvas)
- T (10/20) Chaucer, "The Squire's Tale" (reading available on Canvas)
H (10/22) Chaucer, "The Franklin's Tale"
- T (10/27) *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, Fitts 1, 2
H (10/29) *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, Fitts 3, 4

Weeks 11-12: Late Medieval Chivalric Romance (Malory's *Morte d'Arthur*)

- T (11/3) Thomas Malory, *King Arthur & His Knights*, "Balin, or the Knight with the Two Swords," "Pelleas and Ettard"
H (11/5) Malory, "The Holy Grail"
- T (11/10) Malory, "Lancelot and Elaine," "The Fair Maid of Astolat"
H (11/12) Malory, "The Knight of the Cart"

Epilogue: Medievalist Romance in the Renaissance

- T (11/17) Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, Book I, Cantos 1-2
H (11/19) Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, Book I, Cantos 3-4
- T (11/24) Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, Book I, Cantos 5-7
H (11/26) THANKSGIVING – NO CLASS
- T (12/1) Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, Book I, Cantos 8-10
NO IN-PERSON MEETING – CANVAS INSTRUCTION ONLY
H (12/3) Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, Book I, Cantos 11-12
NO IN-PERSON MEETING – CANVAS INSTRUCTION ONLY

Course Policies:

Plagiarism:

The University of Utah Student Code classifies plagiarism as “academic misconduct.” Plagiarism is defined in Part I.B.2.c of the Code as “the intentional unacknowledged use or incorporation of any other person's work in, or as a basis for, one's own work offered for academic consideration or credit or for public presentation. Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to, representing as one's own, without attribution, any other individual's words, phrasing, ideas, sequence of ideas, information or any other mode or content of expression.” Part V.B of the Code stipulates that students guilty of plagiarism “may be subject to academic sanctions including but not limited to a grade reduction, failing grade, probation, suspension or dismissal from the program or the University, or revocation of the student's degree or certificate. Sanctions may also include community service, a written reprimand, and/or a written statement of misconduct that can be put into an appropriate record maintained for purposes of the profession or discipline for which the student is preparing.” (www.regulations.utah.edu/academics/6-400.html)
If you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism, talk to me. Simply put, don't cheat. It's not worth it.

ADA Notice:

The University of Utah seeks to provide equal access to its programs, services and activities for people with disabilities. If you will need accommodations in the class, reasonable prior notice needs to be given to the Center for Disability & Access, 162 Olpin Union Building, 801-581-5020. CDA will work with you and the instructor to make arrangements for accommodations.
All written information in this course can be made available in alternative format with prior notification to the Center for Disability & Access.

Face Coverings:

Based on CDC guidelines, the University currently requires everyone to wear face coverings (masks that cover the nose and mouth, not face shields) in shared public spaces on campus, including classrooms. If you forget your face covering, you will be asked to leave class to retrieve it, and if you repeatedly fail to wear a face covering in class, you will be referred to the Dean of Students for a possible violation of the Student Code. Note that some students may qualify for accommodations to the University's face covering policy through the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)—for more information, see “ADA Notice” above.

COVID19 Self-Reporting:

Students must self-report if they test positive for COVID19 via <https://coronavirus.utah.edu/>

Campus Safety Statement:

The University of Utah values the safety of all campus community members. To report suspicious activity or to request a courtesy escort, call campus police at 801-585-COPS (801-585-2677). You will receive important emergency alerts and safety messages regarding campus safety via text message. For more information regarding safety and to view available training resources, including helpful videos, visit safeu.utah.edu.

Addressing Sexual Misconduct:

Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender (which includes sexual orientation and gender identity/expression) is a civil rights offense subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories such as race, national origin, color, religion, age, status as a person with a disability, veteran's status or genetic information. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you are encouraged to report it to the Title IX Coordinator in the Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action, 135 Park Building, 801-581-8365, or the Office of the Dean of Students, 270 Union Building, 801-581-7066. For support and confidential consultation, contact the Center for Student Wellness, SSB 328, 801-581-7776. To report to the police, contact the Department of Public Safety, 801-585-2677(COPS).