

**Modern and Contemporary British Literature:
The Quest for Failure and the Failure of the Quest:
Medievalisms in Modernist Literature**

Summer 2019

ENGL 3309-D01

Thursdays, 6:00 – 8:50 p.m. via Zoom

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Office Hours: Mondays, 12:00 – 1:30 p.m.; Wednesdays, 9:00 – 10:30 a.m.



[Salvador Dalí, “Don Quixote,” c. 1966]

Course Description:

“The contemplation of the horrid or sordid or disgusting, by an artist, is the necessary and negative aspect of the impulse towards the pursuit of beauty. But not all succeed as did Dante in expressing the scale from negative to positive.”

(T. S. Eliot, The Sacred Wood, p. 13)

The idea of a “Middle Age” was first cultivated in the Early Modern period as a “Dark Age” to bridge the gap between the Classical World and the ‘golden’ age of the Renaissance. But what were the Middle Ages? The Victorians romanticized the medieval period as a world of knights, damsels in distress, and dragons. But how did the Modernists see the medieval world? How were the Middle Ages constructed to justify political agendas and Modernist aesthetics? How could quests and the Crusades be invoked to reject industrialization and the violence of the World Wars? In this course we will seek answers to these questions as we examine a variety of texts from the twentieth century. Through a series of readings as well as presentations on their historical contexts,

we will consider how the past informs the present and pursue the problem of constructed and politicized versions of history.

This course is designed to give practice in writing critical essays about literature. Through reading, discussing, and writing about texts, students will build close-reading skills, engage in both formal and thematic analysis of literary texts, learn research practices, learn the proper citation of texts, and develop the kind of critical vocabularies essential to successful participation in the English major and minor. All students will be responsible for participating in class discussion, completing and revising writing assignments, and reading and commenting on each other's writing.

Required Texts:

Marcus Bull, *Thinking Medieval: An Introduction to the Study of the Middle Ages*. NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005. ISBN: 978-1403912954

T. S. Eliot, *Murder in the Cathedral*. NY: Harcourt Press, 1964. ISBN: 978-0156632775

T. S. Eliot, *The Waste Land*. NY: W. W. Norton, 2001. ISBN: 978-0393974997

John Gardner, *Grendel*. NY: Vintage, 1989. ISBN: 978-0679723110

T. H. White, *The Once and Future King*. NY: Ace Books. ISBN: 978-0441627400

Additional Supplemental Readings will be supplied by the instructor.

Learning Objectives:

The University Catalog states that “the objective of the humanities in a core curriculum is to expand the student’s knowledge of the human condition and human cultures, especially in relation to behaviors, ideas, and values expressed in works of the human imagination and thought. Through study in disciplines such as literature and philosophy, students will engage in critical analysis and develop an appreciation of the humanities as fundamental to the health and survival of any society.” By the end of this course students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate the ability to read selected texts and genres closely, analytically, and interpretively.
2. Demonstrate the ability to use discuss diverse texts and genres with discipline-specific language and be able to situate texts within historical, cultural, and generic contexts.
3. Write well-structured arguments about literature, with argumentative thesis statements and clearly defined support.
4. Responsibly read and comment upon fellow students’ writing.
5. Identify and use basic research tools and methods.
6. Assess and reflect upon your own reading and writing processes.

Learning Assessments:

The objectives listed above will be assessed in the following ways:

1. Essay, class discussion, close-reading worksheets.
2. Essay, class discussion, historical context presentation.

3. Essay, peer-review, revision activities, close-reading worksheets.
4. Peer-review, revision activities, group work.
5. Essay, historical context presentation, revision activities, peer-review, class discussion.
6. Class discussion, essay, revision activities.

Assignments:

Grade Distribution:

Participation: 10%

Historical Context Presentation: 20%

Close-Reading Worksheets: 20%

Essay: 50%

Participation: 10%

You will be evaluated on your participation throughout the semester based on work in the following activities:

- Small group discussion
- Full class discussion
- Individual writing
- Peer review participation
- Bringing required materials (including assigned text, reading log, and notebook/pen for taking notes)

Participation in class discussion means: listening attentively, contributing ideas, asking questions, taking notes, etc. There are many ways to participate, but if you sit in the back of the classroom with headphones, then you are clearly not participating.

If you are not in class, you cannot participate, and your grade will reflect not only your absences but also your reduced participation.

Each class, there are at minimum two possible Participation points to be earned:

1. Attendance and preparedness for class
2. Participation in class activities and discussion

Additional points may be awarded for quizzes, book checks, submission of homework, etc.

Historical Context Presentation: 20%

In groups of 3-4 students, you will select one text from the scheduled readings and do some outside research. Your presentation may address any aspect of the text – gender, religion, race, war, cultures in conflict, etc. The presentation will include a PowerPoint and be approximately 10-15 minutes long. Due on the day of your presentation will be an Annotated Bibliography. See assignment instructions for proper formatting. **Rubric and sign-up sheet will be distributed the first week of class.**

Close-Reading Worksheets: 20%

These worksheets will prepare you for writing the Essay. There will be three worksheets due in the first half of the course. Successful completion of the worksheet means following all instructions and giving thoughtful answers to the prompts based on close reading of the assigned passage. Worksheets are due at the beginning of class. See the Class Schedule for assignment dates.

The Essay: 50%

The purpose of this essay is to give you practice in close reading, analytical essay writing, and develop your knowledge of one text. You will select one passage from a text and analyze its form, techniques, and narrative and historical contexts. Using the assignment prompt, you will compose a thesis statement and supporting argument about your interpretation of the passage and how your analysis supports that interpretation. Your paper should be 5 pages, double-spaced in Times New Roman, 12-point font with a works cited in MLA format. This must be a formal thesis-driven piece of writing. This essay is due both in class as a hardcopy and on Blackboard as Word document.

A more detailed rubric will be provided on June 13.

Essay Components:

Introduction and Outline (10%): Due 7/11

Draft (10%): Due 7/18

Peer Review Activity (5%): Due 7/25

Revision Activity (5%): Due 8/1

Final Essay (20%): Due 8/8 by 7:00 p.m.

Grading Breakdown:

90 – 100 = A

Strong, distinguished work. Student writing is prepared and organized. Student shows clear understanding of the literature and writing technique. Writing is sophisticated and coherent.

80 – 89 = B

Above average, high quality work. Student writing is prepared and organized. Student understands a majority of the literature and writing technique. Writing quality is elementary, but clear. Student is coherent, but could be more sophisticated in his/her argument or writing quality.

70 – 79 = C

Average, passing work. Student meets bare minimum requirements for assignment. Assignment is complete but does not offer much introspection or deep-understanding of the literature. Argument and writing quality are elementary. Writing and organizational errors. Inconsistencies present.

60 – 69 = D

Below average work. Student does not meet the minimum requirements for assignment. Assignment is incomplete and unprepared. Basic understanding of text, but no argument – or vice versa.

0 – 59 = F

Fail. Student shows a very limited understanding of the literature or assignment.

Classroom Decorum & Course Policies:**Submission of Work:**

Unless granted special permission, students must submit all assignments via Blackboard. Assignments are due on the deadline at the beginning of class. I will not accept submitted materials in any other manner (i.e. via e-mail, under my door, in my box, etc.)

All submitted work MUST follow the standard MLA guidelines. This means: typed, double-spaced pages, 1-inch margins, Times New Roman 12-point font (in black ink), page numbers, and a works cited. There should be a centered title for your short papers that is just below the heading. Headings should be right-adjusted and contain the following information:

Jane Smith
English 2307-004
September 5, 2017
Short Essay #1

Jungian Analysis of the World Mother in Cosmogonic Myths

In order to pass this class, you MUST submit all required assignments.

Late Work:

Late work will only be accepted in extreme emergency situations. In emergency situations, students may e-mail me about submitting an assignment late, but must make specific arrangements for that submission; however, for each calendar day that the paper is late, the final grade for the work will decrease by one letter. Timeliness and personal responsibility is critical to succeeding in college-level coursework. When dual submissions are required (Blackboard and hard copy), timely submission of both methods is required. Submitting the hard copy on time, but a late submission on Blackboard will constitute “Late Work”. Submitting the Blackboard copy on time, but a late hard copy will also constitute “Late Work”. In both cases, the assignment will drop a letter grade for each day that one required submission is late.

University-excused/ Religious Holiday Absences:

Prior notice must be given for university-excused absences and for absences due to observance of a religious holiday. If you intend to observe a religious holy day, you should make that intention known in writing to the instructor prior to the absence. A student who is absent for the observance of a religious holy day shall be allowed to take an exam or complete an assignment scheduled for that day within a reasonable time after the absence.

Absences:

You are allowed TWO unexcused absences. Any subsequent unexcused absences after two will result in one whole grade deduction PER ABSENCE. Only in extreme circumstances will an absence be excused (court-mandated appearance, mandatory sports or TTU-related function, or

extended illness). With documentation, your absence may be excused and will not count against your three “free” absences. Please note that a hangover, headache, or a cold does not qualify as an “extended illness.” After TWO doctor’s notes, you will have used up your excused absences. You cannot succeed in this class if you are absent. After four unexcused absences, you automatically fail this class.

Unless you have made previous arrangements with me, your assignments are due on their scheduled dates regardless of your absences. If you know you are going to be absent, you must make arrangements to submit the assignment in advance of the due date. A late submission due to an absence (excused or unexcused) will still constitute “Late Work” and be marked down accordingly.

If you are in-class, but not present (i.e., on your phone, sleeping, passing notes, messaging on your laptop, listening to music, etc.), you will be considered absent. Physically being in-class does not warrant participation or attendance.

Two tardies (10 or more minutes late for class) will constitute one unexcused absence. If you are running from a class somewhere else on campus and anticipate being a few minutes late, you must notify me prior to class with evidence of the need to arrive late.

Student Conduct:

The readings we will encounter in this class may be socially, morally, or emotionally challenging for some. You do not have to agree with, or even like, all the texts, but you do have to be able to read and discuss them critically and sympathetically. Please be respectful of other students and your instructor. This classroom will be a safe place for all of us, regardless of our race, ethnicity, age, religion, social class, gender identity, or sexual preference. Please bring any breach of this standard to my attention immediately. Use common sense and be empathetic of others. If you engage in any distracting or delinquent behavior during class, you will be asked to leave and will be counted absent. If such behavior continues, you will be dropped from the course.

Scholastic Dishonesty:

“‘Scholastic dishonesty’ includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, collusion, falsifying academic records, misrepresenting facts, and any act designed to give unfair academic advantage to the student (such as, but not limited to, submission of essentially the same written assignment for two courses without the prior permission of the instructor) or the attempt to commit such an act.” It will not be tolerated and may result in the failure of the assignment, at the least, and possible course failure. Additionally, offending students may be referred to Student Judicial Programs. Bottom line: Plagiarism is easy to spot. Don’t do it.

Examples of plagiarism include (but are not limited to):

Outright plagiarism: using someone else’s entire paper as your own;

Ghostwriting: having someone else write your paper for you;

Cut and paste: taking sections from another paper and/or website and including it in your own work; and

Insufficient Citation: failing to cite information obtained from other sources and/or your research.

Writing Assistance:

Students looking for extra assistance during this course should contact the Writing Center, located in Eng/Phil 175. Students can meet with writing tutors to discuss ideas and arguments in texts; the center is not a “fix-it” shop set up to correct errors in grammar and mechanics, although they will assist you with questions regarding any issues. You will need to make an appointment in person, online (<http://uwc.ttu.edu>) or by phone (806-742-2476) and with plenty of time before your due date. Appointments fill up fast, so think ahead!

Americans with Disabilities Act:

“Any student who, because of a disability, may require special arrangements in order to meet the course requirements should contact the instructor as soon as possible to make any necessary arrangements. Students should present appropriate verification from Student Disability Services during the instructor’s office hours. Please note instructors are not allowed to provide classroom accommodations to a student until appropriate verification from Student Disability Services has been provided. [...] Contact Student Disability Services in 335 West Hall or (806) 742-2405.”

TTU Resources for Discrimination, Harassment, and Sexual Violence:

Texas Tech University is committed to providing and strengthening an educational, working, and living environment where students, faculty, staff, and visitors are free from gender and/or sex discrimination of any kind. Sexual assault, discrimination, harassment, and other Title IX violations are not tolerated by the University. Report any incidents to the Office for Student Rights & Resolution, (806)-742-SAFE (7233) or file a report online at titleix.ttu.edu/students. Faculty and staff members at TTU are committed to connecting you to resources on campus. Some of these available resources are: TTU Student Counseling Center, 806-742-3674, <https://www.depts.ttu.edu/scc/> (Provides confidential support on campus.) TTU Student Counseling Center 24-hour Helpline, 806-742-5555, (Assists students who are experiencing a mental health or interpersonal violence crisis. If you call the helpline, you will speak with a mental health counselor.) Voice of Hope Lubbock Rape Crisis Center, 806-763-7273, voiceofhopelubbock.org (24-hour hotline that provides support for survivors of sexual violence.) The Risk, Intervention, Safety and Education (RISE) Office, 806-742-2110, rise.ttu.edu (Provides a range of resources and support options focused on prevention education and student wellness.) Texas Tech Police Department, 806-742-3931, <http://www.depts.ttu.edu/ttpd/> (To report criminal activity that occurs on or near Texas Tech campus.)

Statement of LGBTQIA Support:

I identify as an ally to the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, and asexual (LGBTQIA) community, and I am available to listen and support you in an affirming manner. I can assist in connecting you with resources on campus to address problems you may face pertaining to sexual orientation and/or gender identity that could interfere with your success at Texas Tech. Please note that additional resources are available through the Office of LGBTQIA within the Center for Campus Life, Student Union Building Room 201, www.lgbtqia.ttu.edu, 806.742.5433.

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Within the Center for Campus Life, the Office serves the Texas Tech community through facilitation and leadership of programming and advocacy efforts. This work is aimed at

strengthening the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, and asexual (LGBTQIA) community and sustaining an inclusive campus that welcomes people of all sexual orientations, gender identities, and gender expressions.

Tentative Class Schedule:

DATE	READINGS/ASSIGNMENTS	ASSIGNMENT DUE
06/06 TH	Introduction to the Course READ: Syllabus; Umberto Eco, “Dreaming of the Middle Ages”; Marcus Bull, “Chapter 1: Popular Images of the Middle Ages”; “The Met: The Pre-Raphaelites” + Google: Kelmscott / Pre-Raphaelite / William Morris	
06/13 TH	Topic: Experiencing the “Past” READ: Virginia Woolf, “The Journal of Mistress Joan Martyn”; T. S. Eliot, <i>Murder in the Cathedral</i> ; Marcus Bull, “Chapter 2: What are the ‘Middle Ages’?” Historical Context Presentation: Essay Rubric Distributed.	Close-Reading Worksheet
06/20 TH	Topic: Failure of the Quest – Parallels between Medieval Warfare and the World Wars READ: T. S. Eliot, “The Waste Land”; excerpts from James Joyce, <i>Finnegan’s Wake</i> ; Jed Deppman, “The Return of Medievalism: James Joyce in 1923”; Jessie L. Weston, pp. 35-39 (in <i>The Waste Land</i>); Eliot on <i>The Waste Land</i> , pp. 112-113 (in <i>The Waste Land</i>) Historical Context Presentation:	Close-Reading Worksheet
06/27 TH	Topic: Bestiaries and the Pursuing the Unfamiliar READ: Excerpts from: T. H. White’s <i>The Book of Beasts</i> , Jorge Luis Borges, <i>The Book of Imaginary Beings</i> , Guillaume Apollinaire, <i>Le Bestiaire ou Cortège d’Orphee</i> Historical Context Presentation:	Close-Reading Worksheet
07/04 TH	NO CLASS – INDEPENDENCE DAY	
07/11 TH	Topic: The <i>Völk</i> and the Rise of Nationalism READ: Article on Wagner and German Nationalism; Grimm Bros. excerpts; Marcus Bull, “Chapter 4: Is Medieval History Relevant?” WATCH: Wagner, <i>Der Ring des Nibelungen</i>	Essay Introduction + Outline
07/18 TH	Topic: Tolkien’s Response to Nazi Appropriation of the Past READ: Excerpts from Tolkien; Marcus Bull, “Chapter 3: The Evidence for Medieval History” Historical Context Presentation:	Essay Draft

<p>07/25 TH</p>	<p>Topic: Empathy, Monstrosity, and Rethinking Perspective READ: John Gardner, <i>Grendel</i>; excerpts from <i>Beowulf</i> Historical Context Presentation:</p>	<p>Peer Review</p>
<p>08/01 TH</p>	<p>Topic: Avoidance of War, Exploration of Other Perspectives READ: T. H. White, <i>The Sword in the Stone</i> (in <i>The Once and Future King</i>) Historical Context Presentation:</p>	<p>Revision Activity</p>
<p>08/08 TH</p>	<p>FINALS – Paper is due 7:00 p.m.</p>	<p>Final Paper</p>