ENGLISH 320: MEDIEVAL BRITISH LITERATURE  
(Spring 2004)

CSUB Antelope Valley Campus  
CRN: 20650  
Section Number: 201  
Class Time: Tuesday and Thursday 6 pm – 8:05 pm (Time Block L)  
Classroom: 119  
Instructor: Charles MacQuarrie  
Office: 314  
Office Hours: Monday and Wednesday, 12 – 4 pm; and by appointment  
Phone Numbers: 952-5098  
Required texts:  
Course Packet at the Copy House  
Optional texts  
Tolkien, J.R.R. *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*.  
Vinaver, Eugene. *King Arthur and His Knights*.  
(Interesting optional text that I would have used in a more perfect world  

OVERVIEW

This is a survey of early British literature and its backgrounds. In the next couple of months we will read and talk about a sampling of some of the texts from circa 54BC/BCE to 1400 AD/CE (from *Caesar to Malory*). The prospect of such a vast undertaking might sound daunting at first, but, in fact, I’ve selected only a tiny portion of the corpus. The readings tend to be short, but there are many of them, and the amount of reading for this course is substantial.

I will give background lectures, but there will also be a good deal of class discussion and group work. You will be graded in this class, in part, for your participation in the discussions we will be having. You will also have to do quite a bit of writing. In fact, you will be required to turn in a paper every week. You will write short response papers to each of the readings and you may write one 7-10 page research paper (which may expand upon one or more of your shorter papers). I shall also be giving pop-quizzes every now and again. The quizzes are to make sure that you, attend
class regularly and have kept up with the reading, and the one page papers are to make sure that
you’ve taken the time to think about what you’ve read and are willing and able to organize your
thoughts on paper. I’ll also give you a midterm and a final. At the end of term you will turn in a
portfolio of all your assignments, as I outline below. You will also be required to commit one short
passage of your choice to memory for the midterm and one for the final.

Grading:
Midterm exam 20% or 25%
Final exam 40% or 50%
Portfolio, Analysis papers, quizzes, and participation 20% or 25%
Optional Final Paper (5-6 pages MLA style) 20% or 0%
This paper should be an expansion on one of your analysis papers. It will involve some
research, should include at least one interesting footnote, and must include a bibliography of
at least seven books and/or essays. At least five of the entries must be annotated. If you
haven’t constructed an annotated bibliography before, or have questions please be sure to
ask me and/or to review these web sites:
http://www.library.cornell.edu/okuref/research/skill28.htm#what

Analysis Papers:
Every week, on or before our Tuesday meeting, you will e-mail to me and bring to class a 1-2
page MLA style paper in which you analyze a passage from the weekly reading. You should
include the short passage you are analyzing in block quotes at the beginning of the paper. Make
sure to be as detailed in your analysis as time and space permit. You may talk about the poetics as
well as the meaning of the passages, and you can muse literately and charmingly and
imaginatively about the passage in question (à la Jorge Louis Borges). Each paper should include
one interesting footnote (yes, this does violate MLA style – but I love footnotes). I will grade
these papers credit/no credit.

Portfolios
Your writing portfolio will be due on the final day of class. It must include:
1. Table of contents providing page numbers and headings.
2. All of the written assignments IN ORDER. At least 7 1-2 page analysis papers in all.
3. In-class writing, take-home papers, midterm, and, if you choose to write it, your final paper.
4. The lines that you memorized for the class, typed out, with a one to three paragraph
description of its main features and a discussion of why you chose to memorize those lines,
etc.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

The purpose of English 320 is to survey texts that are central to the understanding of medieval
British literature exclusive of Chaucer. Most of the readings will be in translation. At the end of
the term, successful students will have insight into a literary world very different from that of
the twentieth century. They will be aware of some significant thoughts of the medieval mind and will
be able to discuss the influence of such thoughts on the writing of the period. Such analysis should
invite students to re-evaluate their own reading and writing processes.
Reading Schedule (tentative)

PRE-ANGLO-SAXON BRITAIN

March (Mars) and April (Venus) http://www.logofiles.com/april-history.html

Week 1 30  Tua’s Day http://www.crowl.org/Lawrence/time/days.html
  Introduction. Manuscript tradition. Languages and paleography.
  1  Thor’s Day  Classical background I
      (Coursepack, 1-25. Beware Caesar – his pages aren’t in proper order. I’m not
      praising or blaming him. Brutus is to blame no doubt.)

Week 2 6  T  Classical background II and Early Medieval Continental Background
     (Coursepack 26-67)
  8  Th  Celtic background (Coursepack 68-117)

ANGLO-SAXON AND NORSE BRITAIN

Week 3 13  T  Germanic background (Coursepack 118-147)
  15  Th  Germanic/French background (Coursepack 148-76)

Week 4 20  T  Anglo-Saxon Verse I (Coursepack 177-206 and Crossley-Holland
     Poems: Durham, Brunanburgh, Wife’s Lament, Husband’s Message,
     Wulf and Eadwacer
  22  Th  Anglo Saxon Verse II
     Poems: Deor, Judith, Dream of the Rood, Wanderer, Seafarer

Week 5 27  T  Beowulf (parts 1 and 2 – Grendel and Grendel’s mother(Crossley-
     Holland)
  29  Th  Beowulf (part 3 – The Dragon)

May

Week 6 4  T  Midterm  (20% or 25% of course grade)
  6  Th  (Dunn and Byrne pp. 3-45)

ANGLO-NORMAN AND MIDDLE ENGLISH BRITAIN

Week 7 11  T  Medieval Mystery Plays “Noah’s Flood,” “Cain and Abel,”
     “Abraham and Isaac,” “The Second Shepherd’s Pageant,” and
     “Harrowing of Hell” (Web page listed in Coursepack p. 242)
  13  Th  Performances of Mystery plays (read ahead into Margery Kemp)

Week 8 18  T  Margery Kemp and Julian of Norwich (Coursepack 243-96)
20  Th  *Piers Plowman*: (Dunn and Byrnes 277-285) The Bible and translation (Dunn and Byrnes 485-91) “The Dance of the Seven Deadly Sins” (Dunn and Byrnes 543-6)

**ARTHURIANA**

Week 9  25  T  Arthuriana: Gildas, “Nennius” etc (Coursepack 253-69)
27  Th  Arthuriana II: Geoffrey, Chretian, Marie de France (Coursepack 270-310)

**June**

Week 10  1  T  Arthuriana III: La3man (Coursepack 329-34 and Dunn &Byrne 49-53) *Sir Orfeo* (Dunn and Byrnes 216 – a move back to classical reference)
3  Th  Malory (Coursepack 311-28)

Week 11  8  **Final Exam** (40% or 50% of course grade)

**WAITING LIST POLICY:**

On a waiting list, you are eligible for a place in the class
1. if you come to every class and
2. if you turn in the work while you are there

Being on a waiting list does not mean you are guaranteed a place in the class. It simply means you are welcome to wait for an opening in the class if you desire. If no one drops out of the section you’re attending, no students can add.

As a result, you should be aware of the last day to add and have a back-up class chosen if you need another class. This plan is especially important for financial aid recipients, who must carry a full load to receive their financial aid. *Being on a waiting list does not count as a class toward your full load.*

**Instructor-Initiated Drop Policy:**

This course is subject to the policy on instructor initiated drops. If the class is full and has a waiting list, I have the right to have you administratively dropped from the class by the end of the second week of the term if you have missed three consecutive class session during the first week of the term and have not contacted me with alternate plans. However, you should not assume that you will be automatically dropped from the course due to non-attendance.

Please access the English Majors handbook for departmental grading standards and other useful information: [http://www.csub.edu/english/eng200folder/english200.htm](http://www.csub.edu/english/eng200folder/english200.htm)
### Spring Quarter, 2004

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Feb 02 - 13</strong></td>
<td><strong>Academic Advising for Continuing Students (for Spring Quarter)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Feb 09 - 20</td>
<td><strong>Registration for Continuing Students (for Spring Quarter)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>March 22</td>
<td><strong>Late Registration Begins (for Spring Quarter) ($25 fee)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>March 26</td>
<td><strong>Orientation and Advising for Antelope Valley Students (for Spring Quarter)</strong></td>
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<td>March 26</td>
<td><strong>Orientation and Advising for All Students (for Spring Quarter)</strong></td>
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<td>March 29</td>
<td><strong>ALL FACULTY DUE ON CAMPUS</strong></td>
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<td>March 31</td>
<td><strong>HOLIDAY - Cesar Chavez Day – Campus Closed</strong></td>
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<td>April 03</td>
<td><strong>Transfer Day Orientation</strong></td>
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<td>April 04</td>
<td><strong>Palm Sunday – Christian Holy Day</strong></td>
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<td>April 05</td>
<td><strong>Last day to Add classes</strong></td>
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<td>April 05</td>
<td><strong>Last day to change between audit and letter grading</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>April 05</td>
<td><strong>Last day of Late Registration (for Spring Quarter)</strong></td>
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<td>April 05</td>
<td><strong>Passover – Jewish Holy Day</strong></td>
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<td>April 09</td>
<td><strong>Last day to apply for June Commencement</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>April 09</td>
<td><strong>Good Friday – Christian Holy Day</strong></td>
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<td>April 11</td>
<td><strong>Easter – Christian Holy Day</strong></td>
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<td>April 19</td>
<td><strong>Census Day</strong></td>
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<td>April 19</td>
<td><strong>Last day to change between credit/no-credit and letter grading</strong></td>
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<td>April 19</td>
<td><strong>Last day to withdraw from classes without a “W” being recorded; withdrawals from classes after this date and continuing through the next four-week period will be permitted only for serious and compelling reasons and require written approval by the dean or department chair</strong></td>
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<td>April 24</td>
<td><strong>Freshman Day Orientation</strong></td>
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<td>May 03 - 07</td>
<td><strong>Registration for Continuing Students (for Summer Quarter)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>May 03 - 14</td>
<td><strong>Academic Advising for Continuing Students (for Fall &amp; Summer Quarters)</strong></td>
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<td>May 05</td>
<td><strong>Campus-wide Emergency Evacuation Day</strong></td>
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<td>May 08</td>
<td><strong>Orientation and Advising for All Students (for Fall &amp; Summer Quarters)</strong></td>
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<td>May 08</td>
<td><strong>Orientation and Advising for Antelope Valley Students (for Fall &amp; Summer Quarters)</strong></td>
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<td>May 10 - Aug 06</td>
<td><strong>Registration for Continuing Students (for Fall Quarter)</strong></td>
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<td>May 17</td>
<td><strong>Last day to withdraw from classes for a serious and compelling reason</strong></td>
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<td>May 24 - 28</td>
<td><strong>SOCI Week</strong></td>
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<td>May 31</td>
<td><strong>HOLIDAY - Memorial Day – Campus Closed</strong></td>
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<td>June 07</td>
<td><strong>Last Day of Classes</strong></td>
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<td>June 07</td>
<td><strong>Last day for completion of work by Master’s Candidates to graduate in June</strong></td>
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<td>June 07</td>
<td><strong>Last day to submit completed Master’s Thesis to Graduate Studies and Research</strong></td>
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<td>June 07</td>
<td><strong>Late Registration Begins (for Summer Quarter) ($25 fee)</strong> omitted Study / Reading Day</td>
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<td>Jun 08 - 11</td>
<td><strong>Examination Period</strong></td>
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<td>Jun 11 - 12</td>
<td><strong>Commencement</strong></td>
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<td>June 14</td>
<td><strong>GRADES DUE</strong></td>
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