

Medieval Fantasies

ENGL 360:
Literature of the Middle Ages

MWF, 12:30-1:20

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From the *Vikings* TV series to *The Lord of the Rings* franchise, the medieval period exerts a powerful hold on American popular imagination. But how similar are these contemporary works to the literature and art from the period itself? Can our preferred fictions help us understand medieval life or are they merely make-believe? What is the difference between historically inflected works of fantasy and self-serving fantasies about history?

This class will include readings in both medieval literature and medievalist recreation. For the former, we will read examples of several important medieval genres: romance, history, fable, and revelation. For the latter, we'll look at works of young adult literature, fantasy, historical fiction, and film. We will think about the ways in which the "Middle Ages," far from being over a long time ago, continue to inhabit our current social discourses about love, politics, nature, identity, and religious belief.

Texts

Robyn Cadwallader, *The Anchoress*
Chretien de Troyes, *Arthurian Romances*
Geoffrey of Monmouth, *History of the Kings of Britain*
Terry Gilliam, dir., *Monty Python and the Holy Grail*
Kazuo Ishiguro, *The Buried Giant*
Julian of Norwich, *Revelations of Divine Love*
C.S. Lewis, *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*
The Mabinogion

Leslie Megahey, dir., *The Advocate*
Marie de France, *The Lais of Marie de France*
Sir Gawain and the Green Knight