

ENGL 360: Literature of the Middle Ages

TuTh 1:00-2:15

Prof. Farina

Medieval literature is weird, fun, and – as the members of Monty Python realized – often very funny. But it also affords a view of how people in the past used writing to address issues that are resonant today, including maintaining communities, negotiating gender identities, assessing the human cost of war, and understanding a changing climate. We’ll read work in a variety of medieval genres (including romance, dream vision, history, travel literature, drama, and life-writing) to get a broad understanding of the relation of literary forms to social debates in the “Middle” Ages (1000-1500 CE). While some of the readings will be translated into modern English, you’ll also learn how to read Middle English, so you can appreciate the intricacies of medieval texts in their original language.

Possible texts include:

The *Tain Bo Culaigne*, Geoffrey of Monmouth’s *History of the Kings of Britain*, Marie de France’s *Lais*, The *Mabinogion*, *Gawain and the Green Knight*, Langland’s *Piers Plowman*, Chaucer’s *Troilus and Criseyde*, Mandeville’s *Travels*, *Mankynd*, and maybe just a bit of Monty Python



A medieval meme: snail combat.