

## **HIST 294-05: Knights in Shining Armor: Chivalry, Violence, and Courtly Culture**

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MWF 12-1pm

Main 002

The figure of the medieval knight in shining armor remains one of the enduring images of the Middle Ages. Aboard his noble steed, he dashes fearlessly into battle, clutching shield and sword, his coat of arms brilliant in the sunlight, a turreted castle in the background. Or perhaps he is rescuing a fair maiden from danger, or riding through the forest in search of adventure, or reciting poetry for his beloved. This romantic picture only tells part of the story, of course. Knights were violent men who engaged in violent pursuits. Indeed, they celebrated that violence, enshrining it in their code of chivalry under the name “prowess,” even as they also cultivated the genteel manners of courtliness and professed their Christian faith. In this course, we will explore chivalry and courtliness, the lives and attitudes of knights, reforming efforts from within and outside knighthood, the role of religion, and the effects of gender as we seek to understand the interrelationship of chivalry, violence, and courtly culture.

### **Required readings**

Geoffroi de Charny, *A Knight's Own Book of Chivalry: Geoffroi de Charny* (Penn Press, 2005)

Chrétien de Troyes, *Arthurian Romances* (Penguin edition)

Richard Barber, Juliet R.V. Barker, *Tournaments: Jousts, Chivalry and Pageants in the Middle Ages* (Boydell, 1989; 2000)

Jean Froissart, *Chronicles* (Penguin edition)

Thomas Asbridge, *The Greatest Knight in the World* (HarperCollins, 2014)

Other readings will be available on the course Moodle site and through library reserves.

### **Assignments and grading**

Participation 25%

Short essays 40%

Research paper 35%

- Thesis statement, outline, and annotated bib 5%
- Peer-revised draft with revision memo 10%
- Presentation 5%
- Final draft with revision memo 15%

### *Participation*

This class will work best when everyone comes to class prepared to engage with the materials at hand. Therefore, you are expected to take an active part in all class discussions and activities, which may include in-class informal writing. You will need to complete the assigned readings and reflect on them before arriving in class. Bring all relevant readings with you to class each day, either in hard copy or electronically. You are allowed one unexcused absence; sleeping in class counts as an absence.

### *Short essays*

There will be six opportunities for short essays throughout the semester. You will write a total of four (4) essays of 3-4 pages, each worth 10% of your final grade. The last one of the semester is required for everyone, but you have your choice of the other three. You will write in response to prompts that I will provide, which may ask you, for example, to respond to the argument of a scholarly work, analyze a primary source, address a primary and scholarly source together, or discuss a reading in light of previous class discussions.

### *Research paper*

This is your opportunity to hone in on a topic that excites you within the purview of this course. Research projects involve a number of steps, which we will complete during the semester. The final product will be approximately 10 pages, not including the bibliography.

#### Step 1: Pick a topic

During the week of 12 October, you will meet with me individually, outside of class, to select a research topic and identify some sources to use. I will provide a sign-up sheet via Moodle. Without this step, you cannot proceed with the paper.

#### Step 2: Thesis statement, outline, and annotated bibliography

A strong argument, good sources, and a plan of attack are crucial for the success of any research paper. This assignment requires that you think about each of these things well in advance of the paper's final due date. More details will follow in a separate handout. Due date: **26 October**.

#### Step 3: Write a draft, get feedback

Writing a draft of the paper is not the end of the line; all written work benefits from revision, and that means getting feedback. This step, therefore, involves getting feedback from one of your most valuable resources: your peers. By **Monday, 9 November**, you will produce a complete first draft of your work for review by one or more of your peers. We will hold a **peer-review session on Friday, 13 November**. I will not see this initial draft at any point, but you must complete it in order to get credit for the next step. More information about this process will come in due course.

#### Step 4: Second draft, with revision memo

Based on the feedback from your peers, you will revise your first draft and submit it to me with a revision memo that explains what advice you received, what you implemented, and what you rejected (and why). This draft is **due on 22 November by 11:59pm**.

#### Step 5: Presentations

On the last day of class, you will offer a brief presentation on your project. This is your chance to show off the work you have done and get last-minute feedback. Guidelines will be forthcoming.

#### Step 6: Final draft, with revision memo

This final step repeats what you did with Step 4, but the revision memo will refer to my comments, critiques, and suggestions. It is **due on 18 December by noon**.

The standards by which I assess work in this class are as follows:

- A - Outstanding, Excellent, Awesome, etc.
- B - Significantly above requirements, i.e. Good
- C - Meets requirements
- D - Does not meet requirements, but worth of credit
- F - Work that was completed, but at an insufficient level

### **Policies**

#### *Communicating and meeting with me*

- Email is the best way to contact me. I will do my best to respond within 24 hours; it will usually be less than that, but response time might be longer on weekends or over university holidays. Do not expect an immediate response to messages sent after 6pm.
- I recommend signing up for an appointment via my Google calendar, which you can access through Moodle. This will guarantee that I can see you during my office hours. However, you may just come to my office during posted office hours, too.
- If my regular office hours will not work for you, email me or speak to me after class so that we can work out an alternate time.

#### *Technology*

- Laptops and tablets are permitted in class, but only for the purposes of accessing course readings and taking notes. Phones, iPods, and other personal electronics are prohibited.
  - If I find that you are using your tech to check email, Facebook, ESPN, etc., your tech privileges will be revoked for the remainder of the semester.
- All assignments will be submitted electronically through Moodle, except when specifically noted. Do not email your work directly to me unless Moodle crashes.

### *Late work*

- I will not accept any of the short essays late.
- I will accept late work on the research paper, but each day overdue will result in a reduction of the assignment's grade by 1/3. That means a B paper would become a B- if turned in during the first 24 hours following the due date, and so on.
- Emergencies do come up, so if you have a legitimate reason for missing a due date, tell me *before* the deadline. Email is the best way to reach me.

### *Formatting your written work*

- All papers must be written in 12-point Times New Roman, double spaced, with 1" margins. Page numbers are required.
- Files must be submitted as **.doc or .docx** file-types.
- Cite your sources, and do so using **footnotes** (not endnotes) following Chicago Manual of Style guidelines.

### *Plagiarism*

Plagiarism is strictly prohibited, and failure to abide by the standards of academic integrity will result in serious consequences that could include failure of the assignment, failure of the course, suspension, or expulsion. If you have questions about plagiarism, please talk to me. Refer to Macalester's guidelines and procedures on academic integrity at <http://www.macalester.edu/academicprograms/academicpolicies/academicintegrity/>.

### **Statement on disabilities**

Macalester seeks to create a welcoming environment in which all students can reach their academic potential and have equal access to academic opportunities and co-curricular activities. Under the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, individuals with disabilities are protected from discrimination and assured services. The College is committed to responding in in a flexible manner to the individual needs of all members of the Macalester community with appropriate documentation.

Accommodations are made upon the approval of the Associate Dean of Students, Robin Hart Ruthenbeck, who is the designated coordinator of services for students with disabilities at Macalester. Any student who is interested in requesting services should contact the Office of Student Affairs (651-696-6220 or [studentaffairs@macalester.edu](mailto:studentaffairs@macalester.edu)) early in the semester to schedule an accommodations meeting. For more information, see the Disability Services page at <http://www.macalester.edu/studentaffairs/disabilityservices/>.

**N.B.: This syllabus is subject to revision** during the semester. Any changes to assignments, readings, or topics will be communicated during class and via email, and will be reflected on Moodle, no less than 1 week prior to the change in question.

## Schedule

Week 1: Introduction to the subject

Week 2: Chivalry's history

Week 3: Exploring masculinity

Week 4: Sketching chivalry

Week 5: Sketching chivalry; Ambivalences of chivalry; Chivalry and courtliness

Week 6: Chivalry and courtliness; Tournaments and war

Week 7: Tournaments and war

Week 8: Tournaments and war; Fall Break

Week 9: Knightly piety; Crusading and the military orders

Week 10: Reforming chivalry

Week 11: Reforming chivalry

Week 12: Reforming chivalry

Week 13: Catch-up; Thanksgiving Break

Week 14: Chivalry's others

Week 15: Decline of chivalry?; Chivalry's legacies