



English 210
Literature of the Middle Ages – Dr Wrisley
Final Exam paper

The due date for this assignment will be *Saturday, June 4th* at 3pm firm.

Please submit your paper to www.turnitin.com in the folder marked "Final Paper." Late papers will lead to a penalty on the grade. Remember that if you choose to write the final paper, your grade on it will amount to 40% of your semester grade. This paper must be taken seriously.

This paper should be 8-10 pages long (12 point font, double spaced, regular margins). You can write more if you like although it will not automatically raise your grade. Quality counts. Especially since it is a final exam, my policy on plagiarism will be strictly enforced!

I welcome paper topics that you come up with yourself. I have also listed three possible topics below.

Please follow these steps if you will write the paper:

- (1) Please discuss any personalized paper topics with me by office hours 2-3pm on Fri, May 27th.
- (2) Please compose a one-page abstract of your paper and email it to me by Fri, May 27th at the end of the day. If your final paper changes, I expect you to let me know several days in advance (and/or produce the drafts and notes leading up to your paper). If I do not get an abstract from you, I will expect you to take the exam.
- (3) Please discuss at least two of the authors from the course, at most, three.
- (4) Please, the paper must be organized, clear and demonstrate independent, original thinking on the subject. It must go beyond what we have said in class.
- (5) Any references to the text should be given in endnote format (e.g. "As the reader can easily tell by the numerous references to pink birds in *The Phoenix*, the author must have had extensive familiarity with aviary treatises of the middle ages (*Phoenix*, lines xxx, yyy, zzz)". References given to secondary works must be given in footnote format.
- (6) Please give your *own opinions* in this paper (and give lots of them.)
- (7) Avoid making generalizations about "medieval society".
- (8) Please read it through for the quality and clarity of the English.
- (9) If you would like me to read a draft and make any comments, the draft must be received by Wednesday, June 1st. We can make an appointment to discuss it in person.

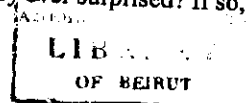
While I am flexible about the format of an 8-10 page paper, there should be some kind of **comparison and contrast** that relates the two texts to the topic of your choice. Please refrain from writing about texts which you have already written about in this class. **DO NOT ANSWER THE SUBQUESTIONS HERE. USE THEM FOR THINKING ABOUT THE SUBJECT ONLY.**

POSSIBLE TOPICS:

A Different images of the Orient. We have read about many images of the Orient this semester, most of which are fantastic. What are some of them? What symbolic and narrative function(s) do they have in the larger narratives? What does the East have that seems special to these authors? Why would an author from Western Europe be interested in describing the East? What is significant about the stories taking place in the East? Where do the authors draw the line between self and other?

(The Phoenix, Wonders of the East, Judith, Apollonius of Tyre, John Mandeville, Squire's Tale, Legend of Good Women)

B Forms of Quest. Many of the texts we read this semester portray characters as going on a quest (travel, wandering, pilgrimage). What is the nature of the quest? Obligation? Religion? Honor? Society? Are such purposes ever mixed? What do the characters hope to achieve out of that quest? Are their expectations met? Do they learn anything at all? Are they ever surprised? If so, how?



(The Wanderer, Beowulf, Judith, Bisclavret, History of the Kings of Britain, Sir Gawain, John Mandeville, Wife of Bath's Tale)

C. Marvelous occurrences. Medieval literature is full of supernatural occurrences. What kinds of marvels do the texts portray? What is the function of marvels: ornament, allegory, moralizing? What fascinates the characters? How do you think an audience could have been fascinated by these texts? Are marvels dangerous? Entertaining? How does the narration help or undercut encounters with the marvelous?

(The Phoenix, The Dream of the Rood, Beowulf, Wonders of the East, Bisclavret, Yonec, Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, John Mandeville, Squire's Tale)

In this final paper, you will be graded primarily on your

- the clarity of your writing in English
- your attention to detail in the readings
- the organization of your paper
- the original insights you bring to the discussion of the two works
- the significance and depth of what you say

Grades will be given on a 100 point scale.

