

Fall 2017
ENGLISH 4610-101
INDIVIDUAL AUTHORS: J.R.R. TOLKIEN
 MWF 12:00-12:50 PM
 Cudahy Hall 108

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This decade has seen the hundredth anniversary of J.R.R. Tolkien's earliest writings on Middle-Earth (*The Book of Lost Tales*, begun in 1917) alongside the completion of Peter Jackson's career-defining twenty-year project to adapt *The Lord of the Rings* for film (1995-2015). This course asks the question: Who is J.R.R. Tolkien, looking backward from the perspective of the twenty-first century? Why have his works, and the genre of heroic fantasy which he remade so completely in his image, remained so intensely popular, even as the world has transformed around them? Our study will primarily trace the history, development, and reception of Tolkien's incredible magnum opus, *The Lord of the Rings* (written 1937-1949, published 1954-1956)—but we will also take up Tolkien's contested place in the literary canon of the twentieth century, the uses and abuses of Tolkien in Jackson's blockbuster films, the special appeal of Tolkien in politically troubled times, and the ongoing critical interests and investments of Tolkien fandom today. As Tolkien scholars we will also have the privilege of drawing upon the remarkable J.R.R. Tolkien Collection at Raynor Library, which contains the original manuscripts for *The Hobbit*, *The Lord of the Rings*, and *Farmer Giles of Ham*.

Note: No prior knowledge of Tolkien is required. The course is designed for a mix of first-time readers, frequent re-readers, and people who are returning to the books for the first time as adults after many years away.

LEARNING GOALS

At the completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Demonstrate understanding of the cultural, historical, political, and philosophical contexts in which Tolkien wrote;
- Identify and understand various formal characteristics both of the Tolkien legendarium and of contemporary fantasy literature more generally;
- Apply techniques of critical analysis as appropriate to diverse literary forms, genres, and media;
- Participate and intervene in contemporary debates over Tolkien's works and his literary/cultural legacy;
- Use literary and cultural study to develop skills for careful reading and clear writing;
- Read and discuss a variety of literary and nonliterary texts on the levels of both form and content.

REQUIRED TEXTS (available at the BookMarq on 16th Street)*The Hobbit* (1937)*The Lord of the Rings* (1954-1956)*The Silmarillion* (1977)

Note: Any published edition of these texts will do.

Additional readings and course materials will occasionally be made available via D2L.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Attendance, Participation, Possible Quizzes	20%
Discussion Inaugurator	5%
D2L Forum	20%
Final Paper (10-12 pages expected)	
▪ Prospectus and Prospectus Workshop	10%
▪ Abstract	5%
▪ Final Paper	40%

A detailed description of the final paper is available on the last page of this syllabus.

Grad students will have slightly different expectations; we can discuss this one-on-one.

GRADING

Grades will follow the following rubric:

* To earn a **C**, you must clearly restate the meaning or project of a text in your own terms. A C essay may volunteer an original argument, but will likely lack evidence or analysis of its sources. C essays are clearly written, though they might display some grammatical weakness.

* To earn a **B**, you must begin to raise important questions about the text under consideration and to use those questions to drive your own interpretive agenda. A B essay typically advances an original argument and provides solid analysis of the text(s) under consideration. B essays are clear, concise, and free of grammatical errors.

* To earn an **A**, you must construct an essay that does more than simply comment on the work of others; you must forward, counter, or transform what they have to say. An A essay advances an original argument that builds toward a climax and makes a persuasive case for its own significance. A essays are clearly written, and often eloquent.

* A **D** means that you have not written in clear prose or that you seem to have deeply misunderstood the text. An **F** means that you did not fully or seriously engage the assignment.

* **A-, B+, B-, C+ (and so on) grades** fall in the gaps between the above categories.

QUIZZES

I do not like to give reading quizzes; I think they infantilize the college-level scholar. However, this is by necessity a very reading-intensive class; if it seems to me that people are not keeping up with the reading, pop quizzes may become necessary despite my philosophical objections. You have been warned.

FORMAT OF WRITTEN WORK

Your final paper should be typed in twelve-point font, double-spaced with one-inch margins, saved in a format Microsoft Word can open. Your filename should contain *your name* in it, for example, yourlastname-finalpaper.docx.

I expect you to *edit* and *proofread* all written work, even forum comments. Drafts that contain excessive typos or grammar mistakes may be returned to the author for correction before I offer comments.

Please give your final paper an original title, and include your name, assignment, and due date in a header on the first page.

All sources relied upon for the writing of your paper, including the primary text, must be appropriately cited.

PAPER SUBMISSION

The final paper should be submitted via D2L's Dropbox by class time on the due date, Friday, December 15, by 5 PM. **Because this is a final exam, late final papers cannot be accepted.**

Your other written work (which will primarily take the form of forum posts) will be posted on the D2L forums. These papers will have flexible due dates driven by your own interests and responses. **It is thus your responsibility to make sure you are properly keeping up with this portion of the course in a timely fashion.**

Except in very unusual circumstances, work will not be accepted by email.

TECHNOLOGY IS TERRIBLE: PLAN AHEAD!

The Internet goes down. Files become corrupted. Computers crash. These are predictable facts of twenty-first century life, not emergencies. For this course, for all your courses, for the rest of your career and your life in this world you need to develop work habits and strategies that take into account the basic, inescapable unreliability of computers. Start your assignments well in advance of the due date; save them often; save backup copies of essential documents, including copies off-site using a service like Carbonite, Dropbox, or Google Drive.

ATTENDANCE AND CLASS PARTICIPATION

Class discussion is an essential component of this seminar; class discussion, not lecture, will be the primary means by which we will investigate these texts together. It is crucial

that you come to class every day having read the required material and prepared to discuss it.

Consequently, attendance in this class is mandatory. You should plan on attending every class. Please talk to me (in advance if possible) if you ever find you will need to miss a class meeting.

The course adheres to Marquette University's attendance policy, which can be found on the Internet at <http://bulletin.marquette.edu/undergrad/academicregulations/#attendance>.

You are allowed **three unexcused absences** over the course of the fall semester. **After that, your class participation will drop by half a letter grade for each additional unexcused absence.** Upon the seventh unexcused absence, you may receive a WA (Withdrawn—Excessive Absences) for the semester.

Merely being present in class is insufficient for an “A” in class participation. Each student is expected to *participate in* and *contribute to* our discussions. Just being in the room is not enough.

DISCUSSION INAUGURATOR

Beginning with Week 3, each member of the class will have one day in which they are expected to inaugurate our discussion based on the readings for that day. The requirements for this are necessarily very loose, as each day of the course will have a very different type of text to be discussed; in general, however, the discussion inaugurator will be asked to (1) succinctly describe the project of this part of the text; (2) articulate a brief critical response to the material; and (3) direct our collective attention to one or two problems in, questions about, or particularly important moments in the text. I expect this introductory role to take approximately five minutes.

A signup sheet for this role will be distributed in class next week.

D2L DISCUSSION FORUMS

This course will make extensive use of the forums on D2L, where you can express your response to the material before class begins and where we can continue our discussions after class is over.

The forums are an excellent place for people who may feel inhibited by in-class discussion to share their opinions with the class. I will be reading it before every meeting of the course and I ask you do the same. You may choose either to begin a discussion thread on a new topic or to respond to a post composed by one of your classmates.

Before class on Friday, September 8, every student is required to upload a picture of their face to their D2L profile and respond to at least one of the texts we have discussed thus far.

After that, students must write **seven short comments (approximately 250-400 words that move beyond plot summary)** responding to any of the texts across the remainder of the course. This is approximately one post every other week. Post your comment in the open thread for that day of class. These comments should ideally be completed either by 10 AM before one of the class discussions devoted to that text or by 10 AM the night before the following class. Roughly half of the posts should be completed before Fall Break.

I encourage you to think of your blog comments as possible “seeds” for the final paper; feel free to begin to develop your thoughts there.

You are also highly encouraged to kill two birds with one stone by posting a forum comment on the day you are scheduled to be the discussion inaugurator.

The forums will also be used as a place for us to workshop your final paper prospectuses, as well as to post a paragraph-long abstract for your final paper once it is completed. These comments do not count as part of the eight total posts.

Additional posts and comments, and comments that substantively engage other students’ arguments, will be looked upon very favorably when I calculate your final grade.

EMAIL

Students in this class are required to check their official Marquette email account—whatever account D2L sends its emails to—at least once a day, in case there are any last-minute announcements or disruptions.

I endeavor to respond to all emails within 24 hours, usually much less—but please do not send me urgent emails regarding your assignments on the night before they are due and expect an immediate reply.

LAPTOP POLICY

In-class use of laptops, Kindles, iPads, etc. is permitted for access to electronic versions of our texts and for notetaking. However, students *must* refrain from non-class-related computer use, including email, instant messaging, Facebook, Twitter, and the like. **Please do not abuse this privilege or distract your fellow students.** I reserve the right to ban individual technological devices if this becomes a problem. Except in unusual cases of personal emergency, cleared with me at the start of class, no use of cell phones will be permitted during class time; please turn off your ringers and put them out of sight.

CONFERENCES

All students are asked to meet with me in a short one-on-one conference at my office at least once during the semester to discuss the course and your work within it.

Please know I am very happy to meet with you individually to discuss work-in-progress in excess of this requirement, as many times as you like. Simply come to my weekly office hours, or see or email me to set up an appointment.

FLEXIBILITY

If it will benefit the class, changes may be made to the above.

WRITING CENTER

Students are strongly encouraged to make use of the Writing Center, located in Raynor Library Room 240, at any stage of the writing process. Please visit the Writing Center website at <http://www.marquette.edu/english/writingcenter/> to find out how to schedule an appointment and to access the studio's online resources.

ACCOMODATIONS

Students with disabilities who believe they may require accommodations in this course should contact me early in the semester so your learning needs can be appropriately met.

I am of course more than happy to work with you to make sure you are successful in this course and to make this course most accessible for you. However, without documentation, I am limited in what I am able to do. Therefore, in order for me to help you most effectively, I need you to be proactive in contacting Marquette University's Office of Disability Services (located on the fifth floor of the 707 Building).

ODS can be reached by phone at (414) 288-1645 or by email at ods@marquette.edu.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

Students are expected to abide by the academic honesty policy outlined in your undergraduate bulletin. I urge you all to examine this material and consult me with any questions you may have about plagiarism or academic integrity *before* it becomes an issue.

Ignorance of what constitutes plagiarism is not an acceptable excuse for plagiarism. **Academic dishonesty of any kind will not be tolerated and will result in a failing grade for the course.** No exceptions or special dispensations will be made.

Marquette students now sign an Honor Pledge, which states:

- *I recognize the importance of personal integrity in all aspects of life and work.*
- *I commit myself to truthfulness, honor, and responsibility, by which I earn the respect of others.*
- *I support the development of good character, and commit myself to uphold the highest standards of academic integrity as an important aspect of personal integrity.*
- *My commitment obliges me to conduct myself according to the Marquette University Honor Code.*

Full details of Marquette's academic integrity policy are available on the Internet at <http://www.marquette.edu/provost/academic-integrity.php>.

On a personal level, I (like everyone) hate being lied to. Please, do not feel you need to concoct elaborate stories. Simply be honest with me about whatever is going on and we will work it out.

ACADEMIC FREEDOM

We all enter this classroom with preexisting political, ethical, philosophical, and intellectual commitments. You are all required to engage the material—but you are absolutely *not* required to agree either with any of the writers we will discuss, or with me, in whole or in part.

RESPECT

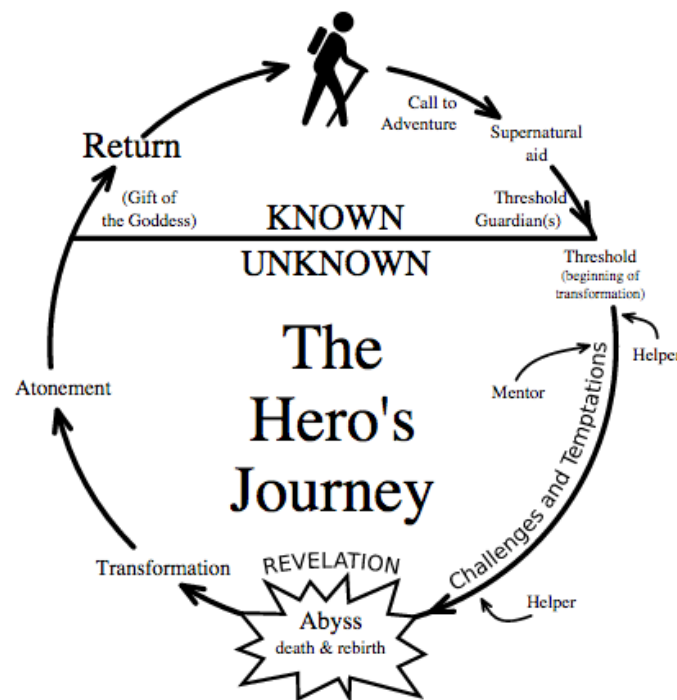
This classroom is a community. It is crucial that we treat each other with the appropriate level of courtesy and respect. No one should be made to feel unwelcome here.

Failure to treat other students with the respect they deserve will **severely** negatively impact your class participation grade.

A NOTE ON SUSPENSE

As noted at the top of the syllabus, absolutely no prior knowledge of or familiarity with Tolkien's work is required for this class.

That said, in this class we will be discussing a set of texts that, taken together, constitute the most famous prose narrative of the twentieth century, a narrative nearly everyone in this room knows (many of you quite intimately). Indeed, as we'll see from Tolkien himself in his essay "On Fairy-Stories" next week, part of the power of this narrative comes precisely in the fact that you know its broad strokes already.



So it would be somewhat silly of us to attempt to enforce any sort of ironclad “no spoilers!” policy within our discussions.

At the same time, the bulk of the legendarium is constructed *as a narrative*—which necessarily includes, among other things, story pacing, character development, and the generation of suspense—and needs to be considered in those terms.

My vision therefore is that **we will endeavor to stick to the material assigned to a given day** with an understanding that, as scholars and critics, **it will occasionally behoove us to jump ahead in the story and *briefly* consider how our understanding of what we are reading might be challenged or transformed by later events we haven’t seen yet.**

If you are someone who is encountering this material for the first time or for the first time in a long while and this idea makes you nervous or uncomfortable—or if you ever begin to feel lost in our discussions—please feel free to let me know, up to and including interrupting me during class.

I MEAN THAT

I want this class to be a meaningful and valuable experience for you. If you have any concerns about the way things are going, my door is always open.

PRELIMINARY SCHEDULE

Any changes to this schedule will be announced in class as they become necessary.

Students should come to class prepared to discuss the listed texts or chapters.

GENERAL COURSE PLAN

WEEKS 1-2: TOLKIEN’S CREATIVE PROJECT

WEEKS 3-4: *THE HOBBIT*

WEEKS 5-7: *THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE RING*

WEEKS 8-9: *THE TWO TOWERS*

WEEKS 10-12: *THE RETURN OF THE KING*

WEEKS 13-15: *THE SILMARILLION*

DAY-BY-DAY SCHEDULE

M	Aug. 28	FIRST DAY OF CLASS
W	Aug. 30	J.R.R. Tolkien, “On Fairy-Stories” [D2L]
F	Sep. 1	J.R.R. Tolkien, “Leaf by Niggle” [D2L]
M	Sep. 4	LABOR DAY HOLIDAY—NO CLASS
W	Sep. 6	Brian Attebery, “Is Fantasy Literature? Tolkien and the Theorists”
F	Sep. 8	Guest: Brian Kenna on Tolkien’s biography and war service

M	Sep. 11	<i>The Hobbit</i> , chapters 1-4
W	Sep. 13	<i>The Hobbit</i> , chapters 5-6 original “Riddles in the Dark” chapter (D2L)
F	Sep. 15	<i>The Hobbit</i> , chapters 7-9
M	Sep. 18	<i>The Hobbit</i> , chapters 10-14 J.R.R. Tolkien, “Letter 52”
W	Sep. 20	<i>The Hobbit</i> , chapters 15-19
F	Sep. 22	<i>The Hobbit</i> (whole book, plus film adaptations) J.R.R. Tolkien, “The Quest for Erebor” [D2L] John D. Rateliff, “The 1960 Hobbit” [D2L]
M	Sep. 25	<i>The Fellowship of the Ring</i> , Book One, foreword, prologue, and chapters 1-2
W	Sep. 27	<i>The Fellowship of the Ring</i> , Book One, chapters 3-5
F	Sep. 29	<i>The Fellowship of the Ring</i> , Book One, chapters 6-7 <u>Tom Bombadil</u> The Encyclopedia of Arda: “Tom Bombadil” [Web] Lord of the Rings Wiki: “Theories about Tom Bombadil” and linked pages [Web] J.R.R. Tolkien, Letters [excerpts] [D2L]
M	Oct. 2	<i>The Fellowship of the Ring</i> , Book One, chapters 8-12
W	Oct. 4	Library Day #1—Meet at Raynor Library
F	Oct. 6	<i>The Fellowship of the Ring</i> , Book Two, chapters 1-2
M	Oct. 9	<i>The Fellowship of the Ring</i> , Book Two, chapters 3-5
W	Oct. 11	<i>The Fellowship of the Ring</i> , Book Two, chapters 6-8 <u>Galadriel</u> <i>Unfinished Tales</i> : “History of Galadriel and Celeborn” [D2L] Robert Tally, “Galadriel, Witch-Queen of Lórien” [Web]
F	Oct. 13	<i>The Fellowship of the Ring</i> , Book Two, chapters 9-10 <i>The Two Towers</i> , Book Three, chapter 1
M	Oct. 16	<i>The Two Towers</i> , Book Three, chapters 2-4
W	Oct. 18	<i>The Two Towers</i> , Book Three, chapters 5-7
F	Oct. 20	MIDTERM BREAK
M	Oct. 23	<i>The Two Towers</i> , Book Three, chapters 8-11 <u>Saruman</u> J.R.R. Tolkien, <i>Unfinished Tales</i> : “Saruman” [D2L] Robert Tally, “Song of Saruman” [Web]

W	Oct. 25	<i>The Two Towers</i> , Book Four, chapters 1-4
F	Oct. 27	<i>The Two Towers</i> , Book Four, chapters 5-7 J.R.R. Tolkien, “Letter 246” [D2L]
M	Oct. 30	<i>The Two Towers</i> , Book Four, chapters 8-10 <u>Orcs</u> Robert Tally, “Let Us Now Praise Famous Orcs” [D2L] Richard K. Morgan, “The Real Fantastic Stuff” [Web] N.K. Jemisin, “The Unbearable Baggage of Orcing” [Web]
W	Nov. 1	<i>The Return of the King</i> , Book Five, chapters 1-6
F	Nov. 3	Library Day #2—Meet at Raynor Library
M	Nov. 6	<i>The Return of the King</i> , Book Five, chapters 7-10 Robin Reid, “Light (noun, 1) or Light (adjective, 14b)? Female Bodies and Femininities in <i>The Lord of the Rings</i> ”
W	Nov. 8	<i>The Return of the King</i> , Book Six, chapters 1-3 Sean Crist, “Could the Eagles Have Flown Frodo into Mordor?” and responses [Web]
F	Nov. 10	<i>The Return of the King</i> , Book Six, chapters 4-7 PROSPECTUS WORKSHOP (ONLINE)
M	Nov. 13	<i>The Return of the King</i> , Book Six, chapter 8 J.R.R. Tolkien, <i>Sauron Defeated</i> [excerpt] [D2L] Peter Jackson, <i>The Lord of the Rings</i> film trilogy
W	Nov. 15	<i>The Return of the King</i> , Book Six, chapter 9 David M. Craig, “‘Queer Lodgings’: Gender and Sexuality in <i>Lord of the Rings</i> ” Anna Smol, “‘Oh. . . oh. . . Frodo!’: Readings of Male Intimacy in <i>The Lord of the Rings</i> ”
F	Nov. 17	<i>The Return of the King</i> , appendices J.R.R. Tolkien, “The Epilogue” [D2L] J.R.R. Tolkien, “The New Shadow” [D2L]
M	Nov. 20	<i>The Silmarillion</i> : “Ainulindalë,” “Valaquenta,” and <i>Quenta Silmarillion</i> , chapters 1-5 J.R.R. Tolkien, “Letter 131” [D2L]
W	Nov. 22	THANKSGIVING—NO CLASS
F	Nov. 24	THANKSGIVING—NO CLASS
M	Nov. 27	<i>The Silmarillion</i> : <i>Quenta Silmarillion</i> , chapters 6-12 J.R.R. Tolkien, <i>Morgoth’s Ring</i> [excerpts] [D2L]
W	Nov. 29	<i>The Silmarillion</i> : <i>Quenta Silmarillion</i> , chapters 13-18
F	Dec. 1	<i>The Silmarillion</i> : <i>Quenta Silmarillion</i> , chapter 19

M	Dec. 4	<i>The Silmarillion: Quenta Silmarillion</i> , chapters 20-24 J.R.R. Tolkien, “Notes on Motives in <i>The Silmarillion</i> ” [Web]
W	Dec. 6	<i>The Silmarillion</i> : “Akallabêth”
F	Dec. 8	<i>The Silmarillion</i> : “On the Rings of Power and the Third Age” LAST DAY OF CLASS
F	Dec. 15	FINAL PAPERS DUE BY 1 PM

FOLLOW FAME: FRIENDS AND ALUMNI/AE OF MARQUETTE ENGLISH

On Facebook (page): www.facebook.com/marquettefame

On Facebook (group): www.facebook.com/groups/496438583889194

(search for “Undergraduate English at Marquette”)

On Twitter: @MarquetteFAME

I will also be inviting you to events in the pop culture and pizza series I run periodically during the fall and spring semesters. I hope you can attend!

ENTRANCE SURVEY**NAME****YEAR****MAJOR****HOMETOWN****MY FAVORITE TEXT THAT ISN'T BY J.R.R. TOLKIEN:****MY FAVORITE GENRE THAT ISN'T HIGH FANTASY:**

I HAVE READ *THE HOBBIT*:

YES NO

I HAVE READ *THE LORD OF THE RINGS*:

YES NO

I HAVE READ *THE SILMARILLION*:

YES NO

I HAVE READ ANY OR ALL OF THESE MORE THAN ONCE:

YES NO

I HAVE READ ANY OR ALL OF THESE SINCE I WAS A KID:

YES NO

I'VE SEEN AT LEAST SOME OF THE PETER JACKSON MOVIES:

YES NO

I'VE SEEN ALL THE PETER JACKSON MOVIES:

YES NO

I'VE SEEN ALL THE PETER JACKSON MOVIES MULTIPLE TIMES:

YES NO