

**ENGL 307: The Arthurian Tradition**  
**Fall 2013**  
**Critical Paper**

Since this is a course in the Arthurian tradition, the major written project in this course asks you to examine some manifestation of that global cultural tradition in literature, art, music, or film. This paper is due on **Wednesday November 20 in class, and must be submitted to Turnitin.com by that time in order to be graded. (I won't grade any papers not uploaded to turnitin.com).** It should be at least seven pages long (exclusive of your Works Cited page). Our Turnitin class ID is 6795118. The password is \_\_\_\_\_.

A tradition arises when subsequent consumers of a legend interpret it in their own ways for their own times and circumstances. Choose an **interpretation** of the Arthurian tradition that has engaged your interest. It can be a medieval interpretation, a modern interpretation, something in between—that's up to you. In this paper you are asked to consider the author's specific use of Arthurian sources and the interpreting work's artistic merit. In other words, you should consider how the writer makes use of the medieval materials related to Arthur and his court and then determine whether or not the author has written an effective story or work of art. In writing this paper, I would like you to reflect upon the following:

1. How does the writer's story use (or develop, change, subvert, whatever) the medieval sources? What does the author gain by altering his or her sources or including Arthurian materials in the story? (Remember that we have not read all the medieval Arthurian materials, so you may need to do some research to see what other sources, or parts of sources, these authors have adapted. For instance, Mary Stewart's *Crystal Cave* uses other parts of Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia* as well as his *Vita Merlini*. You may have to look around for a translation or edition of those materials, or for a complete text of Malory. The *Arthurian Encyclopedia* is a good place to start.)
2. How specifically does the writer use her/his source material? Don't talk in generalizations ("When White uses Malory") but instead look at specific passages ("When White adapts Malory's story of Sir Urry, he eliminates..."). I want to see you compare specific passages of the texts against each other.
3. Does the interpreting artist reach a different conclusion or provide a different outlook on the character(s) than does his or her source(s)? Is the author's use of Arthurian materials appropriate to the point s/he or she wishes to make? Why? How do cultural reasons play into those decisions? Is the adaptation a satisfying "take" on the Arthurian tradition? Why or why not?

**Paper Plan:** By Monday Oct. 21 I will ask you to upload to Turnitin a paper plan for this essay. It should include a thesis statement, a rough outline or a long paragraph of explanation as to how you see the paper proceeding, and an annotated bibliography of at least 5 scholarly sources that you may use in the writing of your paper. This bibliography must be correctly documented in 2009 MLA style.

**Specifications:** All papers must be documented following the MLA parenthetical documentation style. This is explained in the *Prentice Hall Reference Guide*, on the Purdue OWL, and in many other handbooks. You are responsible for following it. Any material taken from a source (your textbooks, something from the library, something from the Internet, etc.) must be documented correctly.

Use 12-point standard (not italic) fonts and MLA margins. Evidence that you care about your writing, such as appointment slips from the Writing Center, influences me favorably. (Yes, this is a hint.) Failure to plan or manage time wisely on your part does not constitute an emergency on my part. Because of the number of papers I'll have to read and check before the final, I cannot accept late papers for this assignment. Plan accordingly.