

CAPSTONE: Medievalisms in George R. R. Martin's *A Saga of Ice and Fire*

Dr. Jamison

Fall Semester 2018

M/W 2:30-3:45

Gamble Hall 201

Office Hours: M and W 1-2:30 and by appointment

Website: D2L

Email: cjamison@georgiasouthern.edu

Required Texts:

George R. R. Martin, *A Song of Ice and Fire* (Book One)

Eugene Vinaver, Ed. *King Arthur and His Knights*

Carol Jamison, *Chivalry in Westeros*

Recommended Texts:

Elizabeth Emory, Ed. *Medievalism: Key Critical Terms*

Maurice Keen, *Chivalry*

Course Description:

Hailed “the American Tolkien,” George R. R. Martin’s novels, and the industry based upon them, have sparked renewed interest in all things medieval. Although he is acclaimed as a great writer of fantasy, Martin is equally a writer of medievalism. The relatively new field of medievalism originated with the work of Leslie Workman, founder of the journal *Studies in Medievalism*, in the 1970s. Workman defines medievalism as “the study of scholarship which has created the Middle Ages we know, ideals and models derived from the Middle Ages, and the relations between them.” In other words, medievalism involves an engagement with the medieval past; as Workman explains in his preface to the 1996 edition of his now eminent journal, “Medievalism and medieval studies might well be defined as the Middle Ages in the contemplation of contemporary society.” It is “the continuing process of creating the Middle Ages.” The field of medievalism is especially provocative in that it offers a variety of critical lenses through which we might view not only the Middle Ages, but also, through our interpretation of them, contemporary society. Martin’s novels not only reflect the Middle Ages, but they also serve as a lens through which we can view contemporary issues. This capstone seminar will explore Martin’s contribution to the ongoing traditions of medieval literature and to the emerging field of medievalism. The course includes readings from Malory’s *Le Morte D’Arthur*; Maurice Keen’s *Chivalry*; critical readings on medievalism, especially as relating to film studies, gender studies, neo-medievalisms, and new historicism; and, of course, Martin’s novels.

In the Capstone Seminar, your primary goal is to produce and present a major research paper that represents your growth as an English major. The paper, about twenty pages in length, should be of such quality that might merit publication. You will present a short version of the paper to faculty at the end of the semester.

Attendance and participation: To succeed in this class, daily participation is essential. Students who miss more than five classes may lose one letter grade for each additional absence. This includes both excused and unexcused absences. If you are consistently late, you will be counted absent (i.e., three tardies equal one absence). Excessive absences can lead to failure in the course. Even if you must be absent, you will be responsible for turning in assignments.

Plagiarism: Violations of the Honor Code will be handled according to the procedures in the Armstrong Atlantic State University Handbook.

Evaluation:

Topic Proposals—10%

Annotated Bibliography—10%

Draft One—15%

Final Draft—30%

Presentation and Abstract—20%

Participation and responses--15%

(Participation includes daily discussions of readings, including readings from Martin's novels, which will be in addition to other readings and assignments.)

Tentative Daily Schedule

August 13, 15

M: Introductions

W: Defining Medievalism (Read *Medievalisms*: "Making Medievalisms: A Critical Overview") / *GOT* readings: ONE

August 20, 22

M: Defining Medievalisms (Read *Medievalisms*: "Middle" and "Modernity") / *GOT* readings TWO

W: Defining Medievalisms/ (Read *Medievalisms*: "Authenticity" and "Presentism")

Sturtevant article <https://www.publicmedievalist.com/ma-popular-imagination/>

August 27, 29

M: Medievalisms and Neo-Medievalisms: discussions include film, industry, popular culture, re-enactment) ("[Game of Thrones isn't medieval: and why that matters](#)") / *GOT* readings: THREE

W: Medievalisms and Neo-Medievalisms (Read *Medievalisms*: "Spectacle" and "Reenactment,")

September 3, 5

M: HOLIDAY

W: No class because of faculty senate meeting (discussion forum on Folio / D2L)

September 10, 12

M: *GOT* powerpoint / *GOT* readings: FOUR

W: *Chivalry in Westeros*, Chapter One (Intro) / *GOT* online resources

September 17, 19

M: *Chivalry in Westeros*, Chapters Two and Three / *GOT* readings: FIVE

W: guest lecture? Or HP powerpoint/ *Chivalry in Westeros*, Chapter Four (franchise)

September 24, 26

M: *Chivalry in Westeros*, Chapter Five (loyalty) / *GOT* readings: SIX

W: *Chivalry in Westeros*, Chapter Six (Prowess)

October 1, 3

M: *Chivalry in Westeros*, Chapter Seven (Vengeance) / *GOT* readings: SEVEN

W: *Chivalry in Westeros*, Chapter Eight (women)

October 8, 10

M: Malory's "Merlin" / *GOT* readings: EIGHT

W: Malory's "Balin" / view student powerpoints

October 15, 17

M: Malory's "The Knight of the Cart" / *GOT* readings: NINE

W: Malory's "Lancelot and Elaine"

October 22, 24

M: Martin and history / *GOT* readings: TEN

W: Malory's "The Fair Maid of Astolat" / Martin and history, modern

October 29, 31

M: Malory's "The Death of Arthur"

W: Proposals due and presented to class

November 5, 7

M: annotations: presented to class

W: draft in class

November 12, 14

M: peer review

W: practice / DRAFT DUE (finished draft; should only need minor polishing)

November 19, 21

THANKSGIVING BREAK

November 26, 28

M: practice

W: presentations (evening)

FINAL DRAFTS are due by December 4 by midnight.