MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY

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<th>Course Number</th>
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<td>HON 3183</td>
<td>Honors Seminar in the Humanities: The World of J.R.R. Tolkien</td>
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Name of Instructor
Dr. Christopher A. Snyder

Meeting Day, Time, and Room Number
M W 3:30-4:45 PM  201 Griffis Hall

Final Exam Day, Time, and Room Number
201 Griffis  Monday Dec 9  3:00 pm to 6:00 pm

Office Hours, Location, Phone
Griffis 210C  662-325-2522

Internet
E-mail address: csnyster@honors.msstate.edu
Course web page:

1. COURSE DESCRIPTION

Three hour seminar. An investigation of interdisciplinary problems or themes in the human experience. Readings and discussions, supplemented by lectures and presentations. This Honors course explores the writings (popular and academic) of J.R.R. Tolkien and the Tolkien phenomena which have emerged since the 1960s. We will also examine the medieval history, material culture, and literature which inspired Prof. Tolkien both as a scholar and as the architect of Middle-earth.

2. COURSE OBJECTIVES

Upon successful completion of this course students will be expected to identify major themes, characters, works, and events of Tolkien’s Middle Ages and in Tolkien’s own writings and biography. Students will also be expected to communicate their understanding of these both orally and through written essays. A research paper will explore one of these themes or one related to the recent cinematic interpretations by Peter Jackson.
3. **TEACHING METHOD**

The course will be run as a seminar, with the majority of class time spent in discussion. To facilitate class discussion, students will be assigned readings from both primary and secondary sources.

4. **GRADING POLICY**

Course grading is based on attendance and participation (10%); leading discussions (10%); two short reaction papers (20%); a book review (20%); and a 10-12 page research paper (40%).

Grading Scale: A=90-100, B=80-89, C=70-79, D=60-69, F=below 60

5. **GENERAL CLASS INFORMATION**

Regular attendance is required. More than three unexcused absences will result in the lowering of the final attendance and participation grade by 10 pts per absence. Please take advantage of visiting the instructor during the office hours listed above. **You may email me to notify me about an emergency absence, but if you want a response/conversation you must see me in person or call me.** Cell phones must be on silent/vibrate during class and laptops are only to be used for reading assigned texts and/or taking notes.

6. **STUDENT HONOR CODE**

Mississippi State has an approved Honor Code that applies to all students. The code is as follows: “As a Mississippi State University student, I will conduct myself with honor and integrity at all times. I will not lie, cheat, or steal, nor will I accept the actions of those who do.” Upon accepting admission to Mississippi State University, a student immediately assumes a commitment to uphold the Honor Code, to accept responsibility for learning, and to follow the philosophy and rules of the Honor Code. Student will be required to state their commitment on examinations, research papers, and other academic work. Ignorance of the rules does not exclude any member of the MSU community from the requirements or the processes of the Honor Code. For additional information, please visit: [http://honorcode.msstate.edu/policy](http://honorcode.msstate.edu/policy)

7. **TITLE IX**

MSU is committed to complying with Title IX, a federal law that prohibits discrimination, including violence and harassment, based on sex. This means that MSU’s educational programs and activities must be free from sex discrimination, sexual harassment, and other forms of sexual misconduct. If you or someone you know has experienced sex discrimination, sexual violence and/or harassment by any member of the University community, you are encouraged to report the conduct to MSU’s Director of Title IX/EEO Programs at 325-8124 or by e-mail to titleix@msstate.edu. Additional resources are available at [http://www.msstate.edu/web/security/title9-12.pdf](http://www.msstate.edu/web/security/title9-12.pdf), or at [http://students.msstate.edu/sexualmisconduct/](http://students.msstate.edu/sexualmisconduct/).

8. **SUPPORT SERVICES AND CAMPUS RESOURCES**

Students who need academic accommodations based on a disability should visit the Office of Student Support Services, 01 Montgomery Hall, call 662-325-3335, or visit the website at [www.sss.msstate.edu](http://www.sss.msstate.edu). All requests for accommodations must be made at the beginning of the semester and should include appropriate written documentation. Students are encouraged to seek professional guidance to improve formal and academic writing. One good resource is the Writing Center: email, writingcenter@msstate.edu; campus phone, (662) 325-1045. Our library liaison is also available to help Honors students with research needs and will hold regular office hours in Griffis Hall (TBA).
9. UNIVERSITY SAFETY STATEMENT

Mississippi State University values the safety of all campus community members. Students are encouraged to register for Maroon Alert texts and to download the Everbridge App. Visit the Personal Information section in Banner on your myState portal to register. To report suspicious activity or to request a courtesy escort via Safe Walk, call University Police at 662-325-2121, or in case of emergency, call 911. For more information regarding safety and to view available training resources, including helpful videos, visit ready.msstate.edu.

10. CLASS SCHEDULE

Week One

Aug. 21  Introduction and Syllabus

Week Two

Snyder, *Gatsby’s Oxford* (excerpt)
John Garth, *Tolkien and the Great War* (excerpt)

Aug. 28  J.R.R. Tolkien and C.S. Lewis
Tolkien and Lewis, letters (handout)

Week Three

Sept. 2  Labor Day. NO CLASS.

Sept. 4  Tolkien and the Middle Ages, Part I: History and Archaeology
Snyder, *Making of Middle-earth*, pp. 38-93

Week Four

Sept. 9  Tolkien and the Middle Ages, Part II: Literature of the Barbarians
Tolkien, “*Beowulf*: The Monsters and the Critics” (handout)
Tolkien (trans), *Beowulf* (excerpt)
“The Ruin” and “The Wanderer” (handout)
The Poetic Edda (excerpts)

Sep. 11  Tolkien and the Middle Ages, Part II: Chivalry and Romance
Tolkien (trans), *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* (excerpt)
*The Alliterative Morte Arthur* (excerpt)
Tolkien, *The Fall of Arthur* (excerpt)
C.S. Lewis, “The Necessity of Chivalry”

Week Five

Sep. 16  Tolkien and Fairy Tales
Tolkien, “On Fairy-Stories” in *The Tolkien Reader*
W.B. Yeats, “The Stolen Child”
Sep. 18  Tolkien as Poet
Early poems (handout)
“The Adventures of Tom Bombadil” and Other Poems (The Tolkien Reader, pp. 189-251)

Week Six

Sep. 23  *The Hobbit*. **First short paper due.**
Tolkien, *The Hobbit*
Snyder, *Making of Middle-earth*, ch. 3

Sep. 25  *The Hobbit* (cont.)

Week Seven

Sep. 30  *The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring*
Tolkien, *The Fellowship of the Ring*
Snyder, *Making of Middle-earth*, ch. 4

Oct. 2  *The Two Towers*
Tolkien, *The Two Towers*

Week Eight

Oct. 7  *The Return of the King*
Tolkien, *The Return of the King*

Oct. 9  *The Lord of the Rings*, the Appendices and Themes
Tolkien, *LOTR*, Appendices

Week Nine

Oct. 14  The Politics of Middle-earth

Oct. 16  Research Day.

Week Ten

Oct. 21  The Legendarium, Part I. **Second short paper due.**
Tolkien, *The Silmarillion*, “Ainulindalë” and “Valaquenta” (chs. 1-18)
Snyder, *Making of Middle-earth*, ch. 5

Oct. 23  The Legendarium, Part II

Week Eleven

Oct. 28  *Unfinished Tales*
Tolkien, “Aldarion and Erendis” and “The History of Galadriel and Celeborn”
Oct. 30  Tolkien and Literary Criticism: Philology, Historicism, and the New Medievalism
       Tolkien, “Oxford Valedictory Address” and “Letters” (handout)
       Snyder, Making of Middle-earth, Appendix I

Week Twelve

Nov. 4  Tolkien Criticism
       C.S. Lewis, reviews of The Hobbit and LOTR (handout)
       Tom Shippey, The Road to Middle-earth (excerpt)

Nov. 6  Research Day.

Week Thirteen

Nov. 11 Tolkien’s Art/Illustrating Tolkien. Book review/analysis due.
        Middle-earth illustrations by Tolkien, Alan Lee, John Howe, etc. (handout)
        Snyder, Making of Middle-earth, Appendices II & III

Nov. 13  The Peter Jackson films
        LOTR: The Fellowship of the Ring (DVD)

Week Fourteen

Nov. 18  LOTR: The Two Towers (DVD)

Nov. 20  LOTR: The Return of the King (DVD)

Week Fifteen

Nov. 25  The Hobbit trilogy (DVD)

Nov. 27  Thanksgiving. NO CLASS.

Week Sixteen

Dec. 2  Tolkien: Moral Philosophy and Theology
       Snyder, Making of Middle-earth, Appendix IV
       Peter Kreeft, The Philosophy of Tolkien (excerpt)

Dec. 4  Conclusion. Research paper due.

Dec. 9  Final Exam: 3 PM to 6 PM

11. REQUIRED TEXTS

Christopher Snyder, The Making of Middle-earth: A New Look Inside the World of J.R.R. Tolkien
       (NY: Sterling, 2013)
J.R.R. Tolkien, The Hobbit: or, There and Back Again (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2001)
---, Fantasy Tales Box Set (The Tolkien Reader/The Silmarillion/Unfinished Tales/Sir Gawain
       and the Green Knight) (NY: Del Rey, 2003)
Aug. 28  J.R.R. Tolkien and C.S. Lewis
Tolkien and Lewis, letters (handout)

Sept. 2  Labor Day. NO CLASS.

Sept. 4  Tolkien and the Middle Ages, Part I: History and Archaeology
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Sept. 23  *The Hobbit*
Tolkien, *The Hobbit*
Snyder, *Making of Middle-earth*, ch. 3

Sept. 25  *The Hobbit* (cont.)

Sept. 30  *The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring*
Tolkien, *The Fellowship of the Ring*
Snyder, *Making of Middle-earth*, ch. 4

Oct. 2  *The Two Towers*
Tolkien, *The Two Towers*

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Nov. 20  *LOTR: The Return of the King* (DVD)

Nov. 25  *The Hobbit* trilogy (DVD)

Nov. 27  Thanksgiving.  NO CLASS.

Dec.  2  Tolkien: Moral Philosophy and Theology
         Snyder, *Making of Middle-earth*, Appendix IV
         Peter Kreeft, *The Philosophy of Tolkien* (excerpt)
BIBLIOGRAPHY
AND
TOLKIEN RESOURCES

Organizations, Podcasts, and Web Sites

ADC Promotions (Tolkien books and Tolkien inspired art)
http://www.adcbooks.co.uk/

Arthedain (the Norwegian Tolkien Society)
http://www.hf.uib.no/arthedain/

The Bird and the Baby
http://www.tc.umn.edu/~d-lena/BirdnBab.html

C.S. Lewis and the Inklings
http://personal.bgsu.edu/~edwards/lewis.html

The Council of Elrond
www.councilofelrond.com

The Elvish Linguistic Society
http://www.eldalamberon.com

http://www.glyphweb.com/arda/

The Forodrim (the Stockholm Tolkien Society)
http://www.forodrim.org/

The Frodo Franchise (Tolkien blog)
http://www.kristinthompson.net/blog/

The Gathering of the Fellowship (Tolkien fan community)
http://www.tolkiensgathering.com/

The Grey Havens: Songs and Tales
http://tolkien.cro.net/talesong.html

Heren Istarion (the New York Tolkien Society)
http://www.herenistarion.org/index.shtml

The Hobbit (stage play)
http://www.thehobbittour.co.uk/

The Hobbit Blog (Peter Jackson’s official blog for the Hobbit films)
http://www.thehobbitblog.com/

The Hobbit Movie (unofficial site)
http://the-hobbit-movie.com/

The Hobbit Movies (news for fans)
http://thehobbitmovies.net/

J.R.R. Tolkien: A Collection (rare editions and collectables)
http://www.themoment.co.uk/tolkien/

J.R.R. Tolkien: An Imaginative Life (Gnostic Society lecture series by Lance Owens)
http://gnosis.org/wgs/Tolkien.html

John Howe (Tolkien illustrator)
http://www.john-howe.com/

The Lord of the Rings (official site of the musical)
http://www.lotr.com/home/

The Lord of the Rings Fanatics Network
http://www.lordotrings.com/

The Lord of the Rings.Net (official movie site)
http://www.lordoftherings.net/

The Lord of the Rings Soundtrack
http://www.lordoftherings-soundtrack.com/
The Lord of the Rings Radio Network (podcasts)
http://www.apple.com/itunes/

The Mathom House (collectibles)
http://www.the-mathom-house.com/

The Music of The Lord of the Rings
http://www.scoresofthering.com/home.html (annotated versions of Howard Shore’s film scores)

The Mythopoeic Society
http://www.mythsoc.org/

TheOneRing.net
www.theonerering.net

Ring Lord (fan site)
http://ring-lord.tripod.com/

Sacnoth’s Scriptorium (website of Tolkien scholar John D. Rateliff)
http://www.sacnothscriptorium.com/

Secrets of the Lord of the Rings (podcast lectures by Fr. Roderick Vonhogen)
http://www.apple.com/itunes/

Shiro no Norite (Japanese Tolkien Society)
http://www/cityfujisawa.de.jp/~norite/

Teaching Tolkien (maintained by Prof James McNelis)
http://teachingtolkien.org/

Ted Naismith (Tolkien illustrator)
http://www.tednasmith.com/

The Tolkien Archives (sponsored by the New York Times)
http://www.nytimes.com/specials/advertising/movies/tolkien/

Tolkien at Oxford (iTunesU podcast)
http://www.apple.com/itunes/

Tolkien, C.S. Lewis and the British Literary Tradition (iTunesU podcast)
http://www.apple.com/itunes/

Tolkien Enterprises (licensing)
http://www.tolkien-ent.com/

Tolkien Genootschap Unquendor (site of the Dutch Tolkien Society)
http://www.unquendor.nl/

The Tolkien Library (Tolkien book collecting site)
http://www.tolkienlibrary.com/

The Tolkien Music List
http://www.tolkien-music.com

The Tolkien Professor (podcast lectures by Dr. Corey Olsen of Washington College, MD)
http://www.tolkienprofessor.com/

The Tolkien Sarcasm Page
http://flyingmoose.org/tolksarc/tolksarc.htm

The Tolkien Shop (books and collectables)
http://www.tolkienshop.com/

The Tolkien Society
www.tolkienssociety.org

Tolkien Society on Twitter
http://twitter.com/TolkienSociety

The Tolkien Wiki Community
http://www.thetolkienwiki.org/wiki.cgi?FrontPage

Tolkien.co.uk (the Harper Collins site)
http://www.tolkien.co.uk/frame.asp

Tolkien’s Oxford
http://users.ox.ac.uk/~tolksoc/TolkiensOxford/
Periodicals

Arda (the journal of the Swedish Tolkien Society, published annually, Stockholm: Forodrim, 1981-)
Beyond Bree
In Fellowship (journal published by The Gathering of the Fellowship Community, 2005-)
Minas Tirith Evening-Star (published quarterly by the American Tolkien Society, 1967-)
The Mythic Circle (a literary magazine published annually by the Mythopoeic Society)
Mythlore (published quarterly by the Mythopoeic Society, 1969-)
Mythprint (the monthly bulletin of the Mythopoeic Society)
Orcrist: The Bulletin of the University of Wisconsin Tolkien Society (published irregularly 1967-)
Parma Nole
Silver Leaves http://www.whitetreefund.org/silver_leaves.html
The Tolkien Journal (published by the Tolkien Society of America, 1965-72)
Tolkien Studies (published annually by West Virginia University Press, 2004-)
Vinyar Tengwar (the journal of the Elvish Linguistics Fellowship)

Other periodicals, like The Chesterton Review, The Saint Austin Review, Seven, and Inklings: Jahrbuch für Literatur und Asthetik, frequently include articles and special issues devoted to Tolkien.

Bibliographies, Guides, and Reference Works

(http://www.axiomtoolworks.com/encarda.htm)


*Tolkien Gateway.* [http://www.tolkiengateway.net/wiki/Main_Page](http://www.tolkiengateway.net/wiki/Main_Page)

**Filmography and Discography**


Monsters of Middle-earth. The History Channel (first aired October 5, 2009).


Reiff, Caspar and Peter Hall (composers). *A Night at Rivendell with the Tolkien Ensemble.* Classico, 2000.


---. *The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King (Soundtrack).* Warner Bros., 2003.


---. Of the Darkening of Valinor and Of the Flight of the Noldor from The Silmarillion. Read by Christopher Tolkien, 1978.


The Writings of J.R.R. Tolkien

The Tolkien Manuscripts, which include extensive notes for and drafts of both his academic and popular publications, are held in the Modern Papers collection of the Department of Western Manuscripts at the Bodleian Library, Oxford. Not all are accessible to the public. Manuscripts and drafts of The Hobbit, The Lord of the Rings, Farmer Giles of Ham, and Mr. Bliss (including original Tolkien drawings and paintings) were bequeathed by the author in 1957 to Marquette University in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. The Marquette collection was developed by Richard E. Blackwelder (see http://www.marquette.edu/library/collections/archives/Mss/JRRT/mss-blackwelder.html ). Another significant body of Tolkien papers can be found at the Marion E. Wade Center at Wheaton College in Wheaton, Illinois. For a detailed discussion of these and smaller collections, see Wayne G. Hammond, “Special Collections in the Service of Tolkien Studies,” in Wayne G. Hammond and Christina Scull (eds), The Lord of the Rings 1954-2004: Scholarship in Honor of Richard E. Blackwelder (Milwaukee, WI: Marquette Univ. Press, 2006), 331-40. For a detailed bibliography of Tolkien’s scholarship, see Michael D.C. Drout, “J.R.R. Tolkien’s Medieval Scholarship and its Significance.” Tolkien Studies 4 (2007), Appendices.

--- (ed by Christopher Tolkien). *The History of Middle-Earth*. 12 vols. London: George Allen and Unwin; Boston, Houghton Mifflin, 1983-96). The individual volumes are titled as follows:

**General Overviews**


**Oxford, Tolkien, and the Inklings**


**Tolkien’s Middle Ages**


http://www2.hi.is/Apps/WebObjects/HI.woa/wa/dp?detail=1004508&name=nordals_en_greinar_og_erindi.


The Staffordshire Hoard http://staffordshirehoard.org.uk/


‘The Hobbit’


‘The Lord of the Rings’


The Legendarium


Tolkien Criticism


**Tolkien Media: Art, Film, Music, and Theater**


The Tolkien Phenomenon