HU 3501: Medieval Literature
King Arthur and His Knights
Fall Semester, 2002 A.D.

Introduction: The most prevalent theme in Western Literature is the Arthurian Legend as it appears in numerous forms in virtually every period of English Lit—but in French, Spanish, Italian and German Lit as well. The most often asked question about this form, of course, is “why is it so popular and long lasting?” The next most asked question is “Did King Arthur ever really exist?” In the course of the next fifteen weeks we will examine both these questions, but finding definitive answers is probably beyond our scope since authors and scholars have spent centuries at the task and still have not arrived at satisfactory solutions.

Required Texts:
Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, Everyman Classic Library.
Mark Twain. A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur’s Court, Modern Library.
T.H. White. The Once and Future King, Ace Books.

Course Requirements: Much of this course will focus on discussion of the various versions of the Arthurian Legend through the ages as well as of the literary traditions which are represented (and sometimes originated) in the stories. For
this reason, it is essential that you all keep up with the readings. Thus there will be numerous quizzes of various lengths depending on the works assigned. At the end of the course, the lowest two scores (of the regular quizzes) will be dropped. There will likewise be several extemporaneous oral reports which will be assigned at the beginning of the class and delivered during the hour. Each of you will also prepare a major oral report on one of the characters or critters which appears in the stories. There will be five papers required, one approximately every three weeks. Lastly, there will be a take-home final which will be due at the end of the fifteenth week. Instruction sheets for the oral reports and the papers as well as a list of suggested topics will be handed out as the course proceeds.

Course Procedures: Quizzes are given beginning of the hour: if you come late, they will not be started over: be on time. If you miss a class (unless it is an official university excused absence) you cannot make up the quiz or the oral report which you might have been assigned. Late papers are NEVER accepted, so do not waste your time and mine by coming into my office with some lame excuse. If you miss papers, you might as well drop the class as you cannot pass without handing in all the written assignments.

Class Work Percentages:

- Five papers: 50%
- Take-home Final: 10%
- Quizzes: 10%
- Oral Presentation: 15%
- Extemporaneous oral reports: 5%
- Class Participation: 10%
Dr. C.W. Nelson - 309 Walker
487-3232
<cnwelson@mtu.edu>

Office Hours: 10-11 MWF
1-2:30 MWF
11-12 TR
and by appointment

'The stories of King Arthur are all true, or ought to be.'
--Winston Churchill