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HIST 105-03, Topics in History- Robin Hood: Myth and Reality, Spring 2007

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History 105.03 Topics in History – Robin Hood: Myth and Reality
MWF 2:00-2:50 – Kennedy Hall 104
Spring 2007

Prof. Anna Dronzek
Clough 317, 843-3882 (voice mail)
dronzeka@rhodes.edu (I check e-mail more frequently than voice mail)
Office Hours: MW 3:00-4:00, T 2-3, and by appointment.

Please feel free to come see me, phone me, or e-mail me about any course-related concerns or questions you may have!

Description

Everyone has heard of Robin Hood, who lived in the greenwood with his merry men. Was he real, or was he just a legend? This class will explore his myth and his reality, examining the earliest sources for his existence, historians' arguments on the question, and the legacy that he has left behind – an enduring image popular throughout the centuries. We will also discuss the different ways that his image has evolved over time and why he continues to intrigue people in the twenty-first century. As part of examining the popular image of Robin Hood, this course will require viewing approximately four films outside of the regularly-scheduled class meeting.

Goals

This course is designed to introduce you to the study of history as a scholarly discipline. It is also designated **F2: Develop excellence in written communication** and therefore also focuses on improving your writing skills. At the end of this semester, you should be able to:

- understand and describe the main points of the Robin Hood legend, the historical context in which the legend develops, and how and why it changes over time
- analyze and critically evaluate historical ideas, arguments, and points of view
- develop skill in expressing yourself in writing and orally, specifically:
 - planning, organizing, and supporting a coherent, well-supported argument with a clear thesis
 - distinguishing between kinds of evidence and selecting evidence that is relevant, sufficiently detailed, and substantial
 - summarizing, extrapolating, and synthesizing material from a variety of sources, giving adequate and accurate documentation
 - assessing your own drafts and reconceiving, restructuring, or significantly modifying your own arguments
- better understand the goals and methods of history as an academic discipline

Course Books

The following books are required and are available in the Rhodes College Bookstore (as well as at most online booksellers):

Roger Lancelyn Green, *The Adventures of Robin Hood* (Puffin Books, 1956) ISBN 0140367004

Stephen Knight, *Robin Hood: A Mythic Biography* (Cornell University Press, 2003) ISBN 0801438853

Thomas H. Ohlgren, ed., *Medieval Outlaws: Medieval Outlaws in Modern English Translation*, revised/expanded edition (Parlor Press, 2005) ISBN 1932559620

A. J. Pollard, *Imagining Robin Hood: The Late-Medieval Stories in Historical Context* (Routledge, 2004) ISBN 0415223083

Additional required readings will be made available online, as handouts, or on reserve in Barret Library, and are marked on the schedule below.

Requirements

Participation – 25%

Research has demonstrated that students learn material more effectively and retain it more thoroughly through active participation than by listening passively to lectures, and therefore I place a great deal of importance on class participation. To succeed in this portion of the course, complete all reading and writing assignments prior to class, and come to class prepared to answer questions, to raise comments and/or questions of your own, to otherwise participate in class activities, and to listen to others present their perspectives. Attendance alone will not earn you an A in participation; you are expected to contribute actively. Participation will be graded on a combination of factors, namely attendance, frequency of participation, and most importantly, quality of participation. Also see “Discussion” under Policies, below.

Writing – 50%

Paper #1: Summary of Historical Argument Paper –

This paper is a 1 p. (300 words) summary of a book chapter.

Paper #2: Analysis of Historical Argument Paper -

This assignment asks you to write a 3 pp. (900 words) paper evaluating the arguments of two articles about the medieval Robin Hood legend.

Paper #3: “Medieval Outlaws” Paper (Three Parts) – 30%

Part I: You will be assigned one of the outlaw tales in *Medieval Outlaws*, and will write a 3-5 pp. (600-900 words) essay describing the outlaw’s main characteristics and analyzing his appeal. This essay will be due in class on the day on which we read this outlaw tale, and you will be responsible for 1) helping to lead discussion about this outlaw and 2) responding to two of your classmates’ essays.

Part II: Drawing on **all** the outlaws from *Medieval Outlaws*, you will write a 5-7 pp. (1200-1800 words) essay that states and supports an argument about the nature of medieval outlaws, their tales, and/or their relationship to their historical context.

Part III: Revise the paper you wrote for Part II.

Paper #4: "Modern Robin Hoods" Paper (Three Parts) -

Part I: Choose one of the modern versions of the Robin Hood legend (*Ivanhoe*, Errol Flynn's *Robin Hood*, Walt Disney's *Robin Hood*, Kevin Costner's *Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves*, or *Robin Hood: Men in Tights*) and write a 3-5 pp. (900-1500 words) paper analyzing your source's model of Robin Hood.

Part II: Choose a second of the modern versions of the Robin Hood legend and write a 5-7 pp. (1500-2100 words) paper comparing and contrasting the second version to the first.

I will provide further details about each of these assignments throughout the semester.

Midterm Exam – 10%

Final Exam – 15%

Instead of asking you to answer the traditional I.D. or essay questions, these exams will ask you to respond to passages from the course readings (AKA "gobbets") and 1) identify the text and author, 2) explain the historical context for the passage, and 3) explicate its meaning and significance for understanding Robin Hood. I will provide further details closer to the dates of these exams (marked on the schedule below).

Please note that you must complete all assignments to be eligible to receive a passing grade in this class.

Course Policies

General

Readings on the syllabus are listed on the day for which they are due. Therefore, on Friday, January 12, you should come to class having read the first two Fyttes of *A Gest of Robyn Hode*. Please also bring the assigned readings to class with you each day, as we will often refer specifically to passages in the readings.

Attendance

Because this class is a seminar, your participation is crucial to its success, and it is impossible to participate if you are not present. Missing more than four classes will adversely affect your course grade at my discretion. In the event of an emergency or other unavoidable absence, you remain responsible for any material covered in your absence; please contact me to let me know you will not be in class and to find out how you can make up the work that you missed.

Discussion

This course is organized as a seminar. While I will lecture on occasion, discussion is by far the more important component. During discussions, much of the responsibility for what goes on in the classroom lies in your hands and therefore the quality of your experience depends on your own preparation. I see the classroom as an intellectual community, and it is the responsibility of everyone to contribute their perspectives to that community. **No one ever reads historical material in quite the same way, and each of you has important insights to offer to the group as a whole (including me); please share those insights to help further everyone's learning.** You are not required to understand everything in the reading, but you must be willing to raise questions about what you find confusing, as I will not know what you do not understand unless you tell me. **Identifying what confuses you about a reading is extremely important, as it is often the points of greatest confusion that tell us the most about how people in the past differed from people today.** I encourage you to disagree with each other and with me, but expect you to do so in a way that shows respect for others. If you have any concerns about how the discussion is going in this class – either about your own or others' contributions – please feel free to raise them with me!

One form of respect is according your classmates (including me) the courtesy of your undivided attention; please do not read or work on materials not related to this course during class time. Please also turn off all cell phones during class time unless I have approved their continued activation in advance.

Late Assignments and Incompletes

All assignments are due at the beginning of class on the date for which they are assigned (or at another time as designated) and late assignments will not be accepted. This is not only because completing work to deadline is an important skill to learn, but because the assignments for this course are time-sensitive – that is, they are related to the material we will be discussing at the time that you complete them, and turning them in late robs them of most of their purpose; moreover, in some cases your peers will need to consult your work in order successfully to complete their own. Incompletes will not be granted in this course unless there are extreme extenuating circumstances, and they must be arranged with me before finals week.

Academic Dishonesty

Each of you is bound by the Honor Code as elaborated in the Student Handbook, and no violation will be tolerated. **Note that carelessness or error is not an acceptable excuse for academic dishonesty.** Please review the Student Handbook if you are unclear about the details of the Honor Code, particularly the definitions in Article I, Section 3, including the definition of “plagiarism.” On every assignment, you should reaffirm the Honor Code by writing the entire honor pledge and signing your name. No work will be accepted without an Honor Code pledge. Studying together and reading one another's papers is always a good idea, but make sure that your work is your own.

Accessibility

It is College policy to provide reasonable accommodations to students with disabilities. Course materials are available in alternative formats to persons with disabilities upon request. Please contact the instructor or the Disability Services office, 843-3994, to discuss accommodation needs.

Grading Guide

“**A**” work shows that you have done all the assigned readings, attended class, and participated in discussion. You know and understand the material covered by the course and can use it appropriately to support your own particular, clearly written argument or interpretation. You must also be able to follow instructions and do the assignment asked of you, not another one with which you are more comfortable.

“**B**” work differs from “A” work in that it might not always use the material to support an independent argument or interpretation; or might not present its argument as clearly in writing; or might not exactly address the assignment.

“**C**” work shows that you know the material covered in the course, but does not use the material to sustain a clear argument or interpretation, either through lack of evidence, factual inaccuracies or misunderstandings, problems in writing clearly, or not answering the assignment.

“**D**” work shows only that you have a minimal knowledge of the course material.

“**F**” demonstrates no knowledge of the course material at all. *If you receive an F on an assignment, please come see me so we can talk about how to improve on future work.*

Schedule of Classes and Assignments

DAY	DATE	ASSIGNMENT
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Wed	1/10	First Day of Class: Introduction
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Robin Hood: The Medieval Outlaw

Fri	1/12	<i>A Gest of Robyn Hode</i> , Introduction, Fyttes 1-2 (1-15) [PDF available in my faculty folder (note that there is a prose translation in <i>Medieval Outlaws</i> , but please do try to work your way through the Middle English)]
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Mon	1/15	NO CLASS (Martin Luther King, Jr. Day)
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Wed	1/17	<i>A Gest of Robyn Hode</i> , Fyttes 3-4 (15-28) Drop Add Ends
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Fri	1/19	NO CLASS (I'm out of town)
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Mon	1/22	<i>A Gest of Robyn Hode</i> , Fyttes 5-8 (28-46)
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- Wed 1/24 J. C. Holt, "Who was he?"
[PDF available in my faculty folder]
Paper #1 Due: Summary of Historical Argument
- Fri 1/26 One of the three earliest Robin Hood tales: *Robin Hood and the Potter*, *Robin Hood and the Monk*, or *Robin Hood and Guy of Gisbourne*. You will be assigned one of these tales in class; your responsibility is to come to class prepared to explain the main points of the tale to your classmates.
[PDF available in my faculty folder]
- Mon 1/29 R. H. Hilton, "The Origins of Robin Hood"; Maurice Keen, "Robin Hood – Peasant or Gentleman?"
[PDFs available in my faculty folder]
Paper #2 – Topic 1 Due: Analysis of Historical Argument
- Wed 1/31 J. R. Maddicott, "The Birth and Setting of the Ballads of Robin Hood"; J. C. Holt, "The Origins and Audience of the Ballads of Robin Hood"; [PDFs available in my faculty folder]
Paper #2 – Topic 2 Due: Analysis of Historical Argument
Extended Drop Period Ends
Pass/Fail Period Ends
- Fri 2/2 Richard Tardif, "The 'Mystery' of Robin Hood: A New Social Context for the Texts"; Barbara Hanawalt, "Ballads and Bandits: Fourteenth-Century Outlaws and the Robin Hood Poems"
[PDFs available in my faculty folder]
Paper #2 – Topic 3 Due: Analysis of Historical Argument
- Mon 2/5 *Imagining Robin Hood* – Chs. 1-2 (1-56)
- Wed 2/7 *Medieval Outlaws* – Introduction, "The Outlawry of Earl Godwin" (xv-27)
Paper #3 – Part I Due (Earl Godwin)
- Fri 2/9 *Medieval Outlaws* – "The Deeds of Hereward" (28-99)
Paper #3 – Part I Due (Hereward)
- Mon 2/12 *Imagining Robin Hood* – Ch 3 (57-81)
- Wed 2/14 *Medieval Outlaws* – "The Saga of An Bow-Bender" (290-337)
Paper #3 – Part I Due (An Bow-Bender)
- Fri 2/16 *Medieval Outlaws* – "The Outlaw's Song of Trailbaston," begin reading "Fouke Fitz Waryn" (151-~200)

- Mon 2/19 *Medieval Outlaws* – “Fouke Fitz Waryn” (~200-247)
Paper #3 – Part I Due (Fouke Fitz Waryn)
- Wed 2/21 *Imagining Robin Hood* – Ch 4 (82-110)
- Fri 2/23 *Medieval Outlaws* – “Two Tales of Owain Glyndwr,” “The Tale of Gamelyn” (248-89)
Paper #3 – Part I Due (Owain Glyndwr, Gamelyn)
- Mon 2/26 *Imagining Robin Hood* – Chs 5-6 (111-55)
- Wed 2/28 *Medieval Outlaws* – “Eustache the Monk” (100-150)
Paper #3 – Part I Due (Eustache the Monk)
- Fri 3/2 *Medieval Outlaws* – “The Hermit and the Outlaw” (338-55),
“Adam Bell, Clim of the Clough, and William of Cloudesly”
(397-419)
- Mon 3/5 *Medieval Outlaws* – “From *The Acts and Deeds of Sir William Wallace*” (420-69)
Paper #3 – Part I Due (William Wallace)
Mid-term Grades Submitted
- Wed 3/7 *Imagining Robin Hood* – Ch 7-8 (156-210)
- Fri 3/9 **Midterm Exam**
- Mon 3/12 NO CLASS – Spring Break
- Wed 3/14 NO CLASS – Spring Break
- Fri 3/16 NO CLASS – Spring Break

The Post-Medieval Robin Hood

- Mon 3/19 *Imagining Robin Hood* – Chs 8-9 (184-222)
- Wed 3/21 *A Mythic Biography* – Introduction, Ch. 1 (xi-43)
Paper #3 – Part II due
- Fri 3/23 *A Mythic Biography* – Ch. 2 (44-93)
Withdraw Period Ends
- Mon 3/26 *A Mythic Biography* – Ch. 3 (94-149)

Wed	3/28	Discussion of Errol Flynn's <i>Robin Hood</i> Paper #4 – Part I due (Errol Flynn)
Fri	3/30	<i>A Mythic Biography</i> – Ch 4 (150-210)
Mon	4/2	Broadsides of Robin Hood [PDF available in my faculty folder] Paper #3 – Part III due (option 1)
Wed	4/4	Discussion of Disney's <i>Robin Hood</i> Paper #4 – Part I due (Walt Disney)
Fri	4/6	NO CLASS – Easter Recess
Mon	4/9	Excerpts from <i>Ivanhoe</i> [PDF available in my faculty folder]
Wed	4/11	Excerpts from <i>Ivanhoe</i> [PDF available in my faculty folder] Paper #4 – Part I due (Ivanhoe)
Fri	4/13	Discussion of Kevin Costner's <i>Robin Hood</i> Paper #4 – Part I due (Kevin Costner)
Mon	4/16	<i>The Adventures of Robin Hood</i> (1-157) Paper #3 – Part III due (option 2)
Wed	4/18	<i>The Adventures of Robin Hood</i> (158-294) Paper #4 – Part I due (The Adventures of Robin Hood)
Fri	4/20	Discussion of <i>Robin Hood: Men in Tights</i> Paper #4 – Part I due (Men in Tights)
Mon	4/23	Flex day
Wed	4/25	Conclusion – Last day of class
Fri	4/27	Awards Convocation Undergraduate Research & Creative Activity Symposium (URCAS)
Wed	5/2	5:30 PM – FINAL EXAM