English 240, The Green World of English Literature
MWF, 10-10:52 a.m., Vaughan 201
Monday 1-6 p.m., and Friday 11 a.m. to 12:30, tutorials

If desire [as wonder, not lack] is to subsist, a double place is necessary, a double envelope.

–Luce Irigaray

In this course we’ll travel from the deserts of the Eastern Mediterranean to the islands of northwestern Europe, and in time from the fall of Rome to J.R.R. Tolkien’s Oxford study. In the process, we’ll examine the relevance of premodern traditions to how we think about ourselves and our relationship to others and the world, and how different cultural frameworks change psychological definitions of self, fantasy, nature and desire. We’ll examine environmental philosophy and the history of place, while gaining a sense of the great panoply, pageant, wonders and horrors of stories and poetry across a thousand years of human experience with nature from before the development of modern commercial economies and philosophies.

Writings will focus on issues of place, and will include three short “place studies” involving writing on photos and interviews and/or observations, one short essay on place and one longer essay on the “green world” trope and textual place, and one group video project on place and the green world. In addition to our medieval and related secondary readings, we’ll be reading sections of Edward S. Casey’s groundbreaking history of place in Western culture, The Fate of Place. We’ll consider the role of the 11th-12th century watershed in the “invention” of Western Europe, and how that new European culture tended to erase earlier place-based worldviews—as well as how the green world trope in later English literature (like later magical realism in Latin America) served as a narrative of resistance to that erasure of place.

Wed. 1/16 Frye.
Fri. 1/18 Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, Casey.
Mon. 1/21 SGGK; Feminine subtext article. Casey. Writing.
Wed. 1/23 Eriugena, Maximus, Patrick, Casey, St. Symeon, John Carey selections
Fri. 1/25 The Life of St. Antony
Wed. 1/30 Early Irish poetry. Casey.

Thurs. 1/21 Focus the Nation.
Fri. 2/1 Wooing of Etaín
Mon. 2/4 Destruction of Da Derga’s Hostel. Casey. Writing.
Wed. 2/6 Táin prequels
Fri. 2/8 The Táin
Mon. 2/11 The Táin. Casey. Writing.
Wed. 2/13 The Táin
Fri. 2/15 Bede and Casey
Mon. 2/18 Beowulf.

Tues. 2/19 Short essay draft due.
W. 2/20 Beowulf
Fri. 2/22 Beowulf. Half-time quiz.
W 2/27 Song of Roland
Fri. 2/29 Pwyll.


Mon.. 3/3 Branwen
Wed. 3/5 Manawydan
Fri. 3/7 Math. Final draft, short essay.
March 10-14 Spring Break
Mon. 3/17 Lanval. Writing
Wed. 3/19 Yvain
Fri. 3/21 Yvain

Sat. March 29. Field Trip to D.C., National Cathedral, Walters Museum.

Mon. 3/24 Volsungsaga
Wed. 3/26 Volsungsaga and Nibelungenlied
Thurs. 3/27 Group video projects due.
Fri. 3/28 Rumi
Mon. 3/31 Dante, 1826-69 in anthology; Dafydd ap Gwilym 1818; Christine de Pizan, 1820. Final project prospectus due.

Wed. 4/2 Chaucer, General Prologue.
Fri. 4/4 Chaucer, Knight’s Tale. Writing.
Mon. 4/7 Chaucer, Knight’s Tale. Writing.
Wed. 4/9 Chaucer, Wife of Bath’s Prologue and Tale.
Fri. 4/11 Chaucer, Wife of Bath’s Tale. Second-half quiz.
Mon. 4/14 Malory Writing
Wed. 4/16 Malory
Fri. 4/18 Malory
Mon. 4/21 Malory. Writing.
Wed. 4/23 LOTR
Fri. 4/25 LOTR film
Mon. 4/28 LOTR
Wed. 4/30 Final project draft due.

Assignments/grading
Grades will be calculated approximately as follows:
Midterm quiz, 5 percent
Second half of semester quiz, 5 percent
3 place studies (2-3 pages), 15 percent
5 reading responses (2-3 pages), 10 percent
Short essay on place (two drafts), 5-7 pages, 15 percent
Final project/exam, green world study (two drafts), 10-12 pages, 30 percent
Class participation/attendance (including weekly tutorials), 10 percent
Group video project 10 percent
Field trips to the Cloisters or Washington National Cathedral (optional response) extra credit

Books:
Edward Casey, *The Fate of Place*, University of California Press, 1998, 0520216490 (pbk)


*Life of St. Antony*, Eastern Orthodox Books, 1989978-0899810423 (pbk)


*Early Irish Myths and Sagas*, trans. Jeffrey Gantz, Penguin 1982, 0140443975 (pbk)


Chretien de Troyes, *Yvain, the Knight of the Lion*, trans. Burton Raffel, Yale 1987, 0300038380 (pbk)