

Lorraine K. Stock  
[lstock@uh.edu](mailto:lstock@uh.edu)

Fall, 2012  
10:00-11:30 am T/TH

### **Engl 3302, Medieval Literature (and Film)**

#### The Middle Ages as “A Distant Mirror” of Contemporary Culture

The course shall explore affinities between Medieval literature/history and cultural and political issues of the past century through the present in a variety of medieval texts that have been adapted into film and television. We shall study the texts and how contemporary popular culture has adapted these texts cinematically to reflect current issues (of the period of film production). Possible texts and topics include: *Beowulf* and its various film versions reflecting the contemporary War on Terrorism; Arthurian Romances such as *The Vulgate Cycle*, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, and *Silence*, and their various films and TV adaptations, reflecting issues of gender construction and sexuality.

#### **Required Texts:**

1. *The Lancelot-Grail Reader*, ed. Norris J. Lacy (NY: Garland, 2000) ISBN 0-8153-3419-2.
2. *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, ed. and trans. by James Winney (Lewiston NY: Broadview Press, 1992) ISBN 0-921149-92-1
3. *Silence: A Thirteenth-Century French Romance*
4. *Beowulf* (edition as yet unchosen)
5. Selected texts, readings, and film clips put on Blackboard or entire films on reserve.
6. Highly recommended: If you are able to, purchase a copy of the DVD of John Boorman’s 1981 film, *Excalibur*. I do a lot with this film in the first third of the course. It is widely available for under \$10. Copies will be available on reserve in the library, but having your own copy will be convenient.

#### **Written Work:**

1. 3 short papers comparing a text scene to a film interpretation, distributed throughout the semester.
2. A magazine article or articles (totaling 1200 words) written by an adopted avatar about some aspect(s) of medieval life reflected in the texts under consideration.