

# GAME OF THRONES

ENGLISH 234

Fall 2017

This course fulfills the Pre-1850 literature requirement for the English major



This course examines the myths, texts and events that inspired HBO's award-winning television series. While we certainly will be paying homage to *Game of Thrones* throughout the semester, the book and television series aren't our discursive and interpretative end points but rather our points of departure. Our literary journey through the Seven Kingdoms weaves us through Viking sagas, Inquisition trials, penitential tracts, saints' lives, medieval travel narratives, how-to guides and ancient law codes. Topics of conversation surely will include (but are not limited to): eunuchs, mad kings, incest, magic, siege warfare, child brides, religion and ritual, guts and gore and more guts and gore.

**Disclaimer: This course takes the idea of experiential learning very seriously. If the thought of eating dragon hearts, committing treason, marrying off family members, fighting in a battle that may leave you mortally wounded or doing other things that may make your stomach turn or eyes roll, this course probably is not for you. If you already engage in these activities or have harbored a secret desire to do so, then this course definitely is for you!**

**Ruler of the 7 Kingdoms:** Dr. Jana Mathews

**Preferred Contact Method:** parchment scroll or e-mail: [jmathews@rollins.edu](mailto:jmathews@rollins.edu)

**My Castle:** Carnegie 113 cell: 407-913-1679 (feel free to text, but I won't respond after 9pm)

**When/Where to find the party:** MWF 11-11:50am Sullivan House

**Confessions/Pleas for Mercy are taken (Office Hours):** MWF 12-1 and Thursdays 11am-12:15pm. I'm happy to meet you at other times as well. Email for an appointment!

## Required Course Materials

- Shakespeare, *Othello* (Not available at the Rollins bookstore. Purchase any edition (free online editions ok!))
- Access to Blackboard
- Rollins email account

- In lieu of book fees, please expect to spend approximately \$20 in supplies (for house challenges) over the course of the semester.
- As noted on the Course Schedule, this course has a \$60 course fee attached, which covers the cost of your admission and transportation to Medieval Times.

### **Student Learning Objectives**

1. Hone extended close reading skills of texts, graphic novels, film and cultural phenomena
2. Learn how to read and engage with critical sources and basic literary theory
3. Develop and hone one's academic voice
4. Learn how to situate texts within larger literary, historical and cultural contexts
5. Conduct critical examinations of the relationships between authors and their textual sources and inspirations



### **Course Assignments**

**1. Quizzes (5%):** All of your work for this course is designed to fulfill one or more of the course objectives. Daily reading assignments and class discussions and activities will prepare you for the quizzes and quizzes model the formats of exams. Early quizzes take the form of passage explications; quizzes assigned later in the semester will take the form of thesis statements and essay outlines. Due to the developmental nature and pacing of this course, I cannot accept late quizzes. It's very sad, I know.

**2. Midterm Exam (15%):** After learning the ropes of close reading via a few low stakes quizzes, you will have the opportunity to demonstrate your mastery of the skill through short (paragraph-length) analytical responses to relevant passages, t.v. clips and images. You will have so much fun doing this assignment that you'll forget that it's for a grade. Maybe. Or maybe not.

**4. Close Reading Essay (4-5 pages) (25%):** A close reading makes a unique, specific and debatable argument about a larger thematic idea or topic and uses close readings of textual passages to bolster and support this claim. This is your chance to think boldly and flex your mental muscles. I value intellectual risk taking more than a perfectly polished paper, so push yourself outside your comfort zone and write the kind of paper that you have always been nervous or afraid to write.

**5. Final Exam (30%):** After honing your close reading skills through the midterm and essay, you will have the opportunity to show off your analytical prowess on a larger stage. In this exam, you will construct 2-3 short original argumentative essays on course topics. These essays' structure will take

the form of several linked close readings, yoked together by a bold thesis and sexy answer to the “so what” question {yes, I just used ‘sexy’ to describe a paragraph in your essay—it’s possible people!}

**5. House Challenges (25%):** Teamwork isn’t just a buzzword in *Game of Thrones*; it is the key to survival. Individuals who don’t belong to some sort of house, order, clan or tribe typically don’t last very long in Westeros. To ensure your survival in this course, you will need to divide yourselves into houses comprised of 4 people. Choose your teammates strategically because throughout the term, the houses will compete against one another in several challenges that require brute strength, but also artistic mastery, intellectual creativity and a lot of enthusiasm. In other words, picking teammates who share all your same talents may leave you vulnerable in some of the challenges.



### 1. The Family Jewels

It’s going to be hard to protect them, but your legacy is on the line.

### 2. Westeros Fashion Show

*Game of Thrones* has been credited with inspiring some of this season’s hottest runway fashions. Now it’s time for you to get in on the action by designing and modeling your own *Game of Thrones*-inspired creation.

### 3. Alchemy Magic Show

Oh, the things you could do with a vial of wildfire. While we won’t be mixing up anything quite as potent as the original, this challenge gives you the opportunity to work your magic...literally.

### 4. Torture Implement Trade Show

It would be cruel to let you watch tons of torture scenes without letting you torture someone yourself. This challenge asks you to invent and demonstrate your very own torture device to a crowd of eager executioners.

### 5. Game of Thrones Feast + Tournament

It’s bad form not to bring food to a medieval feast, even if you are the guest. Your job: make a medieval or *Game of Thrones*-inspired dish to share at our tournament feast and come prepared to battle to the death.

## **Team Roles (team members will cycle through the roles)**

**King/Queen:** You are the team leader and are responsible for organizing team meetings, leading group discussions, mediating team conflicts, making final decisions regarding strategy etc.

**Hand of the King:** You serve as the king/queen's right hand man/woman. As the team spokesperson, you are responsible for leading in-class presentations (if applicable), publicity (including props, costumes, uniforms), team marketing (boasting) and blaming (trash talking).

**Prince/Princess:** Your primary function is to make your house look good. You are the model (fashion show), singer (karaoke) etc.

**Bastard:** Due to your lowly status, you perform a lot of the undesirable/embarrassing parts of the challenge. You are the soldier, the hawker, the loudest and most aggressive bard etc.. Like Jon Snow, you may be underestimated, but you also may be the key to victory.

## **Competition Grading**

Your grade for each competition will be determined by the quality of work and level of effort that you put into each assignment. I will provide you with grading rubrics before each competition so you know exactly what is expected. Each person in your group has a different role to play, but the workload should be evenly distributed (each person should do 25% of the work). On the day of each challenge, each team member will fill in a pie graph showing each team member's contribution to that challenge. I will use these graphs to facilitate grading. While it is my sincerest hope that every team member will earn the same grade for each assignment, this system also provides a measure of accountability for team members who may feel inclined to rely too heavily on the efforts of others.

Under this system, it is possible to come in last place in the Westeros Fashion Show but still receive an "A" for the competition. Similarly, it is possible to win first place in the trade show and earn a "B" or "C" on the assignment. In other words, personality alone can't get you through this 😊

All course grades will be calculated using the following scale:

A (94-100) A- (90-93) B+ (87-89) B (84-86) B- (80-83) C+ (77-79); C (74-76); C- (70-73); D+ (66-69); D (64-66); D- (60-63) F (59 and below)

## **Course Policies/Unsolicited Advice**

### **Attendance**

Here's my take on attendance: you have made the commitment to enroll in my course (many thanks) and I take seriously the responsibility to make coming to class each day worth your while. Every classroom discussion and activity correlates to a mode of assessment, so missing class is equivalent to shooting yourself in the foot. Why would you do that? Because sometimes we need systems of accountability to keep us on the straight and narrow, this course abides by the following attendance policy: you are allowed 3 absences without penalty. Your 4th absence may result in your final course grade being lowered by 1/3 full letter grade. So if your course grade is a B-, this penalty will drop you down to a C+. If you miss 6 classes, you will earn a failing grade for the course. No one has ever fallen into this category, so don't be the first! I do not distinguish between excused and unexcused absences, so choose your absences wisely. The only standing exception to this rule applies to students who are traveling on pre-approved college business (i.e. varsity sports team). If you have a disability that may require additional exceptions to this rule, please make an appointment with the Disability Services Office.

### **Extra Credit**

Do you want to boost your grade in this course by doing a little extra outside work? Take your quizzes/exams to the Writing Center! While I don't offer formal extra credit, students who utilize the

support and assistance of our fabulous writing consultants always do better on their assignments. There are several fantastic writing consultants on staff who have taken this course from me in the past and thus know “how I roll” including **Katie Deisler** ([kdeisler@rollins.edu](mailto:kdeisler@rollins.edu)) and **Morgan McConnell** ([mmconnell@rollins.edu](mailto:mmconnell@rollins.edu)). You must make your appointments 24 hours in advance for most writing consultants using the Tutoring/Writing appointments link (found in the Campus Logins on the Rollins R-Net page). However, if you wish to utilize the services of any of the above tutors, you may contact them directly.

\*\*\*Please note that writing consultants have busy schedules and may not be able to accommodate you at the eleventh hour. Wise students will plan ahead and book their appointments well in advance of paper and exam due dates.

## **COLLEGE POLICIES**

### **Disability Services**

Rollins College is committed to equal access and inclusion for all students, faculty and staff. The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 create a foundation of legal obligations to provide an accessible educational environment that does not discriminate against persons with disabilities. It is the spirit of these laws which guides the college toward expanding access in all courses and programs, utilizing innovative instructional design, and identifying and removing barriers whenever possible. If you are a person with a disability and anticipate needing any type of academic accommodations in order to fully participate in your classes, please contact the Office of Accessibility Services, located on the first floor of the Olin Library, as soon as possible. You are encouraged to schedule a Welcome Meeting by filling out the “First Time Users” form on the website: <http://www.rollins.edu/accessibilityservices/> and/or reach out by phone or email: 407-975- 6463 or [Access@Rollins.edu](mailto:Access@Rollins.edu). All test-taking accommodations requested for this course must first be approved through the Office of Accessibility Services (OAS) and scheduled online through Accommodate at least 72 hours before the exam. Official accommodation letters must be received by and discussed with the faculty in advance. There will be no exceptions given unless previously approved by the OAS with documentation of the emergency situation. We highly recommend making all testing accommodations at the beginning of the semester. OAS staff are available to assist with this process.

### **Academic Integrity**

Membership in the student body of Rollins College carries with it an obligation, and requires a commitment, to act with honor in all things. The student commitment to uphold the values of honor - honesty, trust, respect, fairness, and responsibility - particularly manifests itself in two public aspects of student life. First, as part of the admission process to the College, students agree to commit themselves to the Honor Code. Then, as part of the matriculation process during Orientation, students sign a more detailed pledge to uphold the Honor Code and to conduct themselves honorably in all their activities, both academic and social, as a Rollins student. A student signature on the following pledge is a binding commitment by the student that lasts for his or her entire tenure at Rollins College. The development of the virtues of Honor and Integrity are integral to a Rollins College education and to membership in the Rollins College community. Therefore, I, a student of Rollins College, pledge to show my commitment to these virtues by abstaining from any lying, cheating, or plagiarism in my academic endeavors and by behaving responsibly, respectfully and honorably in my social life and in my relationships with others. This pledge is reinforced every time a student submits work for academic credit as his/her own. Students shall add to the paper, quiz, test, lab report, etc., the handwritten signed statement: "On my honor, I have not given, nor received, nor witnessed any

unauthorized assistance on this work." Material submitted electronically should contain the pledge; submission implies signing the pledge.

Specific to our course: Plagiarism is a serious offense with serious consequences that may include failing an assignment, the course, or both. Forms of plagiarism include but are not limited to purchasing a paper online, cutting and pasting material from the Internet or other electronic or print source (including Wikipedia), passing off someone else's work (or portions of that work) as your own, and failing to cite external sources. If I suspect that you have cheated on an assignment, you will be referred to the Dean of Student Affairs.

### **Credit Hour Statement**

This course is a four-credit-hour course that meets three hours per week. The value of four credit hours results, in part, from work expected of enrolled students both inside and outside the classroom. Rollins faculty require that students average at least 2 ½ hours of outside work for every hour of scheduled class time. In this course, the additional outside-of-class expectations are the completion of daily reading assignments, production of written quizzes, drafting and revising essays and attending out-of-class RCC events.

### **Title IX Statement**

Rollins College is committed to making its campus a safe place for students. If you tell any of your faculty about sexual misconduct involving members of the campus community, your professors are required to report this information to the Title IX Coordinator. Your faculty member can help connect you with the Coordinator, Oriana Jiménez (TitleIX@rollins.edu or 407-691-1773). She will provide you with information, resources and support. If you would prefer to speak to someone on campus confidentially, please call the Wellness Center at 407-628-6340. They are not required to report any information you share with the Office of Title IX. Sexual misconduct includes sexual harassment, stalking, intimate partner violence (such as dating or domestic abuse), sexual assault, and any discrimination based on your sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression or sexual orientation that creates a hostile environment. For information, visit <http://www.rollins.edu/titleix/>

### **Recording Device Use**

In order to protect the integrity of the classroom experience, the use of recording devices is limited to either the expressed permission of the faculty member or with proper documentation from the Office of Accessibility Services. Information about accommodations through Accessibility Services can be found at <http://www.rollins.edu/accessibility-services/>. Recording without the proper authorization is considered a violation of the Rollins Code of Community Standards.

## Course Schedule

\*\*\*=High Reading Load Day.

### **Week 1 The Seven Kingdoms**

8/28 Welcome to the Seven Kingdoms!

8/30 “The Law *Licet Juris* of the Frankfurt Diet” (BB)

9/1 \*\*\*Please conduct a thorough skim of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* (BB)\*\*\* On first glance, this text will make you want to poke your eyeballs out with boredom. Today, I’ll show you how it’s really the most interesting and relevant thing to *GoT* you’ll ever read.

Last day to add/drop

### **Week 2 Kingmakers**

9/4 Labor Day-No class

9/6 “Text of Magna Carta” (BB) **Due in class: House Banner**

9/8 “Sumptuary Law Text” (BB)

Last day to change to credit/no credit

### **Week 3 King’s Landing (The Court)**

9/11 *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* Fitt 1 (BB)

9/11 **Field Trip to Medieval Times!!! Meet at the Cornell Fine Arts Museum at 5:15pm**

9/13 *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* Fitts 2 & 3 (BB) **Quiz due by 10am via BB**

9/15 *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* Fitt 4 (BB)

### **Week 4 Dead Kings and Warrior Queens**

9/18 No assigned reading. **Due in Class: WESTEROS FASHION SHOW**

9/20 “The Mission of Joan of Arc” (BB)

9/22 from *The Death of King Arthur* (BB); Ordericus Vitalis, “The Death of William the Conqueror” (BB)

### **Week 5 Medieval Tinder: Dating, Sex, Marriage and Incest**

9/25 St. Bernadino of Siena, “Two Sermons on Wives and Widows” (BB); Antole de Montaignon, “A Knight’s Advice to his Daughters” (BB)

9/27 Marie of France, *Lanval* (BB)

9/29 Ovid, *Metamorphoses* Book IX (BB); Abelard, *Historia calamitatum* (BB)



### **Week 6 Predators of the Mind**

10/2 Shakespeare, *Othello* Act 1

10/4 No Assigned Reading. In-class activity

10/6 Shakespeare, *Othello* Acts 2-3

### **Week 7 Exam Prep**

10/9 Shakespeare, *Othello* Acts 4-5

10/11 No Assigned Reading. In Class: Midterm Exam Prep.

10/13 No Class. Use this time to work on your exam.

**Sunday 10/15 MIDTERM EXAM DUE. PLEASE SUBMIT TO BLACKBOARD BY 11:59pm**



### **Week 8 The Old Gods and the New Gods**

10/16 **Fall Pilgrimage-no class**

10/18 Sturluson, from *The Prose Edda; The Wanderer* (BB)

10/20 \*\*á Kempis, from *The Imitation of Christ* (BB); Catherine of Siena, “On Receiving the Eucharist” (BB)

### **Week 9: Wildfire, Magic and Witches**

10/23 from *Secretum philosophorum* (BB); Bernard of Gui, “On Sorcery” (BB)

10/25 *Malleus Maleficarum* (BB); Orderic Vitalis, “Herlequin’s Hunt” (BB)

10/27 de Voragine, from *The Golden Legend* (BB).

### **Week 10 Whitewalkers and Medieval Zombies**

10/30 Orderic Vitalis, “The Death of Father Durand” (BB); “Prologue from *Game of Thrones* graphic novel” (BB); “Prologue” (BB)**Due in class: ALCHEMY MAGIC SHOW**

11/1 \*\*\**St. Erkenwald* (BB)

11/3 \*\*\**St. Erkenwald* continued (BB)\*\*\*

Last day to drop WF



### **Week 11 Bad Ways to Die**

**\*\* All this week: Individual conferences with me about your upcoming essay!!\*\***

11/6 *Erec and Enide* (BB)

11/8 Boccaccio, *Decameron* Book IV, Story 5 (BB); “Arya” from *Game of Thrones* (BB)

11/10 No assigned reading. **Due in Class: TORTURE IMPLEMENT TRADE SHOW**

### **Week 12 Wildlings and Monsters**

**\*\* All this week: Individual conferences with me about your upcoming essay!!\*\***

11/13 *The Wonders of the East* (BB); Mandeville, from *Mandeville’s Travels* (BB)

11/15 No Assigned Reading. In-Class essay writing workshop.

11/17 No Assigned Reading. In-Class: Visit to Rollins Special Collections Library

### **Week 13 Feast Days**

11/20 **No Class (you’re welcome; you may express your gratitude for my generosity by writing a kick-ass essay). ESSAY DUE. PLEASE SUBMIT TO BLACKBOARD BY 11:59PM.**

11/22 Thanksgiving-No Class

11/24 Thanksgiving-No Class

### **Week 14 Cannibals and Other Deviants**

11/27 *Judith* (BB)

11/29 Boccaccio, *Decameron* IV, Story 9 (BB); Dante, *Vita Nuova* Sections I-IV (BB)

12/1 “Tan tai mo cor ple de joya” (BB); Froissart, from *Chronicles* (BB); “Glencoe Massacre” (BB)



### **Week 15 Game of Thrones Dinner Party**

12/4 No Assigned Reading. DURING CLASS: EXAM PREP

12/6 No Assigned Reading. **DURING CLASS: GAME OF THRONES DINNER PARTY**

12/8 **Parting is Such Sweet Sorrow ☹**

**Final Exam: Please submit your final to Blackboard by 10am on December 14.**

