

Literature Institute Study Guide

LIT 412 Medieval Literature

Bedford Anthology of World Literature, Books 1-6. Boston: Bedford-St. Martins, 2004.

UNIT	WEEKS	TOPICS	READINGS
I		Overview	
	1	The Middle Period The Near East India China Arabia and Persia Europe Japan	Book 2, 2-14 Book 2, 15-22 Book 2, 207-211 Book 2, 295-301 Book 2, 355-362 Book 2, 469-481 Book 2, 1011-1017
II		Medieval Literature	
	2	Religious Writings New Testament Qur'an	Book 2, 23-27 Book 2, 97-105
	Essay Topics	E1. Please provide an overview of "The New Testament" according to the editors of your textbook. Describe and explain the Evangelism, Gospels, Paul's letters, Apocalypse, "The Great Code" and compare Jesus with Socrates. E2. Please provide an overview of "The Quran" according to the editors of your textbook. Describe and explain the life and times of The prophet Mohammed, the Hegira, the role of women in Islam and the Quran.	
	3	Life Writing: Religious Leaders St. Augustine The Confessions Muhammad Ibn Ishaq Life of Muhammad	Book 2, 64-69 Book 2, 70-96 Book 2, 130-133 Book 2, 134-157
	Essay Topics	E1. Please give an overview of St. Augustine's life and works. E2. Please give an overview of "The Confessions." Describe the perceptions, feelings, and ideas of St. Augustine. Describe his experience of regret and shame, ideas about sin and vice, struggles with indecision and self-doubt, conversion. E3. Please give an overview of Ibn Ishaq's life and works. E4. Please describe the prophet Muhammad's visionary experience, the public reaction to the new religion.	
	4	Medieval War Chronicles Muslim and Christian at War Robert the Monk, fl 1095 Pope Urban II's Call to the First Crusade History of the First Crusade (early 12 th century) History of the First Crusade Ibn Al-Athir (1160-1233) The Collection of Histories Usamah Ibn Munquidh (1095-1190) The Book of Reflections Canon de Bethune "Alas, Love, what hard leave"	Book 2, 578-586 Book 2, 586-590 Book 2, 588-90 Book 2, 591 Book 2, 592-595 Book 2, 595 Book 2, 596-601 Book 2, 601-602 Book 2, 602-608 Book 2, 609 Book 2, 609-610
	Essay	E1. Please provide an overview of the authors and their works in	

Topics	this chapter. E2. How did the first crusaders behave when they conquered Jerusalem? How did the winners of the wars deal with the losers?	
5	Medieval Leaders Einhard (770-840) A Life of Charlemagne Anna Comnena (1083-1153) The Alexiad Baha Ad-Din (1145-1234) A Life of Saladin Anonymous – Life of Chingis Khan Origin of Chingis Khan Joan of Arc and Witnesses (1429-1456) Joan of Arc by Herself and Her Witnesses	Book 2, 168-69 Book 2, 169-173 Book 2, 173-174 Book 2, 174-178 Book 2, 179-180 Book 2, 180-185 Book 2, 186-187 Book 2, 187-196 Book 2, 197-198 Book 2, 198-205
Essay Topic	E1. Please provide an overview of the authors and their works in this chapter.	
6	Beowulf	Book 2, 482-539
Author	Please write a brief author biography.	
Literary Analysis	Please provide a brief description of plot, themes, character analysis of Beowulf.	
Literary Terms	Please briefly define the following literary terms: epic poem, kenning	
Essay Topics	E1: Discuss the heroic code of Germanic warriors and kings. How do the virtues of courage, strength, loyalty play a role in the heroic code of warriors? Discuss the role of generosity, hospitality, and protection in the heroic code for the kings. Please give evidence from the book to support your observations. E2: What is the experience of life-and-death struggle with extremely strong, evil forces in Beowulf. E3: Describe the violent, feuding world of Beowulf and explain why increased conflict was expected after the death of Beowulf.	
7	Song of Roland	Book 2, 540-577
Literary Analysis	Please provide a brief description of plot, themes, character analysis of Roland.	
Literary Terms	Please briefly define the following literary terms: chanson de geste	
Essay Topics	E1: Discuss the heroic code of Song of Roland and compare it to the heroic code of Beowulf. Define the Christian Warrior concept and relate it to medieval heroism. Discuss how it relates to the spirit of Crusades. E2: Discuss the theme of betrayal in the case of Ganelon. Discuss jealousy, deceit, and revenge as it relates to Ganelon. E3: What does Roland experience during the battle? Discuss the changes in Roland's thoughts and behavior before, during, and at the end of the battle.	
8	Essays on Love Ibn Hazm (994-1064) The Dove's Necklace Andreas Capellanus (fl 1170-1186) The Art of Courtly Love	Book 2, 637-639 Book 2, 639-645 Book 2, 611-617 Book 2, 617-627
Literary Terms	Please briefly define the following literary terms: courtly love	

Essay Topics	E1: Please provide an overview of the life of Ibn Hazm and his work. E2: Please provide an overview of "The Dove's Necklace." E3: Please provide an overview of the life of Capellanus and his work. E4: Please provide an overview of "The Art of Courtly Love."	
9	Courtly Love Lyrics of Spain and France	Book 2, 628-636, 655-669
Literary Terms	Please briefly define the following literary terms: courtly love, troubadour love poetry, muwashshah, raqib, zajal, 'Udhrite poetry, simile, kharja, cansos	
Essay Topics	E1: What is the uniqueness of Andalusian society? What are the factors that contributed to the creation of a tolerant society? E2: What were the factors that triggered development of courtly love lyrics in Spain and then in the south of France? E3: Please provide an overview of the authors and their works in this chapter. E4: Please answer the following questions for each of the poems in this chapter: Who is the narrator? What is the poet describing? Discuss the narrator's experience in terms of perceptions and emotions. Can you see any ideas and themes in the poems? Please list specific elements of the poem to support your argument.	
10	Marie de France (1170-1180 ft) Lay of Chevrefoil	Book 2, 670-673 Book 2, 674-677
Author	Please write a brief author biography.	
Literary Terms	Please briefly define the following literary terms: romance, lay	
Essay Topics	E1: Discuss the love story described in "The Lay of Chevrefoil" and compare this love story with the Courtly Love. Describe the lovers' experience. What are the obstacles to the fulfillment of the lovers and what kind of effect those obstacles have on the growth or decline of this love? Why are the lovers afraid? Is this love story unfulfilled, secretive, adulterous? E2: Describe the Tristan legend.	
11	Dante Alighieri (1265-1321) Inferno	Book 2, 678-688 Book 2, 689-848
Author	Please write a brief author biography.	
Literary Analysis	Please provide a brief description of themes, main characters, key scenes.	
Literary Terms	Please briefly define the following literary terms: terza rima, Great Chain of Being, scholasticism	
Essay Topics	E1: Describe Dante's journey. What does Dante feel when he observes the punishments in Hell? How does Dante grow and change during the journey from Hell to Heaven? E2: Describe Dante's Hell. What are the different circles of Hell? What is their relation to each other. What kinds of different sins and their corresponding punishments does Dante describe? What other descriptions of Hell exist in literature? E3: Discuss the theme of sin according to Dante. Are the human beings free to choose to sin themselves or is it predetermined by the destiny? What is the role of free will and personal decision in the	

	idea of sin. How does Dante explain the concept of crime and punishment in Hell?	
12	Boccaccio (1313-1375) Decameron	Book 2, 849-853 Book 2, 853-877
Author	Please write a brief author biography.	
Literary Analysis	Please provide a brief description of key stories and include any ideas and themes.	
Literary Terms	Please briefly define the following literary terms: fabliau, realism, story	
Essay Topics	E1: How do people react to a devastating disease such as plague? What kind of behavior does Boccaccio observe during the 1348 plague in Florence? E2: In the story " Rustico and Alibech", what does the hermit Rustico experience under the temptation of a beautiful girl? How does he struggle with temptation? How do his ideas and behavior change as he yields to the temptation? Does he experience love or lust towards Alibech? Is everything, including deception, fair in love? What do you think the Saints experience when they lead ascetic life? E3: How does the development of Alibech's sexuality progress? How does the natural development of sexuality takes place in the absence of society's acculturation? How does a woman behavior's change after she experiences sexuality and pleasure? does this change in women influence who is the initiator and aggressor in sexuality of men and women? E4: Discuss the disadvantages of the parental supervision and guidance in the case of Ghismonda. How did her parents interfere with her decisions of marital status and the choice of marriage and sexual partner and what was the result of this interference? E5: What are Ghismonda's ideas about her own sexuality? How does Ghismonda explain the rationale for her decision to take a lover? How does her father try to suppress her daughter's nature? What does she mean that she is "flesh and blood" ? E6: What are Ghismonda's and her father's view of nobility? E7: Why does Ghismonda want to die after her lover dies? How realistic was her reaction? Do you recall other star-crossed lovers in literature who felt the same way?	
13	Chaucer (c 1340 – 1400) Canterbury Tales	Book 2, 878-884 Book 2, 885-932
Author	Please write a brief author biography.	
Literary Analysis	Please provide a brief description of the Prologue of the Tale of the Wife of Bath and include any ideas and themes.	
Literary Terms	Please briefly define the following literary terms: tale, morality tale	
Essay Topics	E1: Please list the people who are on the pilgrimage to Canterbury. E2: Please discuss the Wife of Bath' views on marriage, virginity, and sexuality. E3: Please discuss the ideal marital relationship according to the Wife of Bath. How does she manage gain complete control over her husbands and dominate over her husbands? What is the one thing that the women want most from their partner in marriage according to her story?	
14	Medieval Travel Writing	Book 2, 933-986
Literary	Please briefly define the following terms: travel narrative,	

Terms	pilgrimage, hajj, bodhisattva	
Essay Topics	E1. Please describe the main types of travel done the Medieval times. Explain the significance of religious pilgrimage in Christianity, Islam, Buddhism during the Medieval times. E2. Please provide an overview of the authors and their works in this chapter.	
15	Margery Kempe (1373-1438) The Book of Margery Kempe	Book 2, 989-992 Book 2, 993-1009
Author	Please write a brief author biography.	
Literary Analysis	Please provide a brief overview of themes and main ideas in this work.	
Literary Terms	Please briefly define the following literary terms: vision, confession	
Essay Topics	E1. Please provide an overview of Margery Kempe's life and works. E2: Discuss Margery Kempe's desire for union with God and the steps that she takes to achieve her wish. Describe her visions, weeping, her suffering by giving up the comforts, sexuality and financial gain from business ventures. Explain how and why she is being mistreated by society as a religious eccentric, social outcast, and even heretic. Are you familiar with other mystical female saints who sought mystical union with God?	

III

Finals

16 Review, Essay, Exam