

MODULE CODE:	CYCS7021
TITLE:	The Celtic Arthur and the Matter of Britain
DATED:	16/07/2012
MODULE CO-ORDINATOR:	Professor Jane Cartwright
LEVEL:	7
CREDITS:	20
TEACHING METHODS:	Distance Learning: 100% Directed Learning 90% Email, Skype, phone 10% and/or face-to-face tutorials
JACS CODE:	Q510; VQ612; 130 (interdisciplinary module)

AIMS

- To provide students with a systematic understanding of the content, context, cultural and historical importance of the medieval Arthurian material (mostly Welsh in origin) up to and including Geoffrey of Monmouth's *History of the Kings of Britain*.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of the module students should be able to:

- demonstrate that they have an advanced knowledge of the early medieval sources of the Arthurian legend including the role of Geoffrey of Monmouth's *History of the Kings of Britain* in preserving or inventing 'traditional' material;
- evaluate critically past and current research on the Welsh Arthurian material, develop their own critiques and, where appropriate, propose new hypotheses;
- demonstrate a thorough understanding of the cultural and historical importance of this material and place it in its wider literary and historical context;
- critically analyse the possibilities, as well as the limits, of the historicisation of 'Arthur'.

CONTENT

This module examines the context of the figure of Arthur as known from Celtic (mostly but not exclusively Welsh) sources, up to and including the large body of material directly dependent on Geoffrey of Monmouth. This module begins with the historical context, and moves more or less chronologically through the sources for our 'historical' Arthur, which are of an extraordinarily varied nature. It does not so much try to reconstruct a linear and unified narrative of events as to establish a historical context for the consideration, thematically and more or less chronologically, of the relevant primary sources. It ends with the production by Geoffrey of Monmouth of a coherent narrative of an Arthur figure with a secure place in history and literature.

ASSESSMENT

Coursework	100%
One essay of 5,000 words	(100%)

Example assignment:

What is the evidence for pre-Geoffrey Arthurian material in Cornwall and Brittany? To what extent can we use material from Wales to supplement this?

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Essential

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- Bromwich, R. et al. (eds.) *The Arthur of the Welsh*, Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1991.
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- Roberts, B. 'Geoffrey of Monmouth and Welsh Historical Tradition', *Nottingham Mediaeval Studies*, 20 (1976), 29-40.
- Thorpe, L. (trans.) *Geoffrey of Monmouth. The History of the Kings of Britain*, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1966.

Recommended

- Barber, R. *The Figure of Arthur*, Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1972.
- Bromwich, R. 'The Character of the Early Welsh Tradition', in H.M. Chadwick, et al. (eds.), *Studies in Early British History*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1959, pp. 83-136.
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- Chambers, E.K. *Arthur of Britain*, repr. with supplementary bibliography by B.F. Roberts, Cambridge: Speculum Historiale, 1964.
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- Kirby, D.P. and Caerwyn Williams, J.E. Review of John Morris, *The Age of Arthur*, London, 1973 in *Studia Celtica*, 10/11 (1975/76), 454-86.
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