



TEXAS A&M
UNIVERSITY
CENTRAL TEXAS

POLI 4365
Politics of Literature:
J.R.R. Tolkien

Section 110 - CRN 80449 - Fall 2022
6 PM – 9 PM Tuesdays in FH 303



Dr. Jeffrey Dixon

Office: Heritage Hall 204R

Email: JeffreyDixon@tamuct.edu

Phone: (254) 501-5871 (email preferred)

Office Hours: Wed & Thurs

3:30-5:45 PM or by appointment

Course Description

Examine the politics of fiction through a single author or genre to critically evaluate its role in political persuasion, especially normative political theory. Attention is paid to the political uses of genre conventions and the political power of shared myths. POLI 4365 may be repeated once for credit when the author/genre covered differs.

Course Overview

This seminar, originally co-created with Dr. Amber Dunai of the English program, examines the politics of literature through the lens of J.R.R. Tolkien's fiction. Special attention is paid to the political uses of fiction and myths, the political views of Tolkien, the politics described within the fantasy world of Middle Earth, and the relationship of the work to political theory, including theories of religion, gender, race, just war, and rulership. This course meets face-to-face, with supplemental materials made available online through the A&M-Central Texas Canvas Learning Management System [<https://tamuct.instructure.com>].

Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes

These objectives and their associated learning outcomes are ultimately the focus of the course. Course objectives (numbered) and learning outcomes (lower case letters) are listed below.

1. Students should understand how fiction and myths are used for political purposes (a).
2. Students should be able to closely read *The Silmarillion*, *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* in their narrative (b) and political (c) contexts.
3. Students should be able to summarize the relationship between the text of Tolkien's Middle Earth legendarium and theories of the politics of religion (e), feminist political thought (f), critical race theory (g), just war theory (h), and/or ecopolitics (i).
4. Students should be able to empirically and normatively compare the political institutions of J.R.R. Tolkien's Middle Earth and those of the real world (j).



5. Students should be able to both produce (k) and present (l) a research note on some particular political aspect of Tolkien's tales of Middle Earth, drawing on both primary texts and secondary research on Tolkien's fiction.

Learning outcomes a, j, k, and l are assessed using the research note and presentation. Outcomes e, f, g, h, and i are assessed from the weekly memos in the second half of the course. Outcomes b, c, and d are assessed using the weekly memos in the first half of the course and the class participation rubric. Finally, Outcomes d and j are also assessed using the class participation rubric.

Modality and Student-Instructor Interaction

This course is a *face to face* course, with supplemental materials made available online through the Texas A&M-Central Texas Canvas Learning Management System [<https://tamuct.instructure.com>]. The instructor will be checking email every weekday and try to respond within 24 hours; emails sent after business hours or on weekends may take somewhat longer to answer.

Required Texts

The following texts are required and available for purchase at the Warrior Bookstore. Be sure to get the right editions of each, since page numbers don't match up between different editions of these books. You are under no obligation to purchase a textbook from a university-affiliated bookstore. The same textbook may also be available from an independent retailer, including an online retailer.

Humphrey Carpenter (ed). 2000. *The Letters of J.R.R. Tolkien*. NY: Mariner Books (Houghton Mifflin). ISBN: 978-0618056996.

J.R.R. Tolkien. 2021. *The Lord of the Rings*. Illustrated by the Author. NY: William Morrow (HarperCollins). ISBN 978-0358653035.

J.R.R. Tolkien. 2012. *The Hobbit*. 75th Anniversary Paperback Edition. NY: Houghton Mifflin. ISBN: 978-0547928227.

J.R.R. Tolkien. 2014. *The Silmarillion*. Reissue Ed. NY: Mariner Books (Houghton Mifflin). ISBN: 978-0544338012.

All other required readings are available on Canvas.

Technology Requirements

This course will use the A&M-Central Texas Instructure Canvas learning management system. **We strongly recommend the latest versions of Chrome or Firefox browsers. Canvas no longer supports any version of Internet Explorer.**

Logon to A&M-Central Texas Canvas [<https://tamuct.instructure.com/>] or access Canvas through the TAMUCT Online link in myCT [<https://tamuct.onecampus.com/>]. You will log in through our Microsoft portal.

Username: Your MyCT email address. Password: Your MyCT password

All course readings outside of the two textbooks are in the commonly-used *pdf* format and can be opened with Adobe Acrobat Reader or many other free programs, including Chrome itself.

Canvas Support

Use the Canvas Help link, located at the bottom of the left-hand menu, for issues with Canvas. You can select "Chat with Canvas Support," submit a support request through "Report a Problem," or call the Canvas support line: 1-844-757-0953.

For issues related to course content and requirements, contact your instructor.



Other Technology Support

For log-in problems, students should contact Help Desk Central, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week

Email: helpdesk@tamu.edu

Phone: (254) 519-5466

[Web Chat](http://hdc.tamu.edu): [http://hdc.tamu.edu]

Please let the support technician know you are an A&M-Central Texas student.

Grading

Course grades are assigned using the standard 90/80/70/60 division, rounding to the nearest percent, using the following rubric:

POLI 4365 Course Rubric

Item	Points	Approximate Percentage
Academic Integrity Exercise	0 (but required to pass)	0% *
Worksheets (10)	500 (50 per worksheet)	17%
Essays (3)	300 (100 each)	10%
Participation	1400 (100 per session)	47%
Research Paper	700	23%
Research Presentation	100	3%
TOTAL POSSIBLE	3000	100%
2685+=A 2385-2684=B 2085-2384=C 1785-2084=D 1784 or lower=F		

- Academic Integrity Exercise: This consists of watching a brief lecture, taking a quiz, seeing where any mistakes on the quiz came from, and signing a statement. Once you successfully complete this exercise, you will no longer need to do so in future political science courses. If you have previously completed this exercise for me, you need not do so for this course.
*****Having completed the Academic Integrity Exercise is a prerequisite to passing this course. It must be completed before you hand in any homework or the due date on the course schedule, whichever comes first.*****
 - **Rubric: You will automatically fail the course if you have not completed the Academic Integrity exercise on or before the due date on the course schedule.**
- Worksheets: These are due at the beginning of the class session for which they are assigned. Each numbered item on a given worksheet is worth equal credit, and each worksheet is worth the same number of total points.
- Essays: At the beginning of each class session for which an essay is assigned, you should submit a typed, two page (about 400-600 words) essay on the day's readings. If you want to refer to it in class, just make two copies – one to hand in at the beginning of class and one for you to use throughout class.
 - The essay should summarize the relevant material from each reading. Its primary goal is to show that you read and processed the assigned material. Before writing, be sure that you understand each author's argument – the thesis of the reading and what evidence the author produces to support the thesis. All of our authors have arguments to make, and some of the *Letters* contain more than one argument. In principle, about one sentence per letter or



encyclopedia entry is sufficient, while full articles/chapters require a few sentences to detail their arguments.

- Secondly, be sure to detail at least one weakness in the *evidence* or *warrants* of each longer (article- or chapter-length) piece of scholarship we read. The same weakness may exist in more than one of the readings.
 - These essays shouldn't require outside research but if you do some, be sure to cite it properly using the APSA system (see Canvas for examples). If you only cite from the assigned readings, you don't need a works cited page; otherwise, you do.
 - Rubric: The essay is graded for clarity and descriptive accuracy (75% of the credit). It should show that you read and understood the material. It should also (25% of the credit) critique each longer piece of scholarship. Finally, there should be some thesis in the first paragraph that ties together the essay. Spelling/grammar errors can reduce the grade on the memo by up to 20% (1% deduction per error). Check the link on Canvas to at least address my personal pet peeves. If this is a consistent source of lost points, you may wish to seek guidance from the University Writing Center (described below).
- Participation: Students should professionally and constructively participate throughout each class session.
 - Professionalism: Students are to maintain a high level of collegiality and respect when interacting with one another and the professor. Refrain from using profanity or slurs in interactions related to this course. This pattern of professionalism should also extend to your email interactions, e.g. use of full sentences and words ("you" rather than "u"). If you have a preferred name other than the one listed in the roster ("Nick" rather than "Nicholas," for example) or preferred pronouns, please indicate this during first-day introductions so that your classmates and I can use them.
 - Rubric: This will be graded on a simple system. A student who attends and does little else will receive 40% credit (40/100 points) for that session. A student who constructively and professionally participates in about half of the class will receive 80% credit (80/100 points). A student who constructively participates throughout class will receive 120% credit (120/100 points), a significant extra-credit opportunity. A good rule of thumb is to be sure to contribute something relevant (even just a question that shows engagement with the course material) at least once an hour (i.e. three times per class session) if there is no lecture or in-class exercise.
 - Constructive participation means making comments or asking questions that demonstrate familiarity with the assigned readings for the week. It also means actively engaging in any in-class exercises. On the final day of class, it means asking questions about others' research projects.
 - As the amount of class time devoted to lecture increases, the amount of participation expected from students decreases proportionally.
 - Students who are late or leave early without a legitimate excuse (see the rules for excused absences below) will have an amount equal to the proportion of time they missed deducted from their participation score.
- Research Note: Students will write a research note during the course that addresses some aspect of the politics of *The Silmarillion*, *The Hobbit* and/or *The Lord of the Rings*. Students should use the APSA citation system (detailed on Canvas). The main body of the paper -- excluding the cover page, abstract,



works cited, and any notes, tables or figures -- may be anywhere from 3000 to 8000 words long (about 10-20 double-spaced pages using standard fonts and margins).

- Elements, adapted from Enterline (2007):
 - Research Question/Puzzle (embedded in Worksheet 10)
 - Select a research area and look for unanswered, contested, or incompletely answered questions in that area. Write down as many as possible while brainstorming, although only one will make it into your paper (until the conclusion, when you may wish to introduce others as potential follow-on projects). Then select and write down a specific research question of interest from the set of questions that you identified in your research area. Appendix A contains some possibilities, but it certainly isn't exhaustive.
 - Consider the potential academic and societal implications of your study of said question, so that the project is not an isolated event, but part of a broader body of scholarship by the academic community.
 - After you have identified your research question, you should consider whether the question is clear and concise. That is, can the question be stated in a single, interrogative sentence of moderate length?
 - Ultimately, research questions are not "written in stone"—i.e., they can change and evolve as you read and explore. For example, you might find that, upon reading some of the literature, you discover that a great many scholars have explored your question previously, and you wish to explore a research question that is relatively unexplored. Alternatively, as you read the literature you might find a particular sub-area or nuance of your original question that you find of interest and wish to explore as your research question.
 - Research question evolution notwithstanding, the question that you do arrive at must be clearly and visibly stated in your research project. That is, there should be absolutely no uncertainty on the reader's part as to your research question and its validity as the focus of your research project.
 - Literature Review (about half of the research paper)
 - General Purpose: It is necessary to thoroughly vet the scholarly literature (broadly defined) that is relevant to your research question. In doing so, you are engaged in the process of "reviewing the literature," or identifying and familiarizing yourself with prior efforts by scholars that bear in some way on your investigation of your research puzzle/question.
 - Ultimately, you should keep in mind that you have 5-10 double-spaced pages to execute your literature review, so you need to be concise, while at the same time devoting sufficient space to the listed tasks. This 5-10 page limit is purposely constraining. Hallmarks of poor research papers are long literature reviews that result in starvation of the remaining sections of the project, such as the theory and detailed examination of the evidence. As such, the page limit compels you to be succinct, identify the general attributes of the extant literature, and develop a transition to your theoretical section.
 - A *literature review* generally focuses on secondary sources, rather than primary or tertiary sources.
 - Examples of primary sources include books, letters, and drafts by Tolkien himself. Secondary sources are written by scholars discussing the



primary source material. Finally, tertiary sources like the *J.R.R. Tolkien Encyclopedia*, summarize material from secondary sources. Such sources should generally be avoided in the literature review, although they may serve as useful jumping-off points when discussing your research question in the beginning of the paper.

- It would require unusual justification to have less than five secondary sources (scholarly books or peer-reviewed journal articles) in a literature review.
- In addition to reviewing how previous efforts have approached theoretical and empirical issues relevant to your study, you should also demonstrate to the reader the strengths and weaknesses in this work in an effort to set the stage for your own investigation.
- In sum, the purpose in writing a literature review is, broadly speaking, threefold:
 - To discuss the scholarly work relevant to your project;
 - To point out the strengths and weakness of this body of research (and, in doing so, keeping in mind a respectful, even-handed approach to evaluating this work); and
 - Identifying how this body of research as it currently stands has not addressed sufficiently the research puzzle/question that you've identified, or that this body of research might be helpful in addressing your question or puzzle. This task is indeed critical, because it informs the reader as to the reason(s) why further research (i.e., your paper) is warranted, and provides the setup for the theoretical portion of your project. It is very important that you devote some project space to elaborating the reasons why the current literature is inadequate for answering your research question in some way or ways.
 - As an exercise, you might consider yourself confronted by a very skeptical reader who is deciding whether or not to spend the time to read the remaining pages of your project. Ask yourself how well you are doing in convincing this reader to read on. Are you really providing a neat angle on the literature, something that will draw the reader in, or is the remainder of your paper likely to be a very small, incremental advance in previous work, or even worse, quibbling over very minor offenses in prior work?
- Theory (a few pages): Describe the theoretical lens that you will use to address your research question/solve the puzzle. Since most authors we read have access to the same primary sources that you do, it is important to select or devise a method that guides your interpretation of those sources. For example, if you are analyzing the political implications of all or some of the text, you might use a theoretical lens like just war theory, feminism, queer theory, critical race theory, Christian or other theology, Marxism or class analysis, environmentalism, critical theory, some strand of conservative or liberal political philosophy, democratic peace or selectorate theory, psychological theory, economic theory, etc. This theory will help you select and interpret the relevant primary source materials. You should include more than one source that details your theoretical perspective (avoiding tertiary sources, of course).



Justify this theoretical perspective by showing how it has helped address political puzzles in past academic work.

- Argument (a few pages): This is where you solve the puzzle or answer the research question. Each argument includes a claim (your thesis, or a point that supports your thesis), evidence (here focusing on *primary* rather than secondary sources – your proof should come from Tolkien’s writings rather than the mere authority of other scholars unmoored from their sources), and an express or implied connection between the two called a *warrant* (often provided by your theoretical perspective).
- Introduction and Conclusion: These should generally be written last, since they constitute a preview and summary of your analysis, respectively.
 - The introduction should reveal the research question/puzzle, establish its importance, summarize how previous literature has dealt with it, preview your theoretical perspective and thesis, and conclude with a “road map” to the rest of the paper. This can be done in 2-3 paragraphs.
 - The conclusion should revisit the research question/puzzle in light of your arguments and analysis, demonstrating that the evidence, taken as a whole, does indeed support your thesis and that your argument constitutes an important advance in some respects from previous scholarship.
- Title Page and Abstract.
 - Your title should make the subject of your paper plain. Some even use their underlying research question as a title or subtitle.
 - Follow the title with your name, affiliation (presumably Texas A&M University – Central Texas), your professional contact information (e.g. your student email address), and the date or version of your paper. All of this should be centered on the upper half of the page.
 - Follow this information with a single-spaced abstract (a summary of the paper that at a minimum lists the puzzle/question, the theoretical lens with which you approached the problem, any methods used (e.g. “analysis of the text of Tolkien’s *Lord of the Rings*, Letters, and drafts from the *History of Middle-Earth*”), and the paper’s conclusion and theoretical importance. The abstract is quite short – no more than 250 words – and should be entirely contained on the title page or placed on the second, unnumbered, page of the paper.



- Example:

Surge, Escalate, Withdraw & Shinseki:
Forecasting & Retro-casting American Force
Strategies & Insurgency in Iraq*

Andrew J. Enterline Univ. of North Texas Dept. of Political Science Box 305340 Denton, TX 76203-5340 ajenter@unt.edu	J. Michael Greig Univ. of North Texas Dept. of Political Science Box 305340 Denton, TX 76203-5340 greig@unt.edu
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February 21, 2007

Abstract

Central to the contemporary American foreign policy debate is the issue of reducing insurgency and promoting stability in Iraq, and the role of American military forces in achieving these outcomes. Military force-related proposals range from complete withdrawal to a moderate “surge” in troops to a massive escalation of the force commitment. Here, we draw upon an analysis of domestic political stability in 60 imposed political systems occurring during the period 1816-1994 to forecast the effectiveness of said force-related proposals. The analysis underscores, in part, that (a) a policy of surging American troops is unlikely to succeed, (b) a policy of belated massive escalation reduces insurgency, but much less so than an initial policy of massive invasion coupled with massive occupation, a strategy that preempts the development of a robust insurgency.

*We are grateful to the Department of Political Science and the College of Arts and Sciences at the University of North Texas for research and intellectual support.

- Works Cited: Attach a works cited page using APSA specifications, ordered by the last name of the authors and formatted with a hanging indent. Include only works you have used and cited in the paper.
- Tables and Figures: Should you use tables, charts, images, or other figures in your work, they should either appear on the page they are mentioned, or (more common) be attached as separate pages following your works cited, with one page per such table or figure. Regardless of how you present them, each table or figure needs to be numbered and captioned.
- General Formatting: Just follow this checklist:
 - _____ The main body of the text is in proportional 12 point type and is double-spaced;
 - _____ Page numbers appear on every sheet but the first two or three (i.e., the title, abstract and first page are numberless);
 - _____ One-inch margins (left, right, bottom and top) are used through- out the text;
 - _____ Headings, sub-headings, and sub-sub-headings (consistently hierarchical) are employed to sub-divide the text; and
 - _____ The paper is no more than 30 sheets in length (everything included—title page, abstract page, main body of text, endnotes, references, tables, and figures).



○ Rubric:

Points Possible	% of Note Grade	Description
100	10%	Theoretical Lens (Preliminary Draft): Be sure to not only select a theoretical lens to work with, but to defend that theoretical approach by demonstrating that it has been used successfully to solve other puzzles in previous scholarship (which may well have been on different topics or writings than yours). Present the theoretical lens in detail, including previous studies of Tolkien that applied this lens (if applicable). What are the theory's expectations (hypotheses) and/or normative criteria for interpreting and evaluating literature?
50	5%	Introduction and Research Question/Puzzle: See the above requirements for each. The question/puzzle and thesis selected must be relevant to both political science and Tolkien's legendarium and follow all established assignment guidelines.
300	30%	Literature Review: See the above requirements from Enterline. You may wish to shift studies that used your theoretical lens to the last section of the literature review to lend it some coherence.
100	10%	Theory (revised given comments from Preliminary Draft): Be sure to not only select a theoretical lens to work with, but to defend that theoretical approach by demonstrating that it has been used successfully to solve other puzzles in previous scholarship (which may well have been on different topics or writings than yours).
200	20%	Argumentation and Evidence: Ideally, the final thesis will be supported by multiple line of argument (claim, evidence, warrant), each of which will itself be supported through argument construction. This is a research paper, and research into primary sources is required. Depending on your topic, you should include material from the assigned writings from Tolkien and trace their evolution in the <i>History of Middle Earth</i> (Tolkien's drafts of <i>The Lord of the Rings</i> and other writings).
75	~8%	Title Page, Abstract, and Conclusion: See above for the requirements for each.
75	~8%	Works Cited: You should have cited at least 10 works by the end of the paper – five for the literature review, another 2-3 when discussing and defending your choice of theoretical perspective, and at least a few primary sources to provide evidence for your thesis and associated arguments. Everything should be in APSA format, alphabetically by author last name, etc.
Possibly negative	Up to -100%	Word and Page Counts: For every 300 words short of the minimum for the <u>body</u> of the paper (see above), 5% of the remaining credit will be deducted from the paper. For every 300 words over the maximum, 2% credit will be deducted.
Possibly negative	Up to -20%.	Writing Style and Tone: Content should be written in Standard American English in complete, grammatically-correct sentences. Standard punctuation rules should also be observed. The project should be written in a formal tone suitable for a scholarly audience. Colloquialisms and slang should be avoided in favor of more professional diction. For each error over five, 1% will be deducted, to a maximum of 20%.



- Presentation: Prepare a 7-11 minute summary of your puzzle, thesis, and supporting evidence. You should **not** read us your paper or use a full script, although notes or an outline for your own use are a must. Some prepared visual aid (a handout for everyone in the class and the instructors or a PowerPoint presentation) is also required. You will be graded on preparation, professionalism, content, and how you address questions about your work from other students or the professors. (Your own questions of the other presenters form the participation grade for this portion of the session).
 - Rubric: You will be scored on these five criteria. The first four are worth 25 points each, with the last one possibly subtracting from the sum of the first four.
 - Preparation (structure, notes, use of visual aids): 0 5 10 15 20 25
 - Professionalism (dress, conduct, language and syntax): 0 5 10 15 20 25
 - Content (puzzle, thesis, evidence): 0 5 10 15 20 25
 - Question handling (knowledge, responding to counter-arguments): 0 5 10 15 20 25
 - Over/under time limits: -5 per minute over/under
 - TOTAL = _____/100

Course Policies

Attendance and Excused Absences

Attendance is required, as per Participation above. In the case of foreseeable absences, students must inform the instructor *prior to the absence*. Send me an email stating the date(s) you will be missing and the reason(s). You should also hand me a written note with this information in class. Failure to contact the instructor *prior to class* will normally rule out any sort of make-up, but in the case of documented emergencies, the absence may be excused if the emergency is reported as soon as is reasonably possible.

Make-Up Work, Late Work, and Incompletes

- Each memo is due by 6 PM *on the day of class for which it is assigned*. Late memos lose 20% of the credit they would otherwise receive per day, beginning with -20% a few minutes after class begins.
- For every *excused* absence, the missed participation must be made up. The make-up work is simply a more in-depth essay than the usual memo (about twice as long, raising multiple issues or questions regarding each assigned reading for the session).
- There will be no incompletes in this class, barring actual hospitalization or unforeseen deployment after the withdrawal deadline has passed. By university policy, incompletes must be finished in the subsequent semester.

Regrades

The instructor is not perfect, and if you believe part or all of a written assignment has been graded incorrectly, you need only return it **within one week** of receiving the graded assignment back from the instructor, together with a *brief* note specifying the part(s) to be regraded. The specified parts will be compared to the key again. After a week has passed, I can no longer be sure that you will be graded to the same standards as those used for all the other students, so work will not be regraded after this period. For participation regrades, I make my participation data available during the break and after the class so you can see how you are doing. If I failed to credit you with some or all of your participation, point it out to me after class (knowing what you said or asked would be helpful). Assuming it meets the requirements for constructive participation, the participation grade for that evening's session will be changed on the spot. Requests for regrades of participation must be made on the evening we have class so I can still remember what you said.



Academic Integrity

University Code of Academic Honesty: Texas A&M University-Central Texas values the integrity of the academic enterprise and strives for the highest standards of academic conduct. A&M-Central Texas expects its students, faculty, and staff to support the adherence to high standards of personal and scholarly conduct to preserve the honor and integrity of the creative community. Any deviation by students from this expectation may result in a failing grade for the assignment and potentially a failing grade for the course. All academic misconduct concerns will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct. When in doubt on collaboration, citation, or any issue, please contact your instructor before taking a course of action. For more [information regarding the student conduct process](https://www.tamuct.edu/student-affairs/student-conduct.html), [https://www.tamuct.edu/student-affairs/student-conduct.html]. If you know of potential honor violations by other students, you may [submit a referral](https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?TAMUCentralTexas&layout_id=0), [https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?TAMUCentralTexas&layout_id=0].

Specific guidelines for this course, which supplement and do not replace University policy:

- *Violations:* Some common violations of academic integrity that I have observed while teaching similar classes at TAMUCT are
 - **Most Common Violations:**
 - Plagiarism: Plagiarism is a characteristic of a piece of academic work, not a state of mind. It is indeed possible to accidentally plagiarize, so be sure to avoid these common forms of it:
 - Use of direct quotes without quotation marks. Even if you are just using three- or four-word phrases, you need to surround them with quotation marks if you didn't create them yourself. This is true even if you cite the source! Remember that *changing a few words in a sentence does not transform a direct quote into a paraphrase*; instead, it merely transforms one long direct quote into several shorter direct quotes, with a word of your own between each. A true paraphrase is the *expression of the cited source's ideas in your own words*.
 - Paraphrasing another person's words without citing the source (exception for this class: paraphrasing an author we read on that author's worksheet – since the worksheet provides the source, you need not do so unless you use out of class material).
 - Receiving assistance or answers on any coursework from anyone other than the instructor. If you hand your weekly work to someone else and they proceed to copy part or all of it, both of you will be deemed to have violated the policy.
 - *Penalties:*
 - The normal penalty for a violation of academic integrity (whether or not it is specifically listed above) in any of my classes is a grade of zero for the work or a deduction of 20% (two letter grades) from your course grade, whichever is **greater**. The infraction will also be reported to the TAMUCT administration, who will take independent action with respect to the student.
 - The (a) outright purchase, download, or completion by others of an exam, or (b) second or subsequent violation of academic integrity (in this course or other courses) display such serious disregard for academic integrity that either one of them will result in course failure **and** the infraction will also be reported to the TAMUCT administration, who will take independent action with respect to the student.

Drop Policy

If you discover that you need to drop this class, you must complete the [Drop Request](#) Dynamic Form through Warrior Web.



[<https://federation.ngwebsolutions.com/sp/startSSO.ping?PartnerIdId=https://eis-prod.ec.tamuct.edu:443/samlss&SpSessionAuthnAdapterId=tamuctDF&TargetResource=https%3a%2f%2fdynamicforms.ngwebsolutions.com%2fSubmit%2fStart%2f53b8369e-0502-4f36-be43-f02a4202f612>].

Faculty cannot drop students; this is always the responsibility of the student. The Registrar's Office will provide a deadline on the Academic Calendar for which the form must be completed. Once you submit the completed form to the Registrar's Office, you must go into Warrior Web and confirm that you are no longer enrolled. If you still show as enrolled, FOLLOW-UP with the Registrar's Office immediately. You are to attend class until the procedure is complete to avoid penalty for absence. Should you miss the drop deadline or fail to follow the procedure, you will receive an F in the course, which may affect your financial aid and/or VA educational benefits.

Professors are Mandatory Reporters

Texas State Law states that:

- “An employee of a postsecondary educational institution who, in the course and scope of employment, witnesses or receives information regarding the occurrence of an incident that the employee reasonably believes constitutes **sexual harassment, sexual assault, dating violence, or stalking** and is alleged to have been committed by or against a person who was a student enrolled at or an employee of the institution at the time of the incident shall promptly report the incident to the institution's Title IX coordinator or deputy Title IX coordinator.”
- Further: “A person commits an offense if the person is required to make a report...and knowingly fails to make the report. ... A postsecondary educational institution shall terminate the employment of an employee whom the institution determines in accordance with the institution's disciplinary procedure to have committed [such] an offense.”

Student Resources

- **Emergency Warning System for Texas A&M University – Central Texas:** SafeZone provides a public safety application that gives you the ability to call for help with the push of a button. It also provides Texas A&M University-Central Texas the ability to communicate emergency information quickly via push notifications, email, and text messages.
 - All students automatically receive email and text messages via their myCT accounts.
 - Downloading SafeZone allows access to push notifications and enables you to connect directly for help through the app. You can download SafeZone from the app store and use your myCT credentials to log in. If you would like more information, you can visit the [SafeZone](http://www.safezoneapp.com) website [www.safezoneapp.com].
 - To register SafeZone on your phone, please follow these 3 easy steps:
 1. Download the SafeZone App from your phone store using the link below:
 - [iPhone/iPad](https://apps.apple.com/app/safezone/id533054756): [<https://apps.apple.com/app/safezone/id533054756>]
 - [Android Phone / Tablet](https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.criticalarc.safezoneapp) [<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.criticalarc.safezoneapp>]
 2. Launch the app and enter your myCT email address (e.g. {name}@tamuct.edu)
 3. Complete your profile and accept the terms of service
- **Academic Accommodations:** At Texas A&M University-Central Texas, we value an inclusive learning environment where every student has an equal chance to succeed and has the right to a barrier-free education. The Warrior Center for Student Success, Equity and Inclusion is responsible for ensuring that students with a disability receive equal access to the university's programs, services and activities.



- If you believe you have a disability requiring reasonable accommodations, please contact the Office of Access and Inclusion, WH-212; or call (254) 501-5836. Any information you provide is private and confidential and will be treated as such.
- For more information, please visit our Access & Inclusion Canvas page (log-in required) [<https://tamuct.instructure.com/courses/717>]
- Texas A&M University-Central Texas supports students who are pregnant and/or parenting. In accordance with requirements of Title IX and guidance from US Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights, the Dean of Student Affairs' Office can assist students who are pregnant and/or parenting in seeking accommodations related to pregnancy and/or parenting. For more information, please visit <https://www.tamuct.departments/index.php>. Students may also contact the institution's Title IX Coordinator. If you would like to read more about these requirements and guidelines online, please visit the website [<http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/pregnancy.pdf>].
- Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972 prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex and gender—including pregnancy, parenting, and all related conditions. Texas A&M-Central Texas is able to provide flexible and individualized reasonable accommodation to pregnant and parenting students. All pregnant and parenting students should contact the Associate Dean in the Division of Student Affairs at (254) 501-5909 to seek out assistance. Students may also contact the University's Title IX Coordinator.
- **Tutoring:** Tutoring is available to all A&M-Central Texas students, both virtually and in-person. Student success coaching is available online upon request.
 - If you have a question, are interested in becoming a tutor, or in need of success coaching contact the Warrior Center for Student Success, Equity and Inclusion at (254) 501-5836, visit the Warrior Center at 212 Warrior Hall, or by emailing WarriorCenter@tamuct.edu.
 - To schedule tutoring sessions and view tutor availability, please visit [Tutor Matching Services](https://tutormatchingservice.com/TAMUCT) [<https://tutormatchingservice.com/TAMUCT>] or visit the Tutoring Center in 111 Warrior Hall.
 - Chat live with a remote tutor 24/7 for almost any subject from on your computer! Tutor.com is an online tutoring platform that enables A&M-Central Texas students to log in and receive online tutoring support at no additional cost. This tool provides tutoring in over 40 subject areas except writing support. Access Tutor.com through Canvas.
- **University Writing Center:** Located in Warrior Hall 416, the University Writing Center (UWC) at Texas A&M University–Central Texas (A&M–Central Texas) is a free service open to all A&M–Central Texas students. The hours of operation are from 10:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. Monday thru Thursday in Warrior Hall 416 (with online tutoring available every hour as well) with satellite hours available online only Monday thru Thursday from 6:00-9:00 p.m. and Saturday 12:00-3:00 p.m.
 - Tutors are prepared to help writers of all levels and abilities at any stage of the writing process. While tutors will not write, edit, or grade papers, they will assist students in developing more effective composing practices. By providing a practice audience for students' ideas and writing, our tutors highlight the ways in which they read and interpret students' texts, offering guidance and support throughout the various stages of the writing process. In addition, students may work independently in the UWC by checking out a laptop that runs the Microsoft Office suite and connects to WIFI, or by consulting our resources on writing, including all of the relevant style guides. Whether you need help brainstorming ideas, organizing an essay, proofreading, understanding proper citation practices, or just want a quiet place to work, the UWC is here to help!



- Students may arrange a one-to-one session with a trained and experienced writing tutor by making an appointment via [WOnline](https://tamuct.mywconline.com/) [https://tamuct.mywconline.com/]. In addition, you can email Dr. Bruce Bowles Jr. at bruce.bowles@tamuct.edu if you have any questions about the UWC, need any assistance with scheduling, or would like to schedule a recurring appointment with your favorite tutor.
- **University Library & Archives:** The University Library & Archives provides many services in support of research across campus and at a distance. We offer over 200 electronic databases containing approximately 400,000 eBooks and 82,000 journals, in addition to the 96,000 items in our print collection, which can be mailed to students who live more than 50 miles from campus. Research guides for each subject taught at A&M-Central Texas are available through our website to help students navigate these resources. On campus, the library offers technology including cameras, laptops, microphones, webcams, and digital sound recorders.
 - Research assistance from a librarian is also available 24 hours a day through our online chat service, and at the reference desk when the library is open. Research sessions can be scheduled for more comprehensive assistance, and may take place virtually through WebEx, Microsoft Teams or in-person at the library. [Schedule an appointment here](https://tamuct.libcal.com/appointments/?g=6956) [https://tamuct.libcal.com/appointments/?g=6956].
 - Assistance may cover many topics, including how to find articles in peer-reviewed journals, how to cite resources, and how to piece together research for written assignments.
 - Our 27,000-square-foot facility on the A&M-Central Texas main campus includes student lounges, private study rooms, group work spaces, computer labs, family areas suitable for all ages, and many other features. Services such as interlibrary loan, TexShare, binding, and laminating are available. The library frequently offers workshops, tours, readings, and other events. For more information, please visit our [Library website](http://tamuct.libguides.com/index) [http://tamuct.libguides.com/index].

Important University Dates [from http://catalog.tamuct.edu/undergraduate_catalog/general-information/academic20calendars20and20final20exam20schedule/]

August 24, 2022	Deadline for Add, Drop, and Late Registration for 16- and First 8-Week Classes
September 1, 2022	Educator Preparation Program (Teacher and Principal) Application Deadline
September 5, 2022	Labor Day (University Closed)
September 7, 2022	Deadline to drop 16-week Classes with No Record (Census)
October 15, 2022	Deadline for Clinical Teaching Applications
October 17, 2022	Add, Drop, and Late Registration Begins for Second 8-Week Classes \$25 Fee assessed for late registrants
October 17, 2022	Classes Begin for Second 8-Week Session
October 17, 2022	Class Schedule Published For Spring Semester
October 17, 2022	Advising Begins for Spring Semester
October 28, 2022	Deadline for Graduation Application for Fall Ceremony Participation
October 31, 2022	Registration Opens for Spring Semester
November 1, 2022	Clinical Teaching Placement Form Deadline



November 1, 2022	School Counselor Program Application deadline (Spring)
November 1, 2022	Deadline for GRE/GMAT Scores to Graduate School Office
November 4, 2022	Deadline to Drop 16-Week Classes with a Quit (Q) or Withdraw (W)
November 10, 2022	Deadline for Final Committee-Edited Theses with Committee Approval Signatures
November 11, 2022	Veteran's Day (University Closed)
November 18, 2022	Deadline for Scholarship Applications for the Spring Semester
November 24-25, 2022	Thanksgiving (University Closed)
November 25, 2022	Student End of Course Survey Opens (16- and Second 8-Week Classes)
December 2, 2022	Priority Deadline for VA Certification Request (Spring)
December 9, 2022	Deadline to Withdraw from University for 16- and Second 8-Week Classes
December 9, 2022	Fall Semester Ends
December 9, 2022	Deadline for Applications for Tuition Rebate for Fall Graduation (5pm)
December 9, 2022	Deadline for Fall Degree Conferral Applications to the Registrar's Office \$20 Late Application Fee
December 9, 2022	Fall Commencement Ceremony Bell County Expo 7 pm

Amendments

Not all exigencies can be foreseen. I reserve the right to amend the syllabus at any time. Any such amendment will be provided to the students in writing by uploading a revised syllabus for the course to Canvas.

Instructor's Personal Statement (not required reading, but may be of interest)

I strive to provide my students with a liberal arts education. Such an education is intended to expand human potential by emphasizing critical thinking skills, strong writing and oral communication skills, and perceptive responses to others' arguments. These goals enable students to become lifelong learners, community members, and ultimately to lead rewarding lives. Therefore, under the broad rubric of a liberal arts approach to teaching, I emphasize four objectives in my teaching: development of critical thinking skills, advancement of writing and speaking skills, moral development, and mastery of what in my judgment constitutes the "core" of the area under study. These goals determine how I construct course syllabi, which materials I use, and how I manage the classroom.

Critical Thinking Skills

I divide critical thinking skills into three components. First, students must be perceptive readers and listeners. In nearly all courses, there are either sections of the readings, lectures, or class handouts which we discuss and debate, nearly line by line. The point of these exercises is to draw students' attention to the multiple ways in which one might read a phrase or argument. Even where the course readings consist largely of a standard textbook, I try to model this skill in class discussions by initially responding to many questions with "Are you asking X, Y, or Z?" Understanding the nuances of an argument is a prerequisite to analyzing it.



Second, students should have the ability to challenge and dissect arguments made by the course materials, fellow students, or myself. There are some students who are looking for “the way it is” to be handed to them from “on high.” While informing students is part of my responsibilities, I also aim to challenge those students by presenting concrete, unsolved puzzles, and then presenting a number of possible solutions, requiring them to compare the evidence for each. Since the questions I ask in class are usually open questions within the discipline of political science, there are no easy answers. When I open a class discussion, engage with students doing discussion exercises, or even grade homework assignments, I play “devil’s advocate” for each student or group, taking a different position as I interact with each student. It is therefore disappointing when students simply parrot back what they believe the professor wants to hear. Their own thoughts count.

Just as important as the ability to analyze an argument is the ability to construct and defend one, choosing one among several imperfect explanations as the “best bet” for explaining a phenomenon or the superior normative framework for evaluating its ethical implications. There are some students who are very good at critiquing existing explanations, but who then use this skill as an excuse to avoid argument altogether: “None of these explanations are perfect, so it’s all just a matter of opinion.” This is illustrated by Russian dissident Gary Kasparov (2017):

“The point of modern propaganda isn’t only to misinform or push an agenda. It is to exhaust your critical thinking, to annihilate truth. Modern dictatorships have become far more sophisticated still in how to achieve their ends. They learned that by constant bombardment, your senses become overwhelmed. You start to doubt, to shrug your shoulders, to tune out, and that makes you vulnerable. Instead of pushing one lie, one fake, they can push a dozen, or a hundred, and that’s pretty good odds against one lonely truth. They win when you say: ‘Who can be sure what really happened?’”

I press students to weigh the strengths and flaws of each competing explanation and identify the one which is most likely to be correct. For empirical questions, I require them to devise some way in which their preferred explanation could be tested. For normative questions, I require them to apply their framework to difficult moral questions. In sum, I try to combine the focus on argument dissection that one finds in debate with the focus on puzzle-solving that one finds in science and philosophy.

Writing and Speaking Skills

As a former debater and debate coach, I appreciate the importance of being able to write and speak clearly. Of course, one of the most important ways to accomplish this is by assigning writing (and, in some courses, speaking) activities that require effective argument. In order to help students proofread their work, I post a document on Canvas illustrating the most common student grammatical errors: word mix-ups, sentence fragments, agreement of subject and verb, and improper comma or apostrophe usage. More importantly, the emphasis on argument construction discussed above tends to clarify and strengthen students’ written work.

Moral Development

One goal of a liberal arts education is to render students more capable of self-reflection and positive development. Moral education is essential to this process, yet may be the most difficult task facing an educator. Students must first be convinced that the ethical life is the best life. Fortunately, most students already have a set of values, albeit sometimes under-examined and often inconsistent ones. The task of the professor is to challenge their moral beliefs in such a manner that students have to



choose between competing values and become more consistent in their moral judgments. It is decidedly *not* the task of the professor to ensure that students adhere to a particular value system or ideology; instead, the ideal professor will challenge students of any ideology and encourage them to be more reflective and consistent in their judgments.

For this to be possible, students need to recognize their own underlying assumptions (often their religious faith, combined with a cynical view of “human nature”) that make a system of values possible. They must then be able to defend the connections between those assumptions and their value choices. In short, political science needs to be seen as part of a broader liberal arts curriculum which prepares students to do justice (as students understand it) in the world. Otherwise, we risk training sophists who simply use their skills to manipulate others. For example, if we train students in the study of persuasion and argumentation, we should also train them in the ethics of rhetoric. Moreover, they should understand how their moral attitudes toward these matters are connected to other ethical beliefs in their lives.

Subject Mastery

Finally, each class I teach has a certain “core” of material I expect students to master. This material is the necessary data for intelligent discussion of the questions posed by the course. Mastery is different than memorization; it means being able to apply the material to an unanticipated question or situation. The learning outcomes of the course reflect the knowledge of the subject I expect students to have by the end of the course.



Course Topics, Readings, and Due Dates

August 23: Introduction – The Politics of Myth and Literature

August 30: Dawn of the First Age



Above: *Heraldic Device of Fëanor* – probably the closest thing to a Silmaril that Tolkien drew

J.R.R. Tolkien, [The Silmarillion](#), “Ainulindalë”

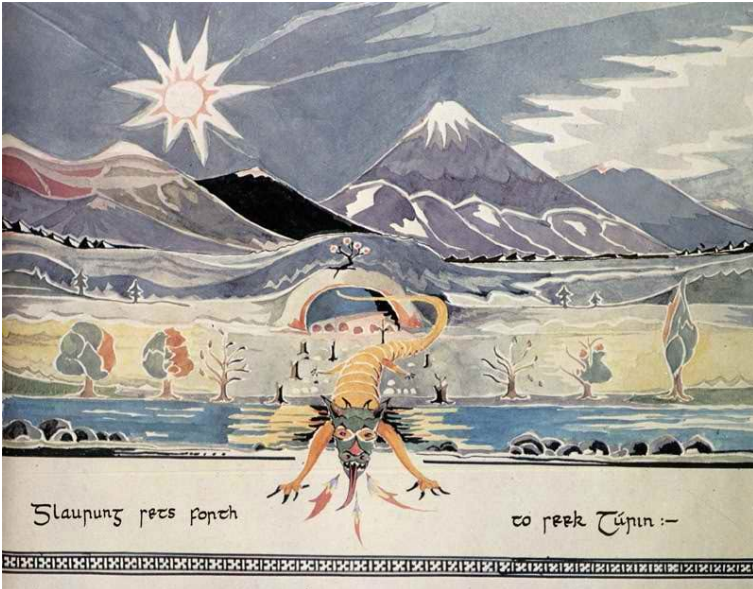
J.R.R. Tolkien, [The Silmarillion](#), “Valaquenta”

J.R.R. Tolkien, [The Silmarillion](#), “Quenta Silmarillion,” Chapters 1-8

Due: Worksheet 1

Due: Academic Integrity Exercise

September 6: The War of the Jewels



Above: “Glaurung Sets Forth to Seek Túrin”

J.R.R. Tolkien, [The Silmarillion](#), “Quenta Silmarillion,” Chapters 9-18

Recommended: Maps of Beleriand posted on Canvas for Chapters 10-14

Due: Worksheet 2

September 13: Heroism, *Eucatastrophe*, and Downfall in the First and Second Ages

J.R.R. Tolkien, [The Silmarillion](#), “Quenta Silmarillion,” Chapters 19-24

J.R.R. Tolkien, [The Silmarillion](#), “Akallabêth”

Recommended: Map of Númenor posted on Canvas for “Akallabêth”

Due: Worksheet 3



September 20: There and Back Again

J.R.R. Tolkien, The Hobbit, Chapters 1-4

J.R.R. Tolkien, The Hobbit (First Edition), Chapter 5 (Canvas)

J.R.R. Tolkien, The Hobbit, Chapters 5-19

Due: Worksheet 4

September 27: The Return of the Shadow

J.R.R. Tolkien, The Lord of the Rings, Prologue and Book One

J.R.R. Tolkien, "Letter to Nevill Coghill" (Canvas)

Due: Worksheet 5

October 4: Journey of the Nine Companions

J.R.R. Tolkien, The Lord of the Rings, Book Two

Due: Worksheet 6

October 11: The Treason of Isengard

J.R.R. Tolkien, The Lord of the Rings, Book Three

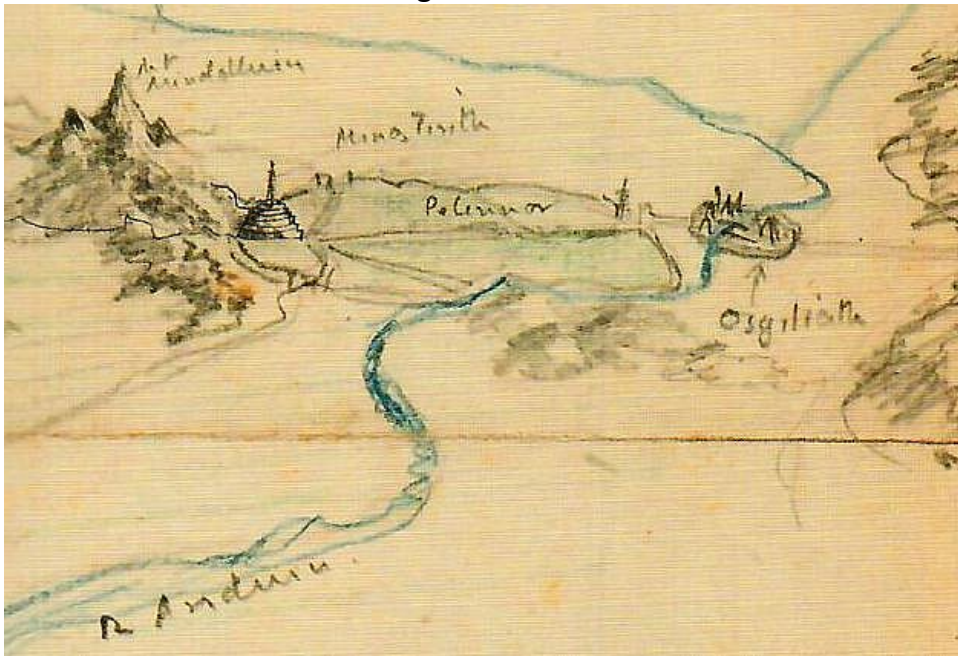
Due: Worksheet 7

October 18: The Journey of the Ringbearers

J.R.R. Tolkien, The Lord of the Rings, Book Four

Due: Worksheet 8

October 25: The War of the Ring



Above: Detail of Tolkien's Sketch of Minas Tirith, Osgiliath, and the Pelennor Fields

J.R.R. Tolkien, The Lord of the Rings, Book Five

Due: Worksheet 9



November 1: The End of the Third Age

J.R.R. Tolkien, The Lord of the Rings, Book Six and (*OPTIONALLY*) Appendix A (v): “Here Follows a Part of the Tale of Aragorn and Arwen”

Letters 181, 183, 186

Hal Colebatch, “Politics” (Canvas)

Bradley Birzer, “Middle Earth and Modernity” (Canvas)

OPTIONAL: Jeffrey Dixon, “Political Theory, Political Myth, Political Science? The Domestic Politics of *The Lord of the Rings*” (Canvas)

Due: Worksheet 10 (including *Preliminary Research Question/Puzzle*)

November 8: Myth, Power, and Faery

Letters 52, 346

J.R.R. Tolkien, “On Fairy Stories” (Canvas)

J.R.R. Tolkien, “Mythopoeia” (Canvas)

Christopher Vaccaro, “Difference and Otherness” (Canvas)

Dennis Wise, “On Ways of Studying Tolkien” (Canvas)

Due: Worksheet 11 and Theoretical Lens (Preliminary) – see Research Note Rubric for details

November 15: Politics of War

Letters 64, 66, 81, 71, 78, 96 (esp. pp. 109-111), 101, 195

Steven Carter, “Faramir and the Heroic Ideal of the Twentieth Century; Or, How Aragorn Died at the Somme” (Canvas)

Michael Livingston, “The Shell-shocked Hobbit: The First World War and Tolkien’s Trauma of the Ring” (Canvas)

Janet Brennan Croft, War and the Works of J.R.R. Tolkien, Excerpt (Canvas)

Jeffrey Dixon, “Political Fictions: Tolkien’s Middle Earth as a Refutation of Modern Just War Theory” (Canvas)

OPTIONAL: Matthew Dickerson, “On Hobbits, the Treatment of Prisoners, and the Ethics of War” (Canvas)

Due: Essay 1

November 22: The Politics of Alterity -- Race, Culture and Gender

Letters 29, 30, 43, 49, 53, 78, 177, 214, 269, 348

Robert Stuart, “Tolkien, Race, and the Critics: Debating Racism in Middle-earth” (Canvas)

Niels Werber, “Geo- and Biopolitics of Middle-Earth: A German Reading of Tolkien’s *‘The Lord of the Rings’*” (Canvas)

Adam Roberts, “Women” (Canvas)

Melanie Rawls, “The Feminine Principle in Tolkien” (Canvas)

OPTIONAL: Dmitra Fimi, “A Hierarchical World” (Canvas)

OPTIONAL: Williams, “Mountain People in Middle Earth” (Canvas)

Due: Essay 2



November 29: Religion, Ethics, and Environment in Middle Earth

Letters, 131, 142, 153, 191, 208, 246, 310, 320, 339, 343, 353

Claudio Testi, "Tolkien's Work: Is it Christian or Pagan?" (Canvas)

Matthew Dickerson and Jonathan Evans, "Woods, Wildness, and the Feraculture of the Ents" (Canvas)

Verlyn Flieger, "Taking the Part of Trees: Eco-Conflict in Middle Earth" (Canvas)

OPTIONAL: Eleanor Simpson, "The Evolution of J.R.R. Tolkien's Portrayal of Nature: Foreshadowing Anti-speciesism" (Canvas)

Due: Essay 3

December 6: The Politics of J.R.R. Tolkien's Middle Earth

Due: Papers and Presentations



Appendix A: Sample Paper Topics:

- What is Tolkien's approach to war and peace? When, if ever, is war "just?"
- How did Tolkien's experiences in World War I affect the messages of his novels?
- To what type of environmental ethics did Tolkien subscribe?
- What is Tolkien's attitude towards political economy – exchange, wealth, class, etc?
- What is Tolkien's ideal form of leadership / governance / political power / stewardship?
- What types of rights are emphasized in Tolkien's novels?
- Do Tolkien's novels tend to support or undermine myths of white supremacy?
- Why have so many Tolkienian feminists rejected feminist critiques of his novels?
- How does Tolkien see or portray women in his novels? Does this tend to undermine or reinforce patriarchy / male dominance?
- What virtues are promoted in Tolkien's novels? From whom does he take this theory of virtue (Plato, Aristotle, Augustine, Aquinas, Boethius, or someone else)?
- What are the uniquely Catholic features of *The Lord of the Rings*?
- In what ways, if any, do Tolkien's conservative Catholic views find expression in his novels?
- How have translators altered the politics and meaning of Tolkien's novels in (insert language here)?
- How did the Peter Jackson adaptations of *The Hobbit* (or *The Lord of the Rings*) alter the politics of those works?
- Does Tolkien favor civilization over the alternatives?
- What is the proper role of work / industry in Tolkien's novels?
- What is the virtue of Wisdom, according to Tolkien?
- What do Tolkien's novels have to tell us about the concept of "queerness?"
- What would (insert political philosopher/theorist here) have to say about Tolkien's novels?
- How do characters experience – or fail to experience – *eudaimonia* / happiness in Tolkien's novels?
- What are the political implications of language in Tolkien's novels?
- Is Tolkien in favor of the minimal state?
- How are friendship and politics related in Tolkien's novels?
- Which is more important in the novels – mercy/pity or justice?
- What might the Voice of Saruman represent in terms of political philosophy?
- How does Tolkien view evil, and what are the implications for the virtuous politician?
- How does Tolkien define politics – and to what views about politics does this definition lead him?
- What is the political economy of pipeweed/tobacco in Tolkien's novels?
- Do Tolkien's novels serve as counterpoints to speciesism?
- Why are Tolkien's works, and adaptations thereof, so popular among extremists (or some subgroup of them)?
- What attitudes toward fascist political thought are found in Tolkien's letters and novels?
- What attitudes toward aspects of property rights (such as legitimate ownership) are displayed in the novels?
- Does Tolkien's mythology meet (this or that political scientist's – perhaps Bouchard, Tudor, Botticci, or Cuthbertson) definition of "political myth?"
- What kind of party politics might be supported by Tolkien's portrayal of (insert issue here – e.g. environmentalism and different party platforms in some country or other)?
- What is Tolkien's representation of geopolitics in the Third Age?
- How does Tolkien view and portray the institution of marriage?



- What does the seeming absence of sensuality/sexuality in Tolkien's novels say about the politics of sex?
- Is *The Lord of the Rings* an example of Orientalism (see Said)?
- How do Tolkien's novels undermine the arguments against justice that appear in Plato's *Republic*?
- Which leader is better-suited to the modern world (Aragorn, Faramir, Denethor, Galadriel, Saruman, etc)?
- Does Tolkien seek a return to medieval society / values / politics?
- What role does aesthetics play in Tolkien's fiction and modern political life?
- How might one apply post-colonialism to Tolkien's fiction?
- How does Tolkien approach potential conflicts between Science and faith through his fiction?
- How does Tolkien portray the consequences of war?
- Is Tolkien's advocacy of hope in seemingly hopeless situations compatible with just war theory's "reasonable probability of victory" criterion?
- What kind(s) of nationalism are consistent with Tolkien's portrayal of the peoples of Middle Earth?
- Can Tolkien be reconciled with modern notions of race as a social construct?
- Which hierarchies are legitimate in Middle Earth?
- What are the political parallels to the Ring's power of invisibility?
- What does Tolkien's fiction have to say about sustainable development?
- What errors exist in the Ruane and James portrayal of the international relations of Middle-Earth?
- Does Tolkien's fiction promote the empowerment of the marginalized?
- What are law and lawfulness in Middle-Earth? Can they be reconciled with modern theories of law?
- Does Tolkien's fiction promote feudalism?
- What relevance do the lessons of Tolkien's fiction have for the Global War on Terrorism?
- How is masculinity (or femininity) developed and portrayed in Tolkien's novels?
- What does the intersectional critical perspective have to say about Tolkien's work?
- How should one behave in war, according to Tolkien's writings?
- From where did Tolkien derive his ideas about humility in politics – and are those ideas correct ones?
- How would a rule-utilitarian read Tolkien's novels?
- Does Tolkien believe that there are objective and absolute moral laws in the political realm?
- Is Tolkien's worldview more supportive of parochialism or cosmopolitanism?



1. What is Arda?
- 2-5. List four Ainur referred to by name *in the Ainundalë* and the apparent gender of each.
6. What is the Secret Fire?
7. Name a Maia that followed Melkor.
8. Where does Melkor flee after first being defeated by the other Valar?
- 9-10. What are two consequences of the War of the Powers?
11. Who forms the first kingdom described in Middle-Earth itself (Menegroth)?



12. Why might explain Manwë's decision to pardon Melkor?

13-14. What three lies does Melkor spread in Aman?



1. What were two elements of the Oath of Fëanor that Tolkien seems to regard as wrongful?
2. Why did Fëanor decide to steal the ships at Alqualondë instead of learning to build a fleet of his own?
3. What was the Doom of Mandos?
4. Why did the Dwarves build Menegroth for Thingol?
5. Who won the first great battle of the Moriquendi vs. Morgoth?
6. Who won the second great battle, which pitted the Noldor against Morgoth?
7. How did Thingol react to the migration of the Noldor into Middle-Earth?
8. Who prevailed in Dagor Aglareb?
9. Who was Aredhel, before meeting Eöl?
10. Who was Idril – and why did she spurn Maeglin?



11. What was Finrod's reaction to his discovery of Men?

12. Who were the Edain?

13. Who won the Battle of the Sudden Flame?

14. What was Fingolfin's reaction to the outcome of the Battle of the Sudden Flame?



1. What does Thingol demand of Beren?
2. Who was included in the Union of Maedhros, and who remained apart?
3. List three pseudonyms used by Túrin Turambar and the meaning of each.
4. How was Thingol's kingdom destroyed without external invasion (which the Girdle of Melian might have prevented)?
5. Who betrayed the location of Gondolin to Morgoth?
6. Who actually *fought* against Morgoth in the War of Wrath?
7. Ar-Pharazon invaded _____, resulting in his destruction.





1. What kind of people are the Dwarves, if we take their song in Chapter 1 as any guide?

2. How did Bilbo's *pride* get the better of him in Chapter 2?

3. What do the Elves' songs reveal about them?

- 5-7. List three *lucky* coincidences in the novel.

8. What does the Goblins' introductory song say about *their* desires and pleasures?

9. How is Gollum's character portrayed differently in the first and revised versions of Chapter 4?

10. What are wargs?

11. How does Beorn verify that the Dwarves are telling the truth?



12. Why does Bilbo insult the spiders? What is he trying to accomplish?
13. Who becomes the real leader of the Company in Gandalf's absence – that is, the one that plans and executes actions for the group?
14. How is Lake-town governed? What is its form of government?
15. Why does Bilbo dare to enter the Mountain all alone – *twice*?
16. What does the Company do once they realize that Smaug is absent (Chapter 13)?
17. Who is Bard the Bowman?
18. What is Bilbo's plan for peace when the Men of Lake-town and Dwarves are both preparing to go to war on each other?
19. Tolkien coined a word called *euclastrophe*, meaning an unlikely combination of events that brings about rapid and unexpected positive change (rather than the rapid and unexpected negative change of a catastrophe). What is the *euclastrophe* in this "fairy-story"?
20. How do the other hobbits react when Bilbo returns home?



1. What type of polity is the Shire? How is it governed?
2. Why are the Bucklanders seen as “queer” by the hobbits in Hobbiton? And what is the intended meaning of “queer” as used by the hobbits?
3. Why are Elves and Dwarves moving through the Shire?
4. Who are the conspirators in Chapter 5, “A Conspiracy Unmasked?”
5. Why is the Old Forest hostile to Hobbits?
6. Tom Bombadil repeatedly rescues the Hobbits. Why?
7. Who is arguing with the residents of Bree at the Prancing Pony?
8. Of whom is Strider singing in Tale of Tinúviel?
9. Who is Glorfindel?



10. What point does the inclusion of Tom Bombadil make about the use of the power of “subcreation,” according to Tolkien’s letter to Nevill Coghill?



1. Of his delay, Gandalf says, “yet I am not sure: it may have been better so.” In what way may Gandalf’s delay have been a *good* thing?
2. Does Bilbo actually change in appearance when he sees the Ring, or is it that Frodo’s perception of him changes when he sees Bilbo’s lust for the Ring?
3. Who made the various Rings of Power?
4. What is the White Council, and why did it fail to defeat Sauron?
5. Why does Elrond allow Merry and Pippin to go with the Fellowship?
6. Who disturbs the Watcher in the Water?
7. How is the face of the Orc-chieftan in Moria described?
8. What might Gandalf mean by the words, “I am a servant of the Secret Fire, wielder of the flame of Anor?”



9. How does Aragorn defuse the conflict between Gimli and the Elves of Lóthlorien?

10. Who rules Lóthlorien?

11. What is Sam's vision in the Mirror, and what political choice does he make?

12. What gift, denied to Fëanor in "Quenta Silmarillion," does Gimli receive from Galadriel?

13. Who senses Gollum for his first time on the river?

14. Why is Frodo "glad to have heard" Boromir "speak so fully." What is his "mind made up" about now?

15. What was Aragorn's intended course of action at the crossroads, prior to the Orc ambush?



1. Aragorn chooses to follow after Merry and Pippin rather than Sam and Frodo. Why?
2. Éomer's orders are to refrain from letting any wander freely in the land without leave from the one he serves – but he is convinced that he is dealing with honorable people here. How does he resolve the dilemma?
3. What political rift exists within the Orc host?
4. What does Saruman stand for, according to Treebeard?
5. Where is Éomer when the company enters the Golden Hall of Medusheld?
6. What is the distinction between the Hornburg and Helm's Deep?
7. Why are the Dunlendings fighting?



8. How does Rohan win the battle of Helm's Deep?

9. Aragorn says, "One who cannot cast away a treasure at need is in fetters." What kind of fetters?

10. What does Pippin see in the Palantír?



1. Why doesn't Frodo kill Gollum/Sméagol?
2. To whom does Sméagol promise loyalty?
3. Why are there dead faces in the waters of the Dead Marshes?
4. According to Sméagol, why doesn't Sauron keep a close watch on Minas Morgul?
5. What is Sam's reaction to the battle he witnesses in Ithilien?
6. How many times does Faramir disobey orders in Chapters 5-6 (list them)?
7. What is Faramir's attitude towards war?



8. Do you think Gollum/Sméagol actually forgave Frodo for his trickery at the Forbidden Pool? What was the closest that he came to redemption and repentance?

9. Why does Frodo lose all hope in Chapter 8 – and why does he continue with the quest?

10. Who or what is Shelob?

11. What are the “Choices of Master Samwise,” in order?

12. Which Orc says that even those “high up” can make mistakes, while another Orc shushes him?



1. Are the Men of Dol Amroth portrayed as superior to those of Lebennin? Why or why not?
2. What does Denethor regard as his highest purpose?
3. Who are the Grey Company?
4. Why does Aragorn choose the Paths of the Dead despite the obvious concern of everyone he mentions it to, including Eowyn?
5. Who is Dernhelm?
6. What does Denethor say he would have done with the Ring?
7. Why does Faramir oppose strengthening the defense of Osgiliath?
8. What do you think Denethor saw when he looked into the *palantír* after the ailing Faramir was brought to him?



9. How do Ghân-buri-Ghân and the Woses aid the Rohirrim – and what do they ask for in return?

10. When and why do the Rohirrim take up the cry, “Death!”

11. Where did Aragorn get all his troops from?

12. Why does Gandalf make the decision to try to save Faramir, even though he knows his help is needed in the battle and that saving Faramir will do nothing to alter its course?

13. Why does the last debate result in a decision to attack Sauron where he is strongest – and with only seven thousand men against Sauron’s many tens of thousands?

14. What kind of peace does Sauron offer the West?



1. What appeal does the Ring make to Sam, and how does he resist it?

2. Did Frodo's final words to Gollum have any actual power? Why/why not?

3. Did Frodo fail in his quest?

4. Who effectively "mansplains" Eowyn's own feelings to her in the Houses of Healing, convincing her that what she *really* wants is a traditional female role?

5. How does Aragorn treat the servants or allies of Sauron after the latter's defeat?

6. What do Gimli and Legolas plan for the future?

7. To what kind of polity do the Hobbits return?

- 9-12. What approach to the brief civil war did each of the four returning Hobbits take?



13. What was wrong with Frodo after the War of the Ring?

14. In Letter 181, what does Tolkien claim is absent in *The Lord of the Rings*?

15. In Letter 183, Tolkien maintains that Frodo's duty was not a *political* one. What does Tolkien think that "political" means or implies?

16. In Letter 186, Tolkien expresses skepticism about democracy. Why does he reject the democratic values of universal equality and humility?

17. What is "metapolitics," as described by Colebatch?

18. What is Birzer's thesis, offered in response to charges of "escapism" in Tolkien's work?



19. What is distributivism?

20-25. What research question do you plan to examine in your research note – and why is having an answer to the question important to political scientists?

Question (20-21):

Importance (22-25):



1. What are Tolkien's two preferred forms of government, according to Letter 52?

2. In Letter 326, Tolkien expresses reservations about literary analysis. What is his objection to such analysis?

3. What is Tolkien's own suggested definition of "fairy-story?"

4. What is wrong with the way folklorists and anthropologists approach fairy stories?

5. What two meanings of "spell" does Tolkien identify?

6. When has a fairy-story "succeeded?"

7. What must be added to Imagination to achieve Sub-creation?

8. What purpose does *eucaastrophe* serve in fantasy?



9. What does Tolkien regard as a *true* fairy-story?

10. In “Mythopoeia,” how does Misomythus see trees and stars?

11. What is one rebuttal offered by Philomythus to the notion that myths are “lies?”

12. According to Vaccaro, what is *the abject*?

- 13-15. What three categories of alterity does Vaccaro review?

16. What kinds of Tolkien scholarship does Wise seem to disfavor? Does this opposition have a political basis?

