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Fall, 2014
2:30-4:00 T/TH;
Room C-106

Engl 4376 (25328): Robin Hood in Culture

This course traces the development of the myth/history of the British legendary character Robin Hood from its pre-medieval roots, through its literary development, to the most current iterations of the hero in politics and popular culture. The course will ask its members to reevaluate their instinctive impression of Robin Hood as the benevolent outlaw who "robbed from the rich and gave to the poor." The course's coverage of the developing legend may include: pre-medieval folklore; medieval ballads about a yeoman outlaw; Elizabethan plays about a gentrified Norman aristocrat-turned outlaw, Robert of Huntington and his love interest Maid Marian; 18th-century broadside ballads providing the back stories about Robin's "Merry Men"; 19th century historical romances, lyric poems, and plays; 20th-century popular culture entertainments including operas, popular fiction, feature films and television series devoted to the Robin Hood legend, most recently the BBC TV series, *Robin Hood* (2006-09), and the 2010 Russell Crowe film *Robin Hood*. Through these adaptations of the legend, Robin Hood became a protean cultural symbol that has been variously appropriated by systems of authority as well as rebels against authority. From her origins as a fertility goddess, the May Queen, to her most recent film adaptations as a gutsy warrior women, reinterpretations of Maid Marian have mirrored the development of women's history in the past century, turning a once passive damsel in distress into a post-feminist, proactive female partner of Robin. In the 2008 American election Barack Obama was associated with the British outlaw by both supporters and detractors. In the commercial sphere, the Robin Hood "brand" has advertised various products, including underwear, bullets, and milk.

Required Books:

1. Stephen Knight/ Thomas Ohlgren, ed. *Robin Hood and Other Outlaw Tales* (Kalamazoo: University of Western Michigan Press; TEAMS Medieval Texts) ISBN 978-1580440677.
2. Howard Pyle, *The Merry Adventures of Robin Hood* (NY: Dover, 1968) ISBN-10: 0486220435; ISBN-13: 978-0486220437
3. Timothy Corrigan, *A Short Guide to Writing about Film* (Longman, 7th edition, 2010) ISBN 10: 978-0-205-66894-6; ISBN 10: 0-205-66894-1 This may be changed to another text; wait for instructions in the class.

These will be supplemented by online texts, (Thomas Love Peacock, *Maid Marian*; Alfred Lord Tennyson, *The Foresters*; and others) and books on reserve.

Films:

Students will become familiar with the major films and television adaptations of the Robin Hood story and do independent research about lesser known films and TV from the instructor's personal collection. Selected film clips will be available on Blackboard and complete films will be placed reserve in the library.

Written Projects may include:

1. A **midterm essay** comparing depictions of one of the major characters in the legend in text and film
2. A series of **well researched short essays or annotations** of aspects of the RH legend including literature, history, films, and popular culture. The instructor will help students choose topics that complement their strengths, majors, and personal interests.
3. A **comparative essay** on adaptations of the legend serving as the **final exam**
4. **Weekly quizzes** on the assigned readings and film clips