

Syllabus Project

due by April 26, 2013

I am not rash with hubris, thinking my syllabus is perfect. On the contrary, I will, in fact, readily admit to its many imperfections. Now you get to try your hand at improving the selection and scheduling of readings for this course, submitting and defending the reading list you would use were you teaching the course.

The finished project will be approximately three to six pages, composed of two parts, a reading list (1–2 pages) and a justification (2–4 pages). The first part is the ordered list of readings. (You need not design a chart or include page numbers: a simple date/title list will be fine.) The justification portion is where you explain why you have chosen what you have and why you think the readings should be ordered in the manner you propose.

You have complete freedom to make the decisions you desire. You might, for instance, choose to spend the entire semester on *Le Morte d'Arthur*. But you would need a very sound, detailed reason for such a decision. Or you might want only to reorder the texts, or perhaps to cut and/or add a few texts. You might even want to keep my exact readings and schedule (sycophant!). No matter what you choose to do, your main focus should be on explaining precisely why you have chosen the content and ordering of your reading list.

You will be evaluated primarily on how your justification exhibits a familiarity with and understanding of the material. Sure, I will be ineffably impressed if you decide to add works we did not cover in the course—even more so if the pieces are not included in our textbook—but such choices do not necessarily mean an A+, not if the reasoning behind such selections lacks a soundly considered application of what you should know about the texts. On the other hand, a paper that effects a few simple, relatively minor adjustments to the reading list we used could get a very high grade, depending on the depth of knowledge the justification evinces.

While this project is due at the end of the semester, you can, essentially, work on your decisions with each class meeting's reading.