E321: Shakespeare
Prof. Coleman Hutchison

This course offers an uncommon opportunity to study England’s great poet and playwright “on location.” Needless to say, we will take full advantage of our setting, touring Shakespearean heritage sites and seeing several performances of Shakespeare’s plays at venues like the Hampstead Theatre (London), the Royal Shakespeare Theatre (Stratford-upon-Avon), and Shakespeare’s Globe (London). In considering the relations between page and stage, the course will highlight the interpretive insights offered by present-day performances. It will also underscore the rather complicated textual histories of all of Shakespeare’s works. NB: Summer 2016 is a particularly good time to take this course, as it marks the 400th anniversary of the death of “The Bard.” To steal a line from one of Shakespeare’s sonnets, we will discover “Will in overplus” next summer….

E350E: Getting Chivalric: The Once and Future Middle Ages
Prof. Daniel Birkholz

Every generation produces its own version of the Middle Ages. Using literature, film, and popular culture, this course examines how the conventions of medieval courtly love and chivalric romance have been utilized—often parodied—from the 14th century to the 21st. We will move from classics like Sir Gawain & the Green Knight and Malory’s Le Morte D’Arthur, through 19th-century romanticism and pragmatism, to the early British fantasists (Tolkien, T.H. White), feminist neo-pagans (The Mists of Avalon), and beyond (Neil Gaiman; Camelot 3000; Monty Python & the Holy Grail). Show-stoppers to include Mark Twain’s A Connecticut Yankee at King Arthur’s Court; some unspeakably bawdy medieval fabliaux; and our very own Arthurian film fest. Camelot has become difficult to find, but expect excursions to sites such as Stonehenge; Cornwall’s Tintagel Castle (where King Arthur was conceived); Glastonbury Abbey (where he’s buried); and Avalon Tor (inside of which he’s still living). Class will probably not be held at The Eagle & Child, the Oxford pub where Tolkien, Lewis & the Inklings met on Mondays between the wars…

E375L: Victorian Literature
Prof. Allen MacDuffie

In the nineteenth century, London was the largest and fastest growing city in the world, the epicenter of the transformative forces of modernity, and a place where social divisions, political struggles, and environmental damage were all spectacularly on display. In this course, we’ll examine the different ways in which this bustling metropolis was represented in key works by three major Victorian novelists: Charles Dickens (Great Expectations), Robert Louis Stevenson (Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde), and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle (The Sign of the Four). These authors variously imagine London as a place of risk, corruption, opportunity, mystery and metamorphosis, where characters experience new possibilities for self-creation and discovery, as well as threats to the integrity of the self. Although our main focus will be on these three writers, we will contextualize our reading with some targeted forays into the history of the city and nineteenth-century England. We will take a number of trips to London to visit the locales described in the novels, and track the characters as they lose and find each other (and themselves) in the labyrinthine world of the city.

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