Instructor:
Dr. Susan Aronstein
Professor of English
University of Wyoming
Laramie, WY 82071
aronstei@uwyo.edu

Course Description:
We all know (or think we know) the story of Arthur and his knights: the sword in the stone, Camelot, the Round Table, might for right, Guinevere and Lancelot, Mordred, the day of doom, the promise of a “once and future king.” In most cases, we are not sure how we know it. We just do. But take a look around you. Excalibur Hotel, Round Table Pizza, A Connecticut Rabbit in King Arthur’s Court, Camelot 3000, King Arthur (the video game), Spamalot—from Las Vegas to Broadway, television to PlayStation, restaurants to bookstores—the Arthurian legend permeates modern culture. It sells us pizzas (Guinevere’s Garden Delight) and adventures (King Arthur invites you to “Build Camelot…Lead hundreds of brave warriors on the magnificent battlefields of Britannia!”), shapes the narrative framework for hundreds of fantasy and science-fiction books and films, and provides the inspiration for countless takes on the tale: both epic (The Mists of Avalon) and parodic (Monty Python and the Holy Grail). This course will examine the persistent popularity of the Arthurian legend as it has crossed oceans and genres: from early medieval Welsh folk tales, through twelfth-century French romances and Victorian verse, to theme parks, modern American films and video games.

Texts and Materials:
Reading Packet
T.H. White, The Once and Future King
Marion Zimmer-Bradley, The Mists of Avalon

Course Content:
This course will consist of a combination of lectures (by Dr. Aronstein and local experts), class discussions, film-viewings, and visits to Arthurian sites and landscapes (such as Winchester, Stonehenge, Avebury and Glastonbury) and to the British Library and Museum to view medieval and Arthurian artifacts.

Course Requirements and Assignments
- Daily Work: class attendance and participation, group work and discussion.
- Reading Questions: for every work we read, you will be asked to come to class with three thoughtful, developed questions about the work and its place in the Arthurian tradition
- Site-visit Journals: Based on your own reflection and your responses to specific questions posed by the class/instructor.
- Research project: A significant critical research paper on an aspect of the Arthurian legend, written in several stages: an initial exploration of topic and question, an annotated bibliography and formal proposal, at least one preliminary draft, and a final version. Due one-month after we return from the UK.