

J.R.R. Tolkien's Middle Earth—The Second Age

Summer Reading Club—Syllabus

Schole Academy and St. Raphael School

Instructor: Rev. Chris Marchand

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Dates: June 20–July 25 (10 sessions)

Time: Section 1: M/W 10 a.m–11 a.m. EST

Section 2: M/W 3–4 p.m. EST

Schoology Access Code:

Description:

Are you curious about the upcoming *Lord of the Rings: The Rings of Power* TV show and want to know more about the background texts they are using to form the show's plot? If so, this is the course for you! J.R.R. Tolkien fans are currently abuzz with curiosity and skepticism surrounding the show, which debuts in September 2022 and takes place during The Second Age of Middle earth, which is thousands of years before *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*. Supposedly the television show is *only* drawing from the appendices found at the end of *The Return of King*, but so many integral events happen during this time period: the rings of power are forged, Sauron gains prominence, the island of Númenor rises and falls, and much happens to the beloved peoples and characters we later encounter in *The Lord of the Rings*. This summer reading club will give you a solid understanding of Tolkien's writings on The Second Age, so—whether you decide you love or hate the TV show—you will at least know what parts of it are accurate, what parts are newly created, and what parts don't exactly line up with the source material. We will be reading from the appendices to *The Lord of the Rings*, *Unfinished Tales*, and a small section of *The Silmarillion*.

Texts:

- *The Return of the King* (or any collected volume of *The Lord of the Rings*) We will be reading primarily from the appendices). Please note: having read *The Lord of the Rings* is not a prerequisite for this course, though it is assumed students will have a general knowledge of the plot and characters from those books, as it will come up in some of our discussions.
- *Unfinished Tales*
- *The Silmarillion*

Optional Texts (these are not required but will be a handy resource):

- *The Lost Road* and *Sauron Defeated* (volumes 5 and 9 of *The History of Middle Earth*)
- *The Complete Guide to Middle Earth* by Robert Foster
- *The Atlas of Middle Earth* by Karen Wynn Fonstad

Reading Schedule	NOTE: this schedule may need to be adjusted as we go. Assume that you will come to each class having read section for that day.
June 20	If you have a copy of <i>The Silmarillion</i> , please read the chapter Akallabêth, which covers the events of The Second Age (scans of the reading will be provided by request).
June 22	Appendix A of LOTR, Read until the end of iv "Gondor and the Heirs of Anárion," stopping before "The Stewards."
June 27	The rest of Appendix A of LOTR.
June 29	Appendices B–D of LOTR
July 6	Appendices E–F of LOTR, with selected readings from LOTR (scans of the reading will be provided by request).
July 11	<i>Unfinished Tales</i> : "Of Tuor and His Coming to Gondolin"
July 13	<i>Unfinished Tales</i> : "A Description of the Island of Númenor" and "Aldarion and Erendis," finishing the section before the paragraph saying "When the second year of Aldarion's..."



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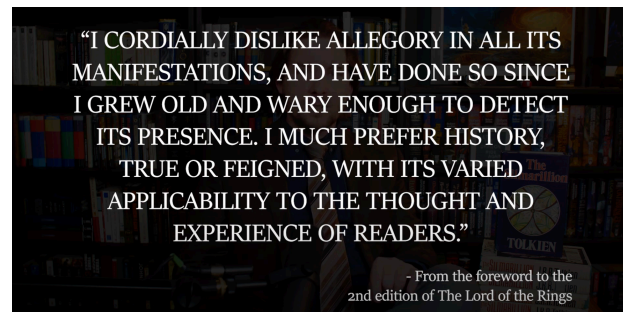
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July 18	<i>Unfinished Tales</i> : finish “Aldarion and Erendis,” and Galadriel and Celeborn finishing the section before “Amroth and Nimrodel.”
July 20	<i>Unfinished Tales</i> : finish Galadriel and Celeborn.
July 25	Selections from <i>The Lost Road</i> and <i>The Notion Club Papers</i> (scans of the reading will be provided by request).

Beginning and ongoing questions:

- What is your current experience of the works of Tolkien?
- What are you hoping to learn and gain from this reading club? What about Middle-earth are you most wanting to know about?
- Can you talk about the differences and connections between history (as a genre of writing), myth, and allegory?
- How is the writing of the appendices, *Unfinished Tales*, and *The Silmarillion* different than *The Hobbit* and *Lord of the Rings*?
- What is Tolkien offering us by creating prehistorical myths about Britain and what do you make of the fact that he was constantly changing and expanding his stories?



Optional Assignment:

At some point during the bookclub, read an article or book (or section of a book) or watch a video that is related to Tolkien's work and then share with the class what you've read. Potential sources:

- <https://www.tolkiensociety.org/>
- <http://mythsoc.org/>
- <http://lotrproject.com/>
- Tolkien Lore Youtube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCJhGIQTGHsS92ilvpFIRiYA>
- Tolkien Collection at Marquette University: <https://www.marquette.edu/library/archives/tolkien.php>
- A list of books about Tolkien and Middle Earth: <https://www.tolkiensociety.org/author/books-about-tolkien/>
- A documentary on Tolkien:
- An interview with Tolkien:
- FAQ's about Tolkien and Middle Earth: <https://www.tolkiensociety.org/author/faq/>
- Different websites with articles on Tolkien: <https://apilgriminnarnia.com/2021/06/14/5-open-source-academic-research-inklings/?fbclid=IwAR3z6oFkvk9mhl4duwtBuD7tQ5IV15PSa9VWvZDXnBz9BG7MqZRDm5dhNVM>
- <http://www.tolkienlibrary.com/index.php>
- Different books: *The Letters of J.R.R. Tolkien*, *Tolkien and the Great War*, *Tolkien's Modern Reading: Middle-earth Beyond the Middle Ages*, *The Worlds of J.R.R. Tolkien: The Places that Inspired Middle-earth*, *The Monsters and the Critics: and other essays*, *Tree of Tales: Tolkien Literature, and Theology*, *Meditations on Middle-earth*, *The Road to Middle-earth: How J.R.R. Tolkien Created a New Mythology*, *J.R.R. Tolkien: Author of the Century*
- Biographies on Tolkien: by Tom Shippey, Humphrey Carpenter, Wyatt North, Colin Duriez, and Jesse Xander.

