A Quest – a hero undertakes a dangerous and exciting journey through a marvelous world in search of spiritual or material reward. The motif of the quest is a common one in the history of western literature, presenting us with a range of heroes, journeys, and rewards. This section will trace the development of the quest motif, starting with its early iterations in the Mesopotamian Epic of Gilgamesh, the Ancient Greek epic of the Odyssey, and the Roman epic of the Aeneid. We will use these examples as archetypes to help us understand the quest motif in modern literature, especially its appearance in the modern genres of fantasy (such as in the Lord of the Rings trilogy), science fiction (such as Star Trek, Star Wars, and Battlestar Galactica), and interactive fiction (such as World of Warcraft and other quest-based games).

This course satisfies Tier One requirements.