

English 260
Survey of British Literature I
Spring 2012
T/R 9:30 – 10:45AM
Clough 304

Prof. Seth Rudy
310 Palmer Hall
Office Hours: W 1-2, T/R 2-3:30
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This course will introduce you to a selection of works of British literature from the Middle Ages through the eighteenth century. Our syllabus will cover a period of roughly a thousand years—a great swathe of time during which Britain, along with its languages and literatures, underwent a series of transformative changes. We will explore those changes and their part in British history through the poetry, prose, drama, and fiction of authors both still well known and now somewhat more obscure. The course will take a number of different critical approaches to these texts even as we more broadly consider the social, political, and economic circumstances of their production. Through lectures, class discussion, and written assignments, this class will develop your knowledge of British literary history as well as your critical thinking and compositional skills.

Course Objectives

To develop analytical acumen and evaluative approaches to primary texts and critical arguments
 To develop a greater understanding of British literary history
 To develop knowledge of key texts and the ways in which those texts are (or are not) representative of Medieval, Early Modern, and Eighteenth-Century British literature.

Required texts

The Longman Anthology of British Literature, Bundled Package (includes Volume 1A – The Middle Ages; Volume 1B—The Early Modern Period; and Volume 1C – The Restoration and the Eighteenth Century), 4th Edition, ed. David Damrosch

Henry V

Handouts/Electronic Texts

Written Assignments

Grammar and stylistics will be taken into consideration as part of your grade for ALL of these assignments. Word-count floors and ceilings are hard boundaries; make sure you land within them! All written assignments should be submitted on paper and electronically in double-spaced, 12-point Times New Roman with 1" margins and the appropriate information in the header (your name, paper title, class, and date). Whenever possible, save your files as .doc (Microsoft Word) documents and in the following format: lastname-paper#.doc. For example: Rudy-paper1.doc.

Response Papers (4 x 5% each = 20%)

2 pages (600 words)

These papers call for a concise, focused, analytic response to a specific aspect of the text(s). Prompts for this will be provided or announced, but need not necessarily be followed; alternatives may be discussed with me in advance. These papers are intended to provide an opportunity for further concentrated critical consideration of issues that have come up during discussions in class and/or during your reading. As space is at a premium in these papers, you will want to avoid overarching introductions to the text or extended summaries; presume your audience is familiar with the text and quickly pursue your analysis of a chosen moment or passage and suggest its relationship to your broader critical interpretation of the text as a whole.

Essay 1 (15%)

5-6 pages (1500-1800 words)

This paper will be a close textual analysis of a short selection of poetry or prose. A set of selections will be provided, but alternatives may be discussed. Close reading calls for sustained critical thinking and in-depth analysis of language in order to discover as much information about your chosen material as possible. *In close reading, you should consider not just what a passage says, but how it says it; consider the ways in which diction, syntax, imagery, connotation, and/or metaphor create meaning within the passage and relate to the piece as a whole.*

Essay 2 (25%)

9-11 pages (2700-3300 words)

The paper calls for you devise a course of secondary research and execute a sustained, coherent, and well-supported argument about any of the primary texts we have read during the semester. Your arguments should be specific to your chosen text(s) and offer some engagement with the conditions (historic, economic, social, and/or intellectual) of its production. If you wish, you may revisit a text (or texts) and topic about which you have already written; however, I will expect a substantial revision and development of your earlier effort in addition to the integration of secondary sources.

Late Assignments

Late assignments will be subject to a grade reduction of 1/3 of a letter grade per day; **any paper more than four days late will automatically receive NO CREDIT (a grade of zero)**. If, for example, an assignment is due Tuesday at 9:30AM, then as of 9:31AM that day, it is one day late and you have until Wednesday at 9:30AM to hand it in. At 9:31AM Wednesday, it is two days late, and so on. Failure to turn in any major assignment may result in automatic failure of the entire course.

ExamsMidterm Exam (10%)

There will be a midterm exam consisting of passages from texts that you must identify by author, title, and date (publication or composition) and key terms for which you must provide brief definitions.

Final Exam (15%)

There will be a final exam consisting of passages from texts that you must identify by author, title, and date (publication or composition) and key terms for which you must provide brief definitions. This exam may also call for several short essays.

EngagementDiscussion/Contribution/Presence (15%)

Perfect attendance by itself will not merit full credit in this area. Engagement—whether in the form of your reading responses (formal and informal), quizzes, essays, discursive participation, office appointments, etc.—should be thoughtful and substantive. Your full intellectual engagement in this course, both inside and outside the classroom, is crucial to its success as well as yours. Of course, you should come to each class prepared to discuss the day's readings and respond to each other's observations. You can advance arguments, ask questions, introduce new topics, or make connections to ongoing and prior conversations by pointing the class to a passage or moment in the text.

You are encouraged to make use of my office hours or make an appointment to speak with me at *any* point during the semester to ask questions about or discuss any aspect of the class. Email is the best way to reach me at all other times.

N.B. Medieval, Early Modern, and eighteenth-century literatures often present different sets of unique and fascinating challenges to the modern reader. We are reading a small selection of works from the period(s) we are covering, but that reading is nonetheless substantial and it is often difficult. Sometimes, a short piece may take longer to read effectively than a longer one. Please refer to the schedule frequently and try very hard not to fall behind.

You are of course also encouraged to make use of my office hours or make an appointment to speak with me at *any* point during the semester to ask questions about or discuss any aspect of the class. Email is the best way to reach me at all other times.

Attendance

Attendance will be taken in each class. **You may miss up to two classes without penalty or explanation.** Additional unexcused absences will adversely affect your engagement and final grades. **Excessive absences will result in a lowering of grade, in some cases to an F.** Three instances of significant tardiness will count as an unexcused absence.

Intellectual Honesty

Please familiarize yourself with the terms of the Rhodes College Honor Code and refer to the attached Department of English Expectations and Policies.

Classroom Decorum

Please refrain from eating in class. Beverages are permissible where circumstances allow. Please turn off cellular telephones and other devices. If you are unable to take notes without a laptop, you may use one in class; however, web browsing and checking email during class is absolutely prohibited.

Academic Accommodations

If you have a documented disability and wish to receive academic accommodations, please contact the Office of Student Disability Services at x3885 as soon as possible.

Department of English Expectations and Policies

A college course is more than simply a set of assignments; it is an intellectual process, one which requires active engagement from beginning to end in order to achieve its intended results. With this in mind, the Department of English has formulated a number of expectations and the policies that support them. If you have questions about how these policies relate to the syllabus for a particular course, you should address them to the instructor.

Attendance: The success of a course depends to a significant extent upon the presence of students alert and prepared to address the subject under discussion. Unavoidable absences should be discussed with the instructor, ideally before they occur. Excessive absences will result in a lowering of grade, in some cases to an F.

Deadlines: Writing assignments, tests, etc., are carefully scheduled as stages toward the fulfillment of the course's goals and cannot be indefinitely deferred without frustrating those goals. Brief extensions for good reasons may be permissible with the instructor's prior approval; otherwise, late assignments will be penalized and may result in their not being accepted for credit.

Submission of all work: All major assignments are integral to the goals of the course. Failure to complete any major assignment will result in a grade of F for the course.

Intellectual honesty: All work is assumed to be the student's own and produced exclusively for the course in which it is submitted. Papers written for one course, even if revised, are not to be submitted in another without the instructor's prior approval. Borrowing of ideas or language from other sources (including published material, other student papers, the internet or other electronic resources, etc.) must be carefully documented. Students are advised against posting their work on the internet since doing so may lead to suspicion of plagiarism. Students are advised to maintain drafts of their work to verify its originality. Cases of suspected plagiarism will be referred to the Honor Council, and the student if convicted will receive a grade of F in the course in addition to sanctions assigned by the Council. Clear evidence of plagiarism (failure to use quotation marks around verbatim or copied language, failure to adequately paraphrase, and failure to cite the source of quoted, paraphrased, or borrowed text and ideas), regardless of the Council hearing outcome, may likewise result in failure of the course. Carelessness in documenting sources, even if not technically plagiarism, will be penalized as the instructor deems appropriate. If you are uncertain about how or whether to document sources, consult your teacher.

ANOTHER BRITAIN, ANOTHER ENGLISH*

- R, Jan. 12 Introduction
Riddles (1A, 178-81)
- T, Jan. 17 The Anglo-Saxon Epic, pt. I
Beowulf, ll.1-1604 (1A, 36-72)
- R, Jan. 19 The Anglo-Saxon Epic, pt. II
Beowulf, ll.1604-3179 (1A, 72-107)

THE NORMAN CONQUEST AND ITS AFTERMATH

- T, Jan. 24 Rewriting Britain: The Arthur Myths
 Geoffrey of Monmouth, from *History of the Kings of Britain* (1A, 183-94)
 Edward I, “Letter Sent to the Papal Court of Rome” (1A, 196-98)
 Response (1A, 198-99)
 Marie de France, from *Lais* (1A, 200-19)
 William Caxton, from Prologue to *Morte Darthur* (1A, 279-80)
- R, Jan. 26 A More “English” Literature: Chaucer, pt. I
 Geoffrey Chaucer, *The Canterbury Tales*, “General Prologue” (1A, 318-57)
- T, Jan. 31 A More English Literature: Chaucer, pt. II – RESPONSE PAPER 1 DUE
 Geoffrey Chaucer, *The Canterbury Tales*, “The Pardoner’s Prologue and Tale” (1A, 403-19)

STATES OF TRANSITION: FROM LATE MEDIEVAL TO EARLY MODERN

- R, Feb. 2 Late Medieval Morality: The Christian Allegorical Drama
Mankind (1A, 587-612)
- T, Feb. 7 Literature, Law, and Social Order: Utopias and Utopianism
 Sir Thomas More, *Utopia* (1B, 715-784)
- R, Feb. 9 Vagabondage and Rogue Literature
 Thomas Harman, *A Caveat for Common Cursetors, Vulgarly Called Vagabonds* (EEBO: TBA)

POETRY IN THE AGE OF ELIZABETH

- T, Feb. 14 The Place of Poetry – RESPONSE PAPER 2 DUE
 Sir Philip Sidney, *An Apology for Poetry* (1B, 998-1032)
- R, Feb. 16 Exercises in Verse: Popular Forms and Uncommon Poets
 Sir Thomas Wyatt, “Whoso List to Hunt” (1B, 668)
 Sir Philip Sidney, “Astrophil and Stella” (1B, 680-97)
 Isabella Whitney, “The Admonition by the Author” (1B, 1041-43), “The Manner of Her Will” (1B, 1046-54)
 Elizabeth I, “The Doubt of Future Foes” (1116), “On Monsieur’s Departure” (1117)
 William Shakespeare, Sonnets 116, 129, 130 (1284-85, 1286-87, 1287)

T, Feb 21 Dramatizing Politics, pt. I
William Shakespeare, *Henry V*, Act I-III

R, Feb 23 Dramatizing Politics, pt. II
William Shakespeare, *Henry V*, Acts IV-V

THE SEVENEENTH CENTURY

T, Feb. 28 Metaphysical Poetry
John Donne (TBA), George Herbert (TBA)

R, Mar. 1 **MIDTERM REVIEW- ESSAY 1 DUE**

T, Mar. 6 **MIDTERM EXAMINATION**

R, Mar. 8 The English Civil Wars
Perspectives: The Civil War (1B, 1678-1697)
Richard Lovelace, “To Lucasta, Going to the Wars” (1B, 1640-41); “To Althea, from Prison” (1642-43)
Andrew Marvell, “To His Coy Mistress,” (1B, 1659-60), “An Horation Ode Upon Cromwell’s Return from Ireland” (1B, 1665-67)
John Milton, “To the Lord General Cromwell” (1B, 1715)

THE END OF THE BEGINNING: *PARADISE LOST*

T, Mar. 20 Of the Devil’s Party?
John Milton, *Paradise Lost*, Books I – III (1B, 1727-90)

R, Mar. 22 **Class Cancelled**

T, Mar. 27 Knowledge Within Bounds
John Milton, *Paradise Lost*, Books VIII, IX (1B, 1871-1913)

R, Mar. 29 The World Was All Before Them
John Milton, *Paradise Lost*, Book XI, XII (1B, 1939-75)

THE REST OF THE RESTORATION

T, Apr. 3 Fact, Fiction, and The New Science – **RESPONSE PAPER 3 DUE**
Sir Francis Bacon, from *The New Organon* (handout)
Samuel Pepys, “The Royal Society” (1C, 2027-31)
“Perspectives: The Royal Society and the New Science” (1C, 2039-53)
“Perspectives: Mind and God,” sections from Isaac Newton (1C, 2613-17)
Thomas Sprat, from *The History of the Royal Society* (handout)
Margaret Cavendish, from *The Blazing World* (handout)

R, Apr. 5 **Easter Recess**

T, Apr. 10 The Restoration Stage I
William Wycherley, *The Country Wife*, Acts I-III (1C, 2213-50)

R, Apr. 12 The Restoration Stage II
 William Wycherley, *The Country Wife*, Acts IV-V (1C, 2251-2283)

THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

T, Apr. 17 “Polite” Learning and The Augustan Poets
 Alexander Pope, “The Rape of the Lock” (1C, 2470-91), “Essay on Man” (1C, 2501-09)
 Jonathan Swift, “The Lady’s Dressing Room” (1C, 2346-49); “Verses of the Death of Dr. Swift” (2352-65)

R, Apr. 19 Print and the Public Sphere
 From “Perspectives: Reading Papers” (1C, 2316-36)
 Samuel Johnson, from “The Rambler” (1C, 2694-96), from “The Idler” (1C, 2697-2703);
 from *A Dictionary of the English Language* (1C, 2703-16); from *Lives of the Poets* (1C, 2738-44)

T, Apr. 24 Nation and Empire – **RESPONSE PAPER 4 DUE**
 Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, from *The Turkish Embassy Letters* (1C, 2544-51)
 James Thompson, “Rule, Britannia” (1C, 2835-36)
 Thomas Gray, “Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard” (1C, 2854-57)
 Samuel Johnson, “The Vanity of Human Wishes” (1C, 2861-69)
 Oliver Goldsmith, “The Deserted Village” (1C, 2988-98)

R, Apr. 26 FINAL EXAM REVIEW

R, Apr. 28 FINAL EXAM – LAST CLASS

FINAL ESSAY DUE TBD

* All reading selections and due dates are subject to change.