

TR 3:30-4:45
Palmer 210

Prof. S. Uselmann
uselmanns@rhodes.edu
Palmer 310
Office hrs: MW 3-5

English 260: British Literature Survey I

This course is a survey of British Literature from its earliest years through the Restoration and the eighteenth century. It is intended to provide a broad sense of the history of English literature written in the British Isles from the very first texts which exist until about the year 1800. Because of the span of the material, we will focus primarily on major texts and authors such as the *Beowulf* poet, Chaucer, Spenser, Shakespeare, Donne, Milton and Swift. In our effort to develop an appreciation for the formal and aesthetic qualities of these works we will also focus on mastering the tools necessary for writing literary analysis.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS:

Beowulf, trans. Seamus Heaney. Norton.
Geoffrey Chaucer, *The Canterbury Tales*, ed. V. A. Kolve and Glending Olson. Norton Critical Edition
Edmund Spenser's Poetry, ed. Hugh Maclean and Anne Lake Prescott. Norton Critical Edition.
Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, ed. Peter Holland. Pelican Penguin.
John Milton, *Paradise Lost*, ed. Scott Elledge. Norton Critical Edition.
John Donne, *Complete English Poems*. Everyman.
Jonathon Swift, *Gulliver's Travels*. World's Classics.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Class Participation, Quizzes, In-Class Writing. This class comes with a heavy reading load and will be run primarily in a lecture/discussion format. It goes without saying that I expect you to come prepared with your book and having done the assigned reading for the day. Regular, active participation is also required, and I will periodically give quizzes or informal writing assignments that will count as part of this grade.

WebCT: As part of your class participation, you will also be required to respond to the readings by posing a question or series of questions to the class at least TEN (10) times over the course of the semester. The questions are by **3:30 on Tuesday (i.e. by the time of class)**. The response should be in the form of a question(s) that struck you as you read – for example some incident, passage, framing device, etc. that struck you as strange, unfamiliar, or problematic. You may also, if you like, offer a brief answer to your own question, but this is not required.

Group-Led Discussion and Response Paper. In addition to the required readings, each member of the class (together with a partner[s]) will be responsible for presenting on ONE particular work that we are reading this semester. This assignment is 5% of your final grade, and consists of three parts:

1. Reading the class postings from WebCT and choose from the week's reading a particular passage (approx. a paragraph but no longer than one page) – a passage which you think brings out, addresses, or helps to complicate these issues.
2. Leading a 15-minute discussion and close reading in class. Highlight the author's choices in literary devices and ask the class "how" and "why" questions that help draw out the key themes of the week. Be sure to email me to let me know your passage **by 4:00 Wednesday before your presentation**.
3. Writing a 1 pg. close reading of the passage that focuses on particular literary devices and develops an interpretation of the passage. This is your own work, to be done apart from your group work. The essay is **due by the Thursday following your presentation**.

All three parts must be completed in order to receive a passing grade on the assignment. If you have any questions about the readings or the assignment, or just want to run some ideas past me, please don't hesitate to email or come by to see me.

Absences. Regular, punctual attendance is required. Arriving more than 15 minutes late three times counts as an absence. Failure to bring your book to class or to pass the day's quiz also counts as an absence. Absences for extracurricular activities, religious holidays, or illness may be excused as long as you have contacted me in advance and completed the necessary homework/make-up work on time. You are allowed two (2) absences free-of-charge; each additional absence will cost your *final course average* two tenths of a point. If you miss more than 6 classes, you will fail the course.

Late Paper Policy. There will be NO extensions on any assignments in this class. Instead, you will be allotted three (3) "free" days at the beginning of the semester, which you may use when and as you wish. Each day is worth 24 hours (e.g. a paper due on Thursday may be handed in by Friday by 4:45), and you are free to use them up all at once or space them throughout the semester. It's up to you, but be aware that once these three days are used up, your letter grade on any given essay will drop 1/3 grade *for each day it is late*.

Grading.

Preparation and Participation (includes quizzes and WebCT postings) – 10 %

Attendance (see above)

Group-Led Presentation and Response Paper – 5 %

Writing assignments:

 Language Exercise – 10 %

 3 Essays (4-6 pp.) – 10 %, 15%, 20%

Two (2) Exams – 15 % each

Honor Code. All work must adhere to the honor code.

Be aware that all of the above requirements must be met in order to receive a passing grade in the course.

Questions, problems, or concerns? Please always feel free to contact me. Most difficulties can be prevented from becoming serious problems fairly easily -- if the professor knows about them in advance.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1

R 1/13 Introduction

Week 2

T 1/18 *Beowulf* (pp. 3-161; ll. 1-2366)

R 1/20 *Beowulf*, c'tued

Week 3

T 1/25 *Beowulf*, pp. 161-213 (ll. 2367-3812)
Chaucer, *General Prologue*, pp. 1-24 (ll. 1-330; 545-66; 715-858)
Chaucer, *Miller's Prologue and Tale*, pp. 75-93

R 1/27 Chaucer, *Miller's Prologue and Tale*, c'tued

Week 4

T 2/1

Chaucer, *General Prologue*, pp. 14-15 (ll. 444-76)
Chaucer, *Wife of Bath's Prologue and Tale*, pp. 105-35

R 2/3

Chaucer, *Wife of Bath*, c'tued
DUE: Language Exercise

Week 5

T 2/8

General Prologue, pp. 11-12 (ll. 331-60); pp. 20-21 (ll. 669-714)
Franklin's Prologue and Tale, pp. 169-91 (ll. 1-952)
Pardoner's Prologue and Tale, pp. 191-207 (ll. 1-655)

R 2/10

Chaucer, Franklin and Pardoner, c'tued

Week 6

T 2/15

Chaucer, *Retraction*, p. 258
Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, pp. 1-31 ("A Letter.."; l.i-ii)

R 2/17

Spenser, c'tued
DUE: Essay #1

Week 7

T 2/22

Spenser, *FQ*, pp. 231-311 (III.i-vi.24)

R 2/24

FQ c'tued

Week 8

T 3/1

FQ, pp. 312-400 (III.vi.25-xii)

R 3/3

EXAM #1

3/8-3/10

No class – Spring Break

Week 9

T 3/15

Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, pp. 3-84

R 3/17

Shakespeare, *The Tempest*

Week 10

T 3/22

Donne, *Complete English Poems*, pp. 2-50; pp. 335-58
Due: Essay #2

R 3/24

No class – Easter Break

Week 11

T 3/29

Milton, *Paradise Lost*, Books I-III, pp. 4-84

R 3/31

Milton, *PL* I-III

Week 12

T 4/5 *PL* IV, VIII-IX, pp. 84-112; pp. 180-229

R 4/7 *PL* IV, VIII-IX

Week 13

T 4/12A *PL* X-XII, pp. 229-301

R 4/14 *PL* X-XII
DUE: Essay #3

Week 14

T 4/19 *Gulliver's Travels*, Parts 1 and 2

R 4/21 *GT*, c'tued

Week 15

T 4/26 *GT*, Parts 3 and 4

R 4/28 **EXAM #2**