

Survey of British Literature I (English 260) – Fall 2015

Rhodes College, Department of English

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Office hours (Palmer 306): MTu 2-4pm, or by appointment (please email)

The semester after he was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature, the poet Joseph Brodsky was teaching a class on Russian poetry to a group of juniors and seniors. They were reading a poem by Osip Mandelstam that made reference to Ovid. When Mr. Brodsky asked how many had read Ovid, not a single hand went up. Mr. Brodsky said, "You've been cheated."

Course description

A (roughly) chronological survey of British Literature from Anglo-Saxon England to the 18th Century, wherein we sample a wide range of representative authors and genres. We will attempt to keep in mind historical periods as well as traditional forms that carry across periods.

Required text—available at the bookstore

The Norton Anthology of English Literature, Vol. 1 (7th ed., 2000)

website (registration code: BRIT-BOOK): <http://www.wwnorton.com/college/english/nael9/>

Requirements

Engagement (25%) is mandatory, broadly conceived to include active **participation** (*listening and responding* to your peers as well as the professor), consistent **preparation** of course readings, **enthusiasm** for assignments, **collaboration** with your peers, and **respect** for the course. Successful students are those who re-read thoroughly in advance of discussion, arrive on time to class, and participate thoughtfully every day of the semester. You are expected to attend every class session. To paraphrase Gertrude Stein: *absence is an absence is an absence*; I don't distinguish between excused and unexcused absences. If for whatever reason (including medical and personal emergencies, extracurricular events) you miss **more than six classes** (that is, **two full weeks of the semester!**), **you will fail the course.**

Portfolio (40%) of imitations and explications

- imitations are due in-class the Monday following the respective readings
- each imitation includes a 1-page single-spaced critical explication (referring to the Norton)
- comments will be made only on the first submission, but you can revise extensively for the final portfolio, which will be graded

Mid-term Exam (10%) and Final Exam (25%) the **chronology** of publications and historical events; literary and critical **terminology** pertinent to our readings; identifying of known and unknown passages.

Grading: 'C' (70–79%) represents *satisfactory* work; a 'B' (80–86%) represents *good* work; a 'B+' (87–89%) represents *very good* work; an 'A-' (90–93%) represents *excellent* work; and the infrequent 'A' (94% and above) represents *extraordinary* achievement. This holds true for your overall engagement, your short essays, and your final exam.

Policies: You must complete **all written work** to pass this course. As always, please observe Rhodes guidelines regarding the **Honor Code**; academic dishonesty will not be tolerated, and students caught plagiarizing **will fail the course**, in addition to being reported to the Honor Council. See attached departmental policies for further details. Respect the integrity of the seminar: please turn off **cell phones** and **remove ball caps** before entering the classroom; please **do not eat during class**; please **use the bathroom before our session commences**. Treat email exchanges with one another and with the professor as **formally composed correspondence**.

Schedule—revisions to be made at the instructor's discretion

Aug 26	Introduction
Aug 28	Ballads and timeline
Aug 31-Sep 4	<u>Beowulf [Monday: Ballad imitation]</u>
Sep 7	<i>LABOR DAY — NO CLASS</i>
Sep 9	<i>Morte Darthur; Sir Gawain and the Green Knight</i>
Sep 11	"General Prologue" to the <i>Canterbury Tales</i>
Sep 14	<u>Wife of Bath's Prologue and Tale [Monday: Beowulf imitation]</u>
Sep 16	<i>Piers Plowman</i>
Sep 18	<i>Everyman; Pilgrim's Progress</i>
Sep 21	Middle English Lyrics; "Litany"; Skelton <u>[Monday: Chaucer imitation]</u>
Sep 23	<i>Utopia; "The Wider World"</i>
Sep 25	<i>NO CLASS – WORK ON YOUR IMITATIONS AND EXPLICATIONS</i>
Sep 28	<i>Sonnets! Petrarch [handout]; Wyatt; Surrey; Spenser; Sidney; Donne; Wroth; Milton <u>[Monday: Skelton imitation]</u></i>
Sep 30	<i>Shakespeare; Jonson "To the Memory"</i>
Oct 2	<i>Twelfth Night</i> and early modern theatre
Oct 5	<i>Faerie Queene</i> Letter; Proem; Book 1 Cantos 1-4 <u>[Monday: Sonnet imitation]</u>
Oct 7	<i>Faerie Queene</i>, Book 1 Cantos 5-8
Oct 9	<i>Faerie Queene</i>, Book 1 Cantos 9-12
Oct 12	<i>Defense of Poesy</i> <u>[Monday: Spenser imitation]</u>
Oct 14	<i>Hero and Leander</i>
Oct 16	Mid-term exam
Oct 19	<i>FALL BREAK – NO CLASS</i>
Oct 21	Montaigne essay [handout]; Bacon's <i>Essays</i>; Addison
Oct 23	Donne—<i>Songs and Sonnets</i>; Walton, <i>Life</i> <u>COMEDY SYMPOSIUM—2-5pm MCCOY</u>
Oct 26	Lanyer; Jonson ; Marvell <u>[Monday: Bacon imitation]</u>
Oct 28	<i>The Temple</i>; "FAITH IN CONFLICT"
Oct 30	"Lycidas" (also in process)
Nov 2	<i>Paradise Lost</i> Books 1 & 2 <u>[Monday: Herbert imitation]</u>
Nov 4	<i>Paradise Lost</i> Book 4
Nov 6	<i>Paradise Lost</i> Book 9; Johnson on Milton
Nov 9	Dryden, "Annus Mirabilis"; "Dramatic Poesy" <u>[Monday: Milton imitation]</u>
Nov 11	<i>Pepys Diary</i>; "Journal of the Plague Year" [handout]
Nov 13	<i>Oronooko</i>
Nov 16	<i>Gulliver's Travels</i>; "Modest Proposal"; Lyly <u>[Monday: no imitation]</u>
Nov 18	Pope, "Rape of the Lock" (also in process)
Nov 20	<i>Rasselas</i>
Nov 23	Gray, "Elegy" (also in process) <u>[Monday: Pope couplet imitation]</u>
Nov 25/27	<i>NO CLASS – THANKSGIVING BREAK</i>
Nov 30	Smart, "Jubilate Agno" <u>[Revise imitations]</u>
Dec 2	"DEBATING WOMEN"
Dec 4	"LIBERTY" – Equiano
Dec 7	Wordsworth, "Preface to the Lyrical Ballads" <u>[Revise imitations]</u>
Dec 9	Review session
Dec. 11	<u>Final Porfolios Due</u>
Dec. 16	Final exam, 1pm