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ENGL 322-01, Renaissance Poetry & Prose, Dido's Tears, Spring 2015

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Dido's Tears

(ENG 322)

Professor Newstok

Spring 2015
TuTh 8:00-9:15am
Palmer 203

newstoks@rhodes.edu
Office: Palmer 306
Office hours: *MonTu 10:30am-noon, or by appointment (please email)*

you would like the whole thing to have the compact intensity of the Dido sequence—Clive James

*But I would have dared to be Dido. This is where I begin to suffer in a woman's place. . . .
My sympathy, my tenderness, my sorrow are all hers. —Hélène Cixous*

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

For over 2000 years, Dido's lament upon Aeneas' departure has inspired compelling verse, drama, art, and opera. Ovid composed a poignant letter in Dido's voice, and Augustine complained that Virgil led him astray by weeping for "dead Dido" (rather than his own sins!). Hamlet instructed the players to recite "Aeneas' tale to Dido," about which Shakespeare's peer, Christopher Marlowe, wrote an entire play. Dante, Chaucer, de Pizan, and contemporary poets have all crafted their own versions of this enthralling story. As our seminar surveys these fascinating retellings, we will inevitably find ourselves discussing *suffering and empathy; literary form and style; adaptation across media; trans-cultural appropriation; exoticism and empire; and gender and ventriloquism.*

The topic is particularly timely, as our seminar coincides with a lecture on suffering by philosopher Scott Samuelson (**January 15**); a visit from *Aeneid* translator Sarah Ruden (**February 25**); the production of Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas* and Marlowe's play *Dido, Queen of Carthage* (**April 17 & 18**), and a talk by scholar John Guillory (**April 23**). *Students are expected to attend these events, and draw upon them in their writing.*

Required Texts

For ease of reference, the following editions have been ordered by the bookstore:

- Euripides, *Medea*, trans. Robin Robertson (Free Press, 2009)
- Vergil, *The Aeneid*, trans. Sarah Ruden (Yale, 2009)
- Burden, *A Woman Scorn'd: Responses to the Dido* (Faber and Faber, 2009)

We will also use many online resources, with links sent via email on a regular basis.

Additional course materials will be distributed throughout the semester.

Have the texts read **before** our discussions each session. Ideally, you will read them once over the weekend, and then **re-read** them during the week—good reading always entails **re-reading**. Read aloud; read slowly; take notes. You should plan on **at least four hours** of preparation for every hour of class. Bring the **assigned reading** to each class, **heavily annotated with your comments**.

Schedule—subject to revision, per student interest and instructor's discretion

There will typically be a secondary reading assigned with the primary each week.

Introduction

Week 1 (Jan. 15) screening of Purcell's *Dido & Aeneas* (Barret 0-34)
Samuelson lecture, 6pm, Evergreen

Greek antecedents

Week 2 (Jan. 20) *The Odyssey* (esp. V, X–XII); Euripides' *Medea* (Jansen visit?)

Roman

Week 3 (Jan. 27) Virgil, *Aeneid* (esp. I–VI)
Week 4 (Feb. 3) Virgil, continued

Medieval

Week 5 (Feb. 10) Ovid (Drinkwater Skype); Augustine; Dante (Haas visit)
Week 6 (Feb. 17) Chaucer (Garner visit); Christine de Pizan (Brown visit?)

Renaissance

Week 7 (Feb. 24) Early modern translation: Caxton; Douglas; Phaer
February 25 Ruden discussion, 3:30pm; Ruden lecture, 7pm, Hardie
Week 8 (Mar. 3) Marlowe (Crewse visit?)
(Mar. 10) *NO CLASS—SPRING BREAK*
Week 9 (Mar. 17) Shakespeare; "The Wandering Prince of Troy" ballad

Restoration

Week 10 (Mar. 24) Purcell & Tate (Canty and/or Rogers visits?)
Week 11 (Mar. 31) Translation, redux: Dryden's Book IV/Preface (Brady visit)
Week 12 (Apr. 7) Dido depicted in the visual arts (Coonin visit)
Week 13 (Apr. 14) Review production recordings on Moodle
April 17 & 18 Opera & play productions, Playhouse on the Square

Contemporary issues

Week 14 (Apr. 21) Guillory readings on 'canon' and 'general education'
April 23 Guillory lecture, 7pm, Blount
Week 15 (Apr. 28) Contemporary poetry (Wilkinson visit)

CRITICAL ANTHOLOGY DUE FRIDAY, May 1

Requirements

Engagement (30%) 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 — a mature level of decorum when engaging with the professor, writing fellow, or peers. **An absence is an absence is an absence, no matter the excuse (doctor-confirmed illness, personal matters, extracurriculars) — six (6) of them = three (3) full weeks! = grounds for failure in the course.**

Weekly annotations (20%), marked throughout the term in order to give you a rough idea of your progress in the course. A “check,” “check-minus,” or “check-plus” will indicate a general, non-binding evaluation. **Due every Sunday by 8pm.**

Scholarly summary (10%) – pairs of students will help introduce us to the critical reception of our primary readings. To do so, they will consult with Professor Newstok, survey a range of pertinent scholarship, produce a concise (one-page, single-spaced) handout, and share their critical summary with the entire seminar.

Critical Anthology (40%), revising the weekly annotations you've produced in this course, with a critical introduction engaging with scholarship (2,000 words) (**May 1**)

Preparation: Expect to prepare **four hours** outside of class for every hour inside class. Have the assignments read **before** our discussions each week; ideally, you will read assignments once over the weekend, and then re-read them during the week; good reading always entails **re-reading**.

Drafts: Writing drafts will invariably improve your final papers. Make an appointment with the **Rhodes College Writing Center** at least once.

Weekly Essays: These are due via email by **8pm** every Sunday.

Deadlines: Deadlines are firm; I do not accept late work or grant extensions. Late work causes problems for both students and teachers, particularly in a workshop; it frequently results in inferior writing and evaluation. **Expect an annotation every Sunday night.**

Email: I expect you to check your email regularly (at least once per day), as I will often detail or revise assignments in between classes. I am happy to receive queries by email regarding your writing, but I may not be able to reply immediately—and it's generally preferable to discuss writing in person.

Policies: As always, please observe Rhodes guidelines regarding the **Honor Code**. Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated, and an Honor Code violation (including **plagiarism**) will be **grounds for failure in the course**.

Decorum: Respect the integrity of the course: please turn off **cell phones** and **remove hats** before entering the classroom. **Eating in class** and **leaving to go to the bathroom** are both disruptive to our conversations; please plan accordingly so that you won't have to do either. Treat **email exchanges** with one another and with the professor as formally composed correspondence.

Format: Please follow these simple guidelines to make marking papers more uniform:

- use **Garamond, Times, or Optima 12-point** font
- **single-space** the text of your essay (to save paper)
- **margins** should be an inch on top, bottom, and sides
- put the following information, single-spaced, in the **top left corner of the page:**

Your Name
ENG 322: Dido's Tears
Professor Newstok
Month Day, Year

- your **tantalizing title** follows this heading, centered on the next line

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, your critical surveys, and your final projects.

Weekly annotations—guidelines

These are concise, one-page, single-spaced (around 600 words) compositions designed to familiarize you with a number of different *kinds* of approaches to analyzing verse — from examining very minute details (individual words and phrases) to considering larger issues (ideology and translation) across multiple texts. As the semester progresses, you will be able to incorporate the 'tools' from earlier essays into your increasingly nuanced compositions. They are also intended to give you some expertise on a particular topic for discussion that week, and serve as preparation for our seminar; it is often only through writing that we come to recognize what we have to say.

Email copies are due via email every Sunday by 8pm to newstoks@rhodes.edu

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.