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ENGL 385-02, Advanced Literary Topics: Seventeenth Century Revolutions

Item Type	Syllabus
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Publisher	Memphis, Tenn. : Rhodes College
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Download date	2025-07-17 02:15:53
Link to Item	http://hdl.handle.net/10267/13999

English 385, section 2
Fall 2004
MWF 3:00-3:50
Palmer 205

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TTh 3:30-4:45 & by appt.

Advanced Literary Topics: Seventeenth-Century Revolutions

This course has a few primary goals. It aims first of all to develop your skills as researchers in the fields of literary history and literary criticism. This course will give you practice in doing close analyses of different texts, investigating alternative interpretations of a literary work, and situating your ideas about a text in a larger critical dialogue. It also will raise some of the big philosophical questions that underlie the study of literature: What, for instance, is “literature,” and how is it different from other kinds of writing? What makes one interpretation of a text better than another?

Because we need a context for these questions, this course also examines the effects in literature of two seventeenth-century revolutions--a scientific revolution that dramatically altered how people perceived the earth's place in the cosmos and a political revolution that temporarily disestablished monarchy in England and created a republic in its place. We will read early modern works of science fiction, poems about alchemy and the planets, scientific and political treatises, and an epic that imagines the creation of the cosmos and the first (failed) revolution. As we construct our own interpretations of these works, we will practice seeing how they reply to each other and how they reflect their extraordinary historical contexts.

Required texts: Cavendish, The Blazing World and Other Writings (Penguin)
Culler, Literary Theory: A Very Short Introduction (Oxford)
Donne, The Complete English Poems (Penguin)
Herbert, The Complete English Poems (Penguin)
Marvell, The Complete Poems (Penguin)
Milton, Paradise Lost (Oxford)

Coursepack
Photocopied readings on reserve

Course requirements: In this class, you will write two shorter papers that will focus on analyzing one or maybe two texts closely. You will also use the skills of close reading in writing a longer final research paper, but in this paper you will also connect your interpretations to the critical dialogue on the text or texts you are examining. While it is expected that you always write all of your papers in stages, drafting and then revising, you'll be required to “show your work” on the research paper over the semester, submitting an idea for a project at the midterm, reviewing some other interpretations of

the texts you're interested in, producing a rough draft, reading it in a workshop with your classmates, and then revising it thoroughly into a final draft.

You should prepare for the class by taking notes and thinking of questions and possible interpretations as you do the reading assignments. At times the reading assignments are relatively short (especially when the material is lyric poetry), and at times they are rather long (often when the reading is prose). Obviously, you read poetry differently from how you read a novel; when the readings are shorter, that usually is an invitation to spend even more time on them. The aim when preparing for class is not simply to have read the assigned material, but to have begun to understand it and form opinions about it you can share with the class. Also, while I do not anticipate changes to the course reading schedule, if there are any changes, I will notify you of them well in advance.

You will also make a presentation on one or more texts from the reading for one day. I will give you more information about this assignment soon; the basic format will be for you to present an interpretation of a poem or another text to the class, offering a thesis and presenting evidence from the text.

Occasionally I may quiz you on your reading comprehension, particularly if I feel that the class isn't doing the reading. Assignments and other course materials, including a discussion board, will be posted on WebCT. You are required to post four responses to the bulletin board over the course of the semester, and at least one by September 10.

Final grades:

Two shorter essays (4-5 pp. each)	20% each
Three reviews of research sources (1-2 pp. each)	10%
Research project (11-14 pp.)	35%
Presentation, quizzes, other work in class	15%

Policies: Please note the "Expectations and Policies" statement on the back page of the syllabus for the general policies of the English department regarding attendance, deadlines, and plagiarism. Below are more precise explanations of the policies for this class:

Attendance: You may miss three classes during the semester without penalty. While I am willing to excuse absences for religious holidays, athletic competitions away from campus, etc., I may require a written excuse. Missing more than three classes may hurt your final grade. Missing more than six classes is grounds for failing the course. If you feel that you will not be able to satisfy this course requirement, you should schedule a meeting with me as soon as possible.

Late work: All papers must be turned in on time. Late papers will lose one-third of the grade for each day they are late. That is, a B becomes a B-, and so forth.

Grading scale: Essays and the final grade are calculated on scale from A to F, including pluses and minuses in between. We will discuss criteria for papers in class, but in short, a grade of “A” indicates excellent work, a “B” is a good grade, and “C” is not a failing grade.

Tardiness: Repeatedly arriving late to class may harm your participation grade. Please come to class on time with your book. Also, if you come to class without your book, I reserve the right to dismiss you from class.

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

Schedule of Assignments:

W	Aug	25	Introduction to the course
F	Aug	27	Culler, ch. 1, “What is Theory?”; Rajan, “Donne’s <u>Songs and Sonets</u> as Self-Consuming Artifact” (handout); Donne, “The Sun Rising,” “A Valediction Forbidding Mourning,” “The Good Morrow,” “The Canonization.”
M	Aug	30	Culler, ch. 2, “What is Literature?”; Berger “Renaissance Imagination: Second World and Green World” (photocopy on reserve)
W	Sept	1	Donne, “Air and Angels,” “The Ecstasy,” “Love’s Alchemy,” “The Relic”
F	Sept	3	Donne, “A Valediction of My Name,” “A Valediction of Weeping,” “A Valediction to His Book”; Copernicus, excerpt from the <u>Commentariolus</u> (photocopy on reserve); Galileo, excerpt from the <u>Dialogue Concerning the Two Chief World Systems</u> (photocopy on reserve)
M	Sept	6	Labor Day
W	Sept	8	Culler, ch 3, “Literature and Cultural Studies”; Donne, “An Anatomy of the World: The First Anniversary”
F	Sept.	10	Culler, ch 4, “Language, Meaning, and Interpretation”; Essay 1
M	Sept.	13	Donne, <u>Holy Sonnets</u> , “Good Friday, 1613,” “Hymn to Christ, at the Author’s Last Going into Germany,” “Hymn to God My God, in My Sickness.”
W	Sept.	15	Bacon, <u>New Organon</u> , preface, aphorisms 1-81 (CP)
F	Sept.	17	Bacon, <u>New Organon</u> , aphorisms 82-130 (CP)
M	Sept.	20	Bacon, <u>Essays</u> : “Of Truth,” “Of Simulation and Dissimulation,” “Of Delays” (CP); Fish, “Georgics of the Mind” (photocopy on reserve)
W	Sept.	22	Bacon, <u>The New Atlantis</u> (CP)
F	Sept.	24	Culler, ch 5, “Rhetoric, Poetics, and Poetry”; Herbert, “Prayer 1” (45), “Jordan 1” (50), “Jordan 2” (94)

M Sept. 27 Herbert, "Affliction 1" (41), "Affliction 2" (55), "Affliction 3" (66), "Affliction 4" (82), "Affliction 5" (89), "Col. 3:3" (78), "Jesu" (104), "Paradise" (124), "Love Unknown" (120), "The Flower" (156)

W Sept. 29 Herbert, "The Sacrifice" (23), "The Thanksgiving" (31), "The Reprisal" (33); Scarry, excerpt from The Body in Pain (photocopy on reserve)

F Oct. 1 Herbert, "Faith" (49), "Avarice" (70), "Sighs and Groans" (76), "The Pearl" (81), "Unkindness" (86), "Submission" (87), "Obedience" (96), "The Dialogue" (106), "The Method" (125), "The Discharge" (135), "Discipline" (168)

M Oct. 4 Herbert, "Redemption" (35), "The Temper 1" (49), "Holy Scriptures 1" (52), "Ungratefulness" (75), "Misery" (92), "Gratefulness" (115), "The Invitation" (169), "Judgement" (177), "Love 3" (178); Schoenfeldt, excerpt from Prayer and Power (photocopy on reserve)

W Oct. 6 Crashaw, "The Weeper," "Ode on a Prayer-Book," "Letter to the Countess of Denbigh" (CP), "The Tear" (handout); Rambuss, "Pleasure and Devotion" (photocopy on reserve)

F Oct. 8 Crashaw, excerpt from Divine Epigrams (handout), "A Song," "Sancta Maria Dolorum," "Music's Duel" (CP); **Essay 2**

M Oct. 11 Crashaw, "A Hymn to St. Teresa," "An Apology for the Foregoing Hymn," "The Flaming Heart" (CP)

W Oct. 13 Cavendish, The Blazing World (119-72)

F Oct. 15 Cavendish, The Blazing World (173-225); **Research project proposal**

Fall Recess

W Oct. 20 Culler, ch 7, "Performative Language," and ch 8, "Identity, Identification, and the Subject"

F Oct. 22 Hobbes, Leviathan, 1.6-7, 10-11

M Oct. 25 Hobbes, Leviathan, 1.12-15

W Oct. 27 Hobbes, Leviathan, 1.16, 2:20-22

F Oct. 29 Marvell, "The Garden," "The Mower against Gardens," "Damon the Mower," "The Mower to the Glowworms," "The Mower's Song"; **3 Reviews of research sources**

M Nov. 1 Marvell, "The Definition of Love," "The Picture of Little T. C.," "Young Love," "The Nymph Complaining for the Death of Her Fawn"

W Nov. 3 Marvell, "An Horatian Ode," "The First Anniversary of the Government," "A Poem upon the Death of His Late Highness the Lord Protector"; Article (TBA; photocopy on reserve)

F Nov. 5 Marvell, "Upon the Hill and Grove at Bilbrough," Upon Appleton House

M Nov. 8 Paradise Lost 1

W Nov 10 Paradise Lost 2
 F Nov 12 Paradise Lost 3

M Nov 15 Paradise Lost 4
 W Nov 17 Paradise Lost 5
 F Nov 19 Paradise Lost 6

M Nov 22 Paradise Lost 7; **Rough draft of research project**

Thanksgiving

M Nov 29 Workshops
 W Dec 1 Paradise Lost 8
 F Dec 3 Paradise Lost 9

M Dec 6 Paradise Lost 10
 W Dec 8 Paradise Lost 11

M Dec 13 Paradise Lost 12; **Final draft of research project**

Criteria for Essays and Other Papers

A: Reserved for papers showing the highest quality of insight, organization, and style. It presents sophisticated ideas in an interesting way, with a clearly articulated thesis and a style capable of expressing complex ideas effectively. It should be virtually without errors of spelling or grammar.

B: Typically, a paper that presents sound ideas in an effective way and employs a clear style appropriate to college-level writing. It should have few errors, if any.

C: Usually, a paper that expresses competently ideas that fail to go beyond the obvious or the commonplace. Often a C paper gives the impression of “going through the motions.” It will fail to engage the reader because it failed to engage the author. It may contain some errors, but not many, and not serious ones.

D: A paper that lacks a clear point of view or fails to develop an argument, often because the author’s grasp of the material is at best superficial. Usually the style is also ineffective and may be marred by mistakes of a relatively serious nature.

F: An unacceptable paper; it may show a failure to understand the subject, or it may be poorly written, with many mistakes. Often it is the product of obvious haste, written without serious thought or effort.