

## ENGLISH 2201.01 Autumn 2018

Selected Works of British Literature: Medieval through 1800

MW 9:35-10:55 Reese 218

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### Course Description

This course will be a critical survey of some of the most canonical works in English literature until 1800. But our story begins before English was English in the way we know it. Even as we look at the ways in which the language we today understand as English evolved through its Old English, Anglo-Norman, and medieval inheritances, we shall explore issues and questions that remain with us today, such as the nature of heroism and government; the role of religion in the cultural and emotional landscape of peoples; the rise of the middle class; the position of women in society; colonialism and its long aftermaths; causes and repercussions of civil wars; beginnings and courses of sexual revolutions; expansion of influential new technologies (such as printing); and the ever-evolving balance between individual freedom and social responsibility. We shall also watch as the *genres* of the most notable compositions of the times change over the seventh to the eighteenth centuries: from epic poetry (*Beowulf*), to narrative poetry (*The Canterbury Tales*), to romance (*Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*), to romance that almost aspires to epic (*Morte Darthur*), to lyric experiments in verse and form (such as by the Sidneys, Donne, Lanyer, Herbert, and Wroth), to phenomenal theatre (*King Lear*), to an early modern epic (*Paradise Lost*). Throughout, we shall listen for voices of the individuals whose stories now constitute our literature: tales of love and loss, records of grief and joy, accounts of travels and longings for home, and dreams of life and death.

### Course Goals

1. Gaining a firm historical grounding in English literature from its beginnings to 1800 and probing the connectedness of this cultural inheritance to our own time.
2. Improving your ability to interpret complex literary works and explain those interpretations in writing.
3. Encouraging you to develop historical empathy and the ability to interpret literary works of the past, works from cultures other than our own.

What goals might you realistically set for yourself?

### Course Requirements and Breakdown of Final Course Grade

Close reading quizzes	20 % of final course grade
Quizzes on historical context	20% of final course grade
Essay 1 (3 pp)	15% of final course grade
Essay 2 (3 pp)	15% of final course grade
Essay 3 (4 pp)	20% of final course grade
Other writing and final cumulative quiz	10 % of final course grade

**Close reading quizzes:** These will be offered throughout the term to help you develop your close reading skills. You might be asked to do close readings of a passage, a paragraph, a poem, or even a line from the texts we read.

**Historical context quizzes:** These brief quizzes will test your understanding of the social, cultural, and historical contexts for the literary works we shall consider throughout the semester. Your understanding of the historical context(s) will enrich your engagement with the texts.

**Essays:** Essay prompts will invite you to develop close readings of assigned texts. The essays should demonstrate what you've learnt both as a reader and as a writer. Essays will not require research—in fact, I'd much prefer to read just what *you* think. However, do take time over your writing. Short, good essays can be hard to write. Remember to plan ahead and allow time for *revision* and *editing*.

**Other writing:** Some writing assignments will ask you to respond creatively to the literature: perhaps to imitate a verse form, or to write in a particular style. These will help assess your engagement with the conventions of the forms we study, and contribute to your progress as a reader, writer, and thinker.

**Final cumulative quiz:** The final cumulative quiz—in which you will compete in teams—will be held at the end of the semester.

**Participation:** I expect that you will participate in class—to develop your speaking skills, check your comprehension, and ensure that the discussion covers your areas of interest. You do not get set points for this, but your participation will improve your learning and life skills. If I find at the end of the term that particular students have demonstrated learning in this area, this will be acknowledged in course grades.

## Course Policies

1. Our class is a learning community; remember that every member is an equal and valued participant.
2. Be aware that this is a reading-and-writing intensive class. Remember to make time outside class to review class material, prepare for the following class, and complete assignments in a timely manner. The better your preparation for class is, the better your in-class participation will be. And good participation is *vital* to good learning. I *want* you to ask questions, get involved, take the lead in discussions. Always keep in mind that this is about *your* learning.
3. If you require extra time or any other adjustments in order to fulfil course expectations, please let me know in the first few meetings of the term. I will do my best to enable the best learning conditions for you. (For more information on the support available to you, please see here: <https://newark.osu.edu/students/student-life/disability-services.html>).
4. Please try to attend all classes and stay for the entire class duration. Again, this is about optimising *your* learning. If you *must* miss a class, however, please let me know in advance so that we may together plan the best means for you to make up work. It would be smart as well to arrange early in the term to trade notes with a classmate in case you do have to be absent.
5. I expect that the work you turn in will be entirely your own, written specifically for this course. Plagiarism will result in a failing grade for the assignment, and possibly for the course. Understand that I am also *required* to report all academic misconduct to the Office of Academic Affairs, which may impose other penalties. (For further information, please see here: <https://oaa.osu.edu/academic-integrity-and-misconduct>).
6. Please bring the relevant texts, a notebook, and a pencil/pen to class each day. (If you prefer to take notes electronically, do so. However, please make sure that neither you nor those around you are distracted by the technology you are using.)
7. The format for all written assignments for this class is as follows: 1-inch margin on all sides of the page; 12-point Times New Roman font; double-spaced. If the assignment is to be submitted in print, please print on both sides of the paper, and staple (if applicable). If the assignment is to be submitted electronically, please submit as a PDF.

## Required Materials

*Norton Anthology of British Literature*, 10<sup>th</sup> edition, Package 1 (Volumes A, B, and C), eds Stephen Greenblatt and others

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## Schedule

All readings are from the *Norton Anthology of English Literature*, 10<sup>th</sup> edition, unless otherwise specified. (The page numbers here refer to the relevant volumes of this edition.) An asterisk (\*) flags a reading of some difficulty and length, to alert you that you will need to budget extra time for that class preparation.

### Wednesday, 22 August

Welcome, introductions, and introduction to the course

Discussion of two riddles (texts handed out in class)

Browse through the Exeter Book Riddles, available here:

<https://anglosaxonpoetry.camden.rutgers.edu/exeter-book-riddles/>

(Possible solutions are available here: <https://anglosaxonpoetry.camden.rutgers.edu/exeter-book-riddles-solutions/>)

See also “The Exeter Book Riddles in Context,” by Megan Cavell: <https://www.bl.uk/medieval-literature/articles/the-exeter-book-riddles-in-context>

### Monday, 27 August

Exeter Book Riddles 5, 7, 9, 11, 14, 25

“The Middle Ages to ca. 1485,” 3-11

Bede and his account of Caedmon’s *Hymn* in *An Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, 30-33

Denise Levertov, “Caedmon,” <http://www.southernhumanitiesreview.com/denise-levertov-caedmon.html> (also available in Files on Carmen)

Due in class: a riddle of your own creation

### Wednesday, 29 August

“The Wanderer,” 118-121

“The Wife’s Lament,” 123-125

*Beowulf* Manuscript pages from the British Library: <https://www.bl.uk/collection-items/beowulf>

Historical Context Quiz 1

### Monday, 3 September

Labor Day; no class; read \**Beowulf*

### Wednesday, 5 September

\**Beowulf* (37-109)

Close Reading Quiz 1

### Monday, 10 September

Alfred the Great’s Old English translation of Gregory the Great’s *Pastoral Care*, available here:

<https://cudl.lib.cam.ac.uk/view/MS-II-00002-00004> and here: <http://www.bible-researcher.com/alfred.html>

“The Middle Ages to ca. 1485,” 11-25

From *Ancrene Wisse*, 154-157

Romance, 158-159

Marie de France, 159-160, "Lanval," 171-185

On current conversations in the field of medieval studies:

<http://medievalistsofcolor.com/statements/the-youngest-of-old-fields/>

Historical Context Quiz 2

### **Wednesday, 12 September**

\**Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, 201-227

Close Reading Quiz 2

### **Monday, 17 September**

\**Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, 227-256

Due in class: two pages from Lady Bertilak's journal

Close Reading Exercise (in preparation for Essay 1)

### **Wednesday, 19 September**

Geoffrey Chaucer, 256-261, "The General Prologue" to *The Canterbury Tales*, 261-282

"The Miller's Prologue and Tale," 282-298

### **Monday, 24 September**

\*"The Wife of Bath's Prologue and Tale," 300-328

Close Reading Exercise (in preparation for Essay 1)

### **Wednesday, 26 September**

Margery Kempe, 442-443, from *The Book of Margery Kempe*, 443-456

*The York Play of the Crucifixion*, 457-465

### **Monday, 1 October**

Writing Workshop (details TBD)

Essay 1 prompt distributed

### **Wednesday, 3 October**

Writing Day: no class; complete Essay 1 drafts

By **Friday, 5 October**: complete revised drafts of Essay 1

By **Sunday, 7 October**: complete and *proofread* final version of Essay 1

### **Monday, 8 October**

Middle English Lyrics, 531-534

Thomas Malory, 534-536, from *Morte Darthur*, 536-554

**Due in class: Essay 1**

### **Wednesday, 10 October**

\**Everyman*, 558-580

Close Reading Quiz 3

### **Monday, 15 October**

"The Sixteenth Century 1485-1603," 3-35

Thomas More, \**Utopia*, 41-118

Historical Context Quiz 3

**Wednesday, 17 October**

Thomas Wyatt, 118-120, "The long love," 120-121, "Whoso list to hunt," 121-122, "My galley," 123-124, "They flee from me," 125-126

Henry Howard, 133-134, "Alas! so all things now do hold their peace," 136

Elizabeth I, 221-222, "Speech to the Troops at Tilbury," 234-235, The "Golden Speech," 235-238

Due in class: a sonnet of your own creation

**Monday, 22 October**

Edmund Spenser, 238-240, from *The Faerie Queene* (introductory materials and Book 1 Cantos 1-2), 247-278

Philip Sidney, 539-541, *The Defense of Poesy*, 546-585, "Loving in truth, and fain in verse my love to show," 586-587

Mary (Sidney) Herbert, 604, psalms, 605-608

Close Reading Quiz 4

**Wednesday, 24 October**

The Wider World, 609-612

Richard Hakluyt, Dedicatory Epistle to *The Principal Navigations*, 612-616

Amadas and Barlowe's Voyage to Virginia, 639-642

Historical Context Quiz 4

**Monday, 29 October**

Christopher Marlowe, \**Doctor Faustus*, 679-715

**Wednesday, 31 October**

William Shakespeare, sonnets, 718-738

Close Reading Exercise (in preparation for Essay 2)

Essay 2 prompt distributed

**Monday, 5 November**

"The Early Seventeenth Century 1603-1660," 891-919

John Donne, 920-922, from *Songs and Sonnets*, 923-942, from *Holy Sonnets*, 960-965, "Good Friday, 1613. Riding Westward," 965-966

Close Reading Exercise (in preparation for Essay 2)

**Wednesday, 7 November**

George Herbert, 1255-1257, from *The Temple*, 1257-1276

**Due in class: Essay 2**

**Monday, 12 November**

Veterans Day; no class; read \**King Lear*

**Wednesday, 14 November**

Shakespeare, \**King Lear*

**Monday, 19 November**

Aemilia Lanyer, 980-981, from *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum*, 981-986

Mary Wroth, 1110-1111, from *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*, 1116-1121

Katherine Philips, 1333-1334, "Friendship's Mystery, To My Dearest Lucasia," 1336-1337, "On the Death of My First and Dearest Child, Hector Philips," 1338-1339

**Wednesday, 21 November**

Thanksgiving Break; no class; read *\*Paradise Lost* (pay particular attention to Books 1, 3, 4, and 9)

**Monday, 26 November**

John Milton, 1447-1451, *\*Paradise Lost*, 1495-1727

**Wednesday, 28 November**

John Milton, *\*Paradise Lost* (continued), from *Areopagitica*, 1479-1489

Close Reading Exercise (in preparation for Essay 3)

**Monday, 3 December**

Anne Bradstreet, "The Author to Her Book," <https://www.poets.org/poetsorg/poem/author-her-book>

Andrew Marvell, 1339-1340, "To His Coy Mistress," 1346-1347

Margaret Cavendish, 1434-1435, "The Poetess's Hasty Resolution," 1434-1436

"The Restoration and the Eighteenth Century 1660-1785," 3-33

John Dryden, 34-35, "Mac Flecknoe," 62-68, "Epigram on Milton," 72

Essay 3 prompt distributed

**Wednesday, 5 December**

Isaac Newton, 109-110, from A Letter of Mr. Isaac Newton, 110-115

Aphra Behn, 133-135, *Oroonoko*, 139-186

Oloudah Equiano, 980-981, from *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Oloudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African, Written by Himself*, 982-990

In class: Final Cumulative Quiz

**Monday, 10 December**

**Essay 3 due, along with one-page self-assessment of your learning over the semester** (both documents to be submitted through Carmen by noon)