

ENGLISH 201

STUDIES IN EARLY BRITISH LITERATURE

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Odd Fellows 234

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Office hours: MWF 10-11, M 1:30-2:45, TH 2:45-4:30, and by appointment

Text: *The Norton Anthology of English Literature, Vol.1, 8th edn.* (Norton, 2006)

This course will introduce you to some of the richest and most turbulent works in all English literature, written during a period – from the 1570s to the 1670s – when the glories of the Elizabethan court gave way to the rumblings of civil war, to regicide and the institution of a commonwealth, and eventually to the restoration of monarchy. It was a century of intense political and religious ferment, of increasing literacy and social mobility and a corresponding impulse to demand political representation, of great social conservatism and even greater iconoclasm. Readings will be varied, difficult, and stimulating. While I do not expect you to have prior knowledge of Early Modern British history or culture, we shall study works in their social and historical contexts, and you will learn to distinguish among various critical methodologies: formalist, historicist, feminist, cultural materialist, and others.

Reading assignments may sometimes be heavy, but I shall expect you to keep up with them. Furthermore, you occasionally will be asked to do outside reading about an author or an historical moment which will enhance your knowledge of the literature. Class participation is welcome and demonstrates your engagement with the reading. Your final grade, however, will be determined primarily by three in-class exams and three papers – one short, one medium, one long – the due dates for which are printed in bold. Papers are due at the beginning of class, and late papers will be penalized by a half-letter grade per day. Attendance, too, is crucial: you may have three unexcused absences *without* penalty, after which your final grade will be docked by 3% for each unexcused absence. Absences for medical reasons may be excused only with a note from your doctor or the Health Center; absences for official College commitments must be documented.

Remember to review the College's honor code. Learning how to paraphrase others' ideas without plagiarism is an essential skill and requires not only appropriate citation, but an ability to translate those ideas into your own words. The assignments listed below should be *completed* by the given date. Page numbers refer to *The Norton Anthology*.

DATE	ASSIGNMENT
9/2	The Court of Elizabeth: culture, politics and Sidney
9/5, 7	Sidney and the sonnet tradition: <i>Astrophil and Stella</i> 947-48, 975-92; Introduction to the Sixteenth Century 485-511.
9/9	Sidney and the influence of Castiglione's Ladder of Love: the Hoby translation 645-61.
9/12, 14	Spenser's <i>Amoretti</i> 704-07, 902-07; also Thomas Wyatt's sonnets, 592-97
9/16	Elizabeth as scholar, woman, and politician: 687-703
9/19, 21	Shakespeare's sonnets: 1058-77
9/23	Short paper due: close reading of a sonnet
9/23-10/3	Shakespeare's <i>Twelfth Night</i> : romance, gender identity, social commentary, and the traditions of the Elizabethan stage
10/2, 7 pm	Film: Trevor Nunn's <i>Twelfth Night</i> (Odd Fellows 106)
10/5	In-class exam on Elizabethan poetry and drama
10/7, 10	Spenser's <i>The Faerie Queene (FQ)</i> and epic tradition: 714-19 and Book 1, Canto 1
10/12	<i>FQ</i> 1, Canto 2
10/14	<i>FQ</i> 1, Canto 3
10/17	No class: fall break
10/19	<i>FQ</i> 1, Canto 4
10/21	<i>FQ</i> 1, Canto 5
10/24	<i>FQ</i> 1, Canto 6
10/26	<i>FQ</i> 1, Canto 7
10/28	<i>FQ</i> 1, Canto 8
10/31	<i>FQ</i> 1, Canto 10

- 11/2 *FQ* 1, Cantos 11-12
- 11/4 In-class exam on *The Faerie Queene***
- 11/7 Milton and the Puritan Revolution: historical contexts and the sonnets as autobiography: 1785-89, 1825-29.
- 11/10, 5pm Paper due: an interpretive crux in *The Faerie Queene***
- 11/9, 11 *Paradise Lost (PL)* Book 1: the traditions of classical epic; also Introduction to the Early Seventeenth Century 1235-59.
- 11/14, 16 *PL* Book 2: Satan as tragic hero, and the function of simile
- 11/18, 21 *PL* Book 3: the debate in heaven; God as puritan
- 11/23, 25 No class: Thanksgiving break**
- 11/28, 30 *PL* Book 4: Renaissance gardens and fallen places; compare The Bower of Bliss in Spenser *FQ* Book 2, Canto 12, 857-67.
- 12/2 *PL* Book 7, the induction (1-39); and Book 8: Raphael, God, and Adam.
- 12/5, 7 *PL* Book 9: the fall to reason. Also read *Areopagitica* 1816-25.
- 12/9 In-class exam on Milton and *Paradise Lost***
- 12/12, 14 *PL* Book 10: grace and reconciliation
- 12/19, 9am Paper due: analysis of a theme or idea in *Paradise Lost***