

English 201
Studies in Early British Literature
Spring 2012

MWF 1:30PM – 2:20PM, Oddfellows 105B
Prof. Ryan S Paul (rpaul@allgeheny.edu)
Office: Oddfellows 213 (x2320)
Office Hours: T/Th, 2:00PM – 5:00PM



Over the course of a few centuries, European culture underwent a number of tremendous upheavals: The rediscovery of many works of ancient Greece and Rome provided new models for poets, artists, and philosophers, provoking a massive outpouring of creativity that come to be known as the Renaissance. The Protestant Reformation and the Catholic Counter-Reformation shattered the unity of Western Christendom, sparking violent conflicts and radical new expressions of religious belief. The spread of literacy, the birth of printing, increasing urbanization, and a growing class of “middling” persons all challenged the older social order and brought a new demand for entertainment and provided new financial opportunities for poets and playwrights. And the increasing centralization of government helped develop a new sense of national identity while simultaneously giving birth to new anxieties about threats both foreign and domestic.

These developments provide the historical context for our study of some of the most important figures and works of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century English literature. While the basis of all our work will be the close analysis of language, form, and style, we will strive to consider these works as both products of and participants in the important controversies of their times. We will begin by looking at “love” poetry; we will consider the development of the sonnet form, the concept of “love” in philosophical and religious thought, and the role of poetic expression in the construction of male and female gender identities. We will then study the religious upheavals of the Reformation and their expression in English devotional poetry. We will read the works of English Protestants and Catholics not only as statements of faith but also as works of theological debate. For the third unit, we will examine one of the most remarkable phenomena of the English Renaissance: the explosion

of the popular theater of Shakespeare and his contemporaries. We will read a number of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century plays and consider the insight they provide into the popular culture of the time and English anxieties over various cultural "others." We will conclude with *Paradise Lost*, the last great work of the English Renaissance and the most famous work of the great poet and political controversialist John Milton. An epic in the tradition of Greek and Roman poetry, an exploration of Christian belief, a discussion of the relationship between genders, and a meditation on the nature of sin, death, knowledge, and salvation, Milton's work serves both as a capstone to a period of change and as the product of a unique mind.

Course Advice

Be an active reader: annotate your text with questions and ideas, and keep a reading journal. In it, record interesting phrases, situations, or words that you might want to think about further in class or for a writing assignment. Also, come to class having familiarized yourself thoroughly with what happens in the works we are discussing, since plot summary will not be an explicit part of the discussion.

Use the supplementary material provided in the *Norton Anthology*. Entries for each author include biographical information as well as an introduction to important themes in his/her work; the footnotes provide excellent information about unfamiliar terms and concepts. If you find words that seem particularly odd, powerful, or intriguing, be sure to check the *Oxford English Dictionary*, available online through the Pelletier Library website.

Be patient. Many of the texts we will read will seem as though they were written in another language, and in some cases that is not far from the truth. It takes practice and diligence to learn how to understand these works. Do not expect that a quick skim of the text will be enough to understand it or to succeed in class; you will need to pay careful attention to what you are reading, and often you will need to read it again and again. You will also find that the works make reference to problems, concepts, and events that are unfamiliar to you. This is part of both their difficulty and their appeal. Be sure to investigate words, names, or ideas that you do not know.

Course Texts

Required:

The Norton Anthology of English Literature Volume 1. 8th Edition. Edited by Stephen Greenblatt, et al.

Additional readings provided by the instructor.

Recommended:

A good dictionary. In addition to keeping a pocket dictionary with you when you read, I would highly recommend you familiarize yourself with the *Oxford English Dictionary*, available online. It is far superior to free online dictionaries and should **always** be used instead.

The Bedford Glossary of Critical and Literary Terms or similar handbook of literary terminology.

Course Goals

At the end of this course, you will be able to:

- Identify and Define the major genres, works, and figures of early English literature
- Outline major historical and cultural developments affecting English literature
- Describe/Summarize the important characteristics of many early literary texts and authors
- Discuss relationships between various texts and between texts and their cultural context
- Analyze and Interpret the language, form, and style of literary texts as they operate to create meaning
- Analyze the development of English literature over history
- Synthesize your knowledge of form, style, language, and culture to propose original interpretations of literary texts and their development

Student Responsibilities

In order to reach these goals, you should:

- Attend class every day
- Prepare for every class thoroughly by completing all assigned readings and reviewing your notes
- Take copious notes on class lectures and discussion
- Participate actively in class discussion with original and insightful comments
- Complete all assignments
- Meet with your fellow students, your instructor, and/or the staff of the Learning Commons when you need assistance
- Adhere to all Allegheny College and classroom policies on academic integrity, classroom behavior, etc.

Grades

Papers: 30%

Quizzes: 10%

Midterm Exam: 20%

Final Exam: 25%

Class Participation & In-Class Activities: 15%

Active participation in class discussion and activities is essential for your success and the success of the class as a whole. So, attendance and class participation are **mandatory**. You should come to class every day prepared and excited to engage with the material and your fellow students. Every student will be expected to contribute to class regularly and consistently.

One-third of your grade will be determined by your work on two short analytical essays. In addition, you will be graded on your participation in daily discussion, your understanding and retention of key concepts and facts, and your performance on various writing assignments both in and out of class. Your performance will be evaluated by regular quizzes, a midterm exam, and a final exam. In addition to the material explicitly outlined on the syllabus, you are responsible for any information or ideas that come up over the semester. Take careful notes, review them regularly, and internalize all the material we cover.

A significant amount of the work for this course will occur **outside** of class. We will not cover every aspect of every text or topic during our meetings, but you are still responsible for all the material assigned. The work done in the classroom is designed to provide you with models for literary analysis; your job is to take the tools and lessons learned and master them through diligent practice.

Each student is allowed 3 unexcused absences without penalty, with each additional unexcused absence incurring a 3% penalty to your final grade. Medical, college-related, and religious absences will be excused only with proper documentation, and advance notice is greatly preferred.

All students are responsible for making up any missed work; in-class assignments missed for unexcused absences cannot be made up. If you know in advance you will be absent on a day that a paper is due, turn it in early or make other arrangements with me. Late papers are penalized 1 letter grade per class-day late.

Students with disabilities who believe they may need accommodations in this class are encouraged to contact Disability Services at (814) 332-2898. Disability Services is part of the Learning Commons and is located in Pelletier Library. Please do this as soon as possible to ensure that such accommodations are implemented in a timely fashion.

Weekly Schedule

<u>Topic</u>	<u>Readings</u>
<u>W 1/18</u> : Introduction	
<u>F 1/20</u> : Petrarch and the Sonnet Tradition	Selections from Petrarch (handout); Thomas Wyatt: bio, "Whoso list to hunt," "Farewell, Love," "I find no peace," & "They flee from me"
<u>M 1/23 – W 1/25</u> : Sir Philip Sidney & the Idea of Renaissance Poetry	Sir Philip Sidney: bio, <i>The Defense of Poesy</i> & from <i>Astrophil and Stella</i> : 1, 9, 34, 45, 106, 108
<u>F 1/27</u> : Edmund Spenser	Edmund Spenser: bio, from <i>Amoretti</i> : 1, 37, 64, 67, 75
<u>M 1/30 – W 2/1</u> : William Shakespeare	William Shakespeare: bio, from <i>Sonnets</i> : 1, 3, 18, 20, 127, 130, 135, 138
<u>F 2/3</u> : "Queer" Sonneteers	Mary Wroth: bio, from <i>Pamphilia to Amphilanthus</i> , 1, 16, 68, 77, 103; Richard Barnfield: bio, from <i>Cynthia</i> : 9, 11
M 2/6: Paper 1 Due	

<p><u>M 2/6 – F 2/17</u>: Gender, Authority, & The “Woman Controversy”</p>	<p>Elizabeth I (all); “The Gender Wars” (1543-1550)</p>
<p><u>M 2/20 – F/24</u>: A Crisis in Faith: The Protestant Reformation</p>	<p>“The Sixteenth Century” (485-511), “Faith in Conflict” (616-640)</p>
<p><u>M 2/27 – F 3/2</u>: Devotional Poetry: John Donne</p>	<p>John Donne: bio, The Flea, The Sun Rising, The Canonization, The Ecstasy, Holy Sonnets (all)</p>
<p><u>M 3/5 – M 3/9</u>: Devotional Poetry: George Herbert</p>	<p>George Herbert (all)</p>
<p><u>M 3/12 – W 3/14</u>: Devotional Poetry: Aemilia Lanyer</p>	<p>Aemilia Lanyer (all)</p>
<p>F 3/16: Midterm Exam</p>	
<p>M 3/19 – F 3/23: Spring Break</p>	
<p><u>M 3/26 – F 3/30</u>: The New(?) Drama of the Self</p>	<p>Christopher Marlowe: bio, <i>Dr. Faustus</i></p>
<p><u>M 4/2 – F 4/6</u>: Sex & Violence on Stage</p>	<p>John Webster: bio, <i>The Duchess of Malfi</i></p>
<p>Paper 2 Due: M 4/9</p>	
<p><u>M 4/9 – M 4/30</u>: John Milton and the Crisis of Power</p>	<p>“The Early Seventeenth Century” (1235-1257); “Crisis of Authority” (1737-1757); John Milton: bio, <i>Areopagitica</i> and <i>Paradise Lost</i></p>
<p>Paper 3 Due & Final Exam: Saturday, May 5, 7:00pm</p>	

