

ENG_OX 255Q

Survey of English Literature to 1660

Fall 2014

Mon/Wed 2:30-4:10

Library 201

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Office Hours: When not teaching, I am in my office or in Lil's. Please email in advance for appointment or knock when my door is open.

Course Description

This course explores the fascinating heritage of English Literature, tracing its development from the 7th century CE to the 17th century CE. It will introduce you to the first ten centuries of literature in English (Old, Middle, Early Modern) and will help develop the skills to master a lot of material quickly. You will meet the voices and language of the forebears of the English speaking peoples and appreciate the diverse influences that create the language and literature commonly spoken and written in America today. From obscure poets and balladeers, to polemicists and self-publicists, and on to the political and cultural shakers of a bygone age, these voices from the past will find new expression as we critically read and write, as well as orally and aurally explore, the wonders of English Literature prior to the Restoration of King Charles II to England's throne in 1660.

You will study the set texts with specific reading criteria in mind. These criteria will assist you to appreciate the set texts on many literary, linguistic, sociological, historical, political, and spiritual levels. The course will require your:

Reading for **STYLE**

Reading for **THEME**

Reading for **IMAGERY**

Reading with and against **GENRE**

Reading for **LEXIS**

Reading for **PROSODY**

Reading for **RITUAL**

Reading for **PLOT**

Reading for **LYRIC**

Reading for **TROPES**

To varying degrees, these reading criteria should inform both your engagement with the individual texts, as well as your assignment responses to the course as a whole.

Objectives

The course develops specific reading and writing skills, while allowing students to learn as much as possible about English Literature in its earliest manifestations. Attendance at class is mandatory, which means that you **MUST** attend all classes to appreciate fully the historical sweep and trajectory of the subject and material. Also, **ALL** set texts must be read in full **BY EVERYONE**. This requirement guarantees that class discussion and debate will be of the highest quality. Preparation is the key to success. The set book (above) will come with you to each and every class. You will regularly be required to read aloud from (your copy of) the texts, and to explore your own engagement with its orality, as well as its rhetorical effect on others.

You will study the set texts with specific reading criteria in mind. These criteria will assist you to appreciate the set texts on many literary, linguistic, sociological, historical, political, and spiritual levels. The course will require your:

1. Reading for **STYLE**
2. Reading for **THEME**
3. Reading for **IMAGERY**

4. Reading with and against **GENRE**
5. Reading for **LEXIS**
6. Reading for **PROSODY**
7. Reading for **RITUAL**
8. Reading for **PLOT**
9. Reading for **LYRIC**
10. Reading for **TROPES**

To varying degrees, these reading criteria should inform both your engagement with the individual texts, as well as your assignment responses to the course as a whole.

By the end of the course, you will have gained an excellent grounding in the history of English Literature to 1660, and will be best placed to recognize its resonances in later literary constructs. It will be impossible to pick up a novel, or to read a newspaper, or even listen to a contemporary song lyric, without appreciating the historicity of its distinctive voice.

To develop your research skills and to make full use of Oxford College's excellent literary resources of primary and secondary material, we will be visited twice by our personal course Librarian this semester for research guidance and assistance.

General Course Guidelines

Punctual class attendance and participation are required and will form the basis of a significant portion of your grade. Please be present and ready to participate promptly at the start of each class. Lack of regular and thoughtful participation, tardiness, and absences will cause your grade to drop substantially! Also, later work will be weighted more heavily than earlier work, so that you have plenty of room for improvement.

PLEASE NOTE: These criteria mean that the average of your paper, project and oral report grades may not equal your final grade.

No late papers or computer excuses will be accepted. Typed and correctly double spaced papers, correct spelling, punctuation, and syntax are expected! If you are unsure about such basics of English composition, please purchase and use one of the many available handbooks of correct English usage. Remember: you have already paid for the use of the Writing Center as part of your tuition! I encourage you to take advantage of this resource, no matter what your current level of writing ability. All texts set should be read in their entirety by the first class period

devoted to their study. Please remember to cite any material that you receive from another source and to clearly identify all quotes. The Honor Code and guidelines on plagiarism will be followed in this course.

Required Assignments

All of the short papers and other assignments noted on the syllabus will be submitted to the Blackboard site as directed. Except where specified, assignments should be posted to Blackboard. Blackboard will be your first port of call for all information about assignments, your grades and your class syllabus. You are responsible for accessing the information and materials posted there.

Plagiarism: The work you submit for class must be your own. You may not submit an essay more than once. If you use another author's words or original ideas in your writing, you must give credit to the author by using the MLA documentation form. All papers suspected of plagiarism will be turned over to the Honor Council (Oxford College Handbook). See the end section of this syllabus.

Required Text

Stephen Greenblatt, et al. (eds), *Norton Anthology of English Literature, Volume 1*, 9th edn (New York: Norton, 2012), has all the texts studied on this course.

Assignments & Evaluation

Research: Essays will often benefit from information derived from other sources. We will follow MLA guidelines for in-text citations and a **bibliography** at the end of each paper **is required**. Essays with incorrect citation format (or no citations or bibliography) will be returned ungraded.

Oral Presentations: you will individually, or in small groups, lead at least one class discussion about that week's text or an assigned topic. You will sign up at the beginning of the semester for the day you will lead. Your oral presentation is 15% of your final grade. If you are absent without an excuse on your assigned day, you cannot make it up.

Reading quizzes: You will take **Five** 5-minute, 5-question quizzes (the chosen texts will NOT be announced in advance). If you read the texts in the *Norton Anthology* as and when directed, you will get 100% of the questions correct; if you don't, you will fail. Each quiz is 2% of your final grade (10% possible).

Essays: Essay lengths are prescribed (as a general rule, your word count should be within 10% of the limit). If this limit is not adhered to, the essay will be returned to you ungraded.

Five 5-minute 5-question quizzes:	2% each	(10% of final grade)
Five 1000-word essays:	5% each	(30% of final grade)
One 2500 word essay:	30%	(30% of final grade)
Oral Reports:	15%	(15% of final grade)
Class Involvement & Attendance:	15%	(15% of final grade)

For your final assignment, you have a choice of two possible creative projects.

1: Write a poem in imitation of medieval Germanic alliterative verse. Use the formal structure of alliterative verse, observing the mid-line caesura and non-rhyme scheme, and choosing and adopting the same meter throughout. It need not be a good poem, but it should be technically correct. If you cannot think of anything original to say, find a prose translation of an Old English or Middle English verse or prose narrative using accepted library research methodology (and credit and cite your research fully), and translate this (or an aspect or narrative moment in this) into your German alliterative verse offering.

The poem will of course form part of the word-count, but ensure that you offer a concise and precise description of your research process, your creative decisions, and how your decisions and choices directly relate to medieval texts studied on the course. You will want to analyze your poem and situate its style and structure in comparison with other extant medieval texts. Your academic analysis of your poem is of primary importance, while the aesthetic or artistic quality of the poem itself is only secondary.

2: Write a sonnet in imitation of Elizabethan sonnets. Use the English formal structure of three quatrains ending with a couplet, and be careful to observe the meter and rhyme scheme. It need not be a good poem, but it should be technically correct. If you cannot think of anything original to say, find a prose translation of Petrarch's or Ronsard's sonnets using accepted library research methodology (and credit and cite your research fully), and translate one of these as freely as you like into an English sonnet.

The poem will of course form part of the word-count, but ensure that you offer a concise and precise description of your research process, your creative decisions, and how your decisions and choices directly relate to the Elizabethan sonnets studied on the course. You will want to analyze your poem and situate its style and structure in comparison with other extant sonnets. Your academic analysis of your poem is of primary importance, while the aesthetic or artistic quality of the poem itself is only secondary.

Business

Office Hours: I am happy to meet all students when mutually convenient. With our heavy schedules, office hours often do not match student availability. If you want to meet, speak to me after class or at Lil's, and email to arrange an appointment.

Late Essays: Your essays are due at the *beginning* of class on the specified date. I will lower the grade for an unexcused late essay by one full letter grade for each day it is late; after one full week the essay will receive an F grade.

Attendance: As noted, attendance is mandatory. There will be no distinction between tardiness and absences. You must notify IN ADVANCE of any absence through sickness or ill health; your classmates may NOT offer explanations on your behalf. Two days of class may be missed through ill health or other pre-arranged and agreed reason (agreed by me that is) without penalty; after that, you will lose 10 points from your attendance grade for each absence.

Email: You MUST use email for the following reasons:

- ☐ to cancel an appointment
- ☐ to notify me of an absence
- ☐ to ask a legitimate question about an assignment

Emails requesting information contained in the syllabus will NOT be answered. Emails about grades will likewise NOT be answered. Conversations about such matters MUST be in person.

Electronic rules: Laptops are ONLY permitted when I require them for class. Silence your phone and put it away during class.

Tools

My advice when reading a lot of material well involves using your head, your heart, and a pencil and soft eraser. Write in the margins of the set text. Do not write over the text, or use a highlighter, as you will need to return to the text for your assignments and "see" the text in its entirety all over again. Use your pencil to:

- 1) List (perhaps near the headnote) genre, verseform, cast of characters, settings.
- 2) Divide the text into its primary sections.
- 3) Give a running plot synopsis at the top of the page.
- 4) Bracket, attribute, and give a synopsis of speeches.
- 5) Mark, in the margins, important theses, keywords, structuring images, and central tropes.

Using a pencil allows you to find your way around the text quickly and to articulate its larger shapes.

Course Schedule.

AUGUST

Wed. 27: Introduction to the course. Survey of English Literature: an overview.
Also, familiarize yourself with the 'A' pages at the back of the volume.

SEPTEMBER

Mon. 1: Labor Day NO CLASS

Wed. 3: 'The Middle Ages' (pp. 3-10, 19-25); Bede and Caedmon's Hymn (pp. 29-32); 'Dream of the Rood' (pp. 32-6). (Add/Drop by 4pm 3 September) Reading for IMAGERY

Mon. 8: *Judith* (pp. 109-111); 'Wanderer' (pp. 117-20); 'Wife's Lament' (pp. 120-22). **ORAL REPORTS will be assigned.**

Wed. 10: *Beowulf* (pp. 36-88). Reading for STYLE

Mon. 15: *Beowulf* (pp. 88-109). **ORAL REPORTS**

Wed. 17: King Arthur and the myth of his return. 'Anglo-Norman & Middle English Literature' (pp. 10-19); Geoffrey of Monmouth, Wace and Layamon (pp. 130-32); Thomas of England, *Le Roman de Tristan* (pp. 132-7). **Paper 1 (1000-word) due. QUESTION: The religious references in *Beowulf* are both Christian and pagan. What specifically pagan practices (sacrifice, burial, augury, etc.) are described? Offer specific examples from the text and discuss their significance either in support of the poem's Christian themes, or in support of its pagan themes. Given your reading of the historical significance of the period, why would a Christian author write a**

poem whose oral narrative focuses on a pagan hero?

Mon. 22: Romance: Marie de France, *Lanval* & Chevrefoil (pp. 154-69); *Sir Orfeo* (169-82).

Wed. 24: *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* (pp. 183-238). **ORAL REPORTS.** Reading for THEME

Mon. 29: Geoffrey Chaucer's Prologue to *The Canterbury Tales* (pp. 238-63); 'Medieval English' (pp. 19-25); *Miller's Prologue and Tale* and *Man of Law's Epilogue* (pp. 264-80). Reading for LEXIS. **Paper 2 (1000-word) due. QUESTION: In *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, the concept of 'courtly love' permeates the text. In traditional 'courtly love' narratives, a knight performs feats of valor for a lady he loves, who is generally not his wife. He aspires to win her love by proving his worthiness – his chivalric merit – through 'love service' (by doing all she desires, by trying to help her, and by being worthy of her regardless of her often dismissive treatment of him). Does this typical depiction of a courtly lady occur in *Sir Gawain*? Credit will be given for comparison with other courtly narratives studied so far.**

OCTOBER

Wed. 1: *Wife of Bath's Prologue and Tale* (pp. 282-310). Reading for GENRE

Mon. 6: *Pardoner's Prologue and Tale* (pp. 310-24); John Gower, *The Lover's Confession* (pp. 346-58). FINAL PAPER QUESTIONS TO BE DISTRIBUTED **ORAL REPORTS**

Wed. 8: William Langland's *Piers Plowman* (pp. 370-95), and *Christ's Humanity* (Passus 18: The Harrowing of Hell) (pp. 395-408). LIBRARY research session, 4.30-5.25.

FALL BREAK

Wed. 15: *Second Shepherd's Play* (pp. 447-77).

Mon. 20: Sir Thomas Malory's *Morte Darthur* (pp. 480-500) discussion. **ORAL REPORTS.**

Wed. 22: *Everyman* (pp. 507-29) discussion. LIBRARY research session, 4.30-5.25.

Mon. 27: Sir Thomas More, *Utopia*, (pp. 569-575 & Book II, pp. 597-645). **Paper 3 (1000-word) due. QUESTION: Malory's *Morte Darthur* is not a poem, but a lengthy prose narrative. The work's title suggests its heritage in French romance literature, but a later English publisher imposed this change on Malory's original. Playing close attention to Malory's text, and offering significant examples to support your argument, explain what aspects (specific moments, language, themes, narrative echoes, etc.) of *Morte Darthur* refer back to the French romance literature (you will be graded by how well you integrate, compare, and contrast examples from earlier texts studied). Also, in what way might the history of England at the time Malory was writing, and his own political circumstance, alter or inform his depiction of Arthur and his knights?**

Wed. 29: Christopher Marlowe's *Tragical History of Doctor Faustus* (pp. 1106-7 & 1127-66). Reading for RITUAL. **ORAL REPORTS.**

NOVEMBER

Mon. 3: William Shakespeare's *King Lear* (p. 1251) Acts 1, 2 & 3. Reading for

PLOT.

Wed. 5: *King Lear* Acts 4 & 5. **ORAL REPORTS.**

Mon. 10: Sonnets: Sir Thomas Wyatt (pp. 646-59); Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey (pp. 661-71); Sir Philip Sidney's *Astrophil and Stella* 1, 2, 5, & 74 (pp. 1084-6 & 1096); Sir Edmund Spenser's *Amoretti*, 1 & 75 (pp. 985-6 & 989); Robert Southwell's 'Burning Babe' (pp. 698-9); Michael Drayton's Idea 'Ode' (pp. 1015-17). Reading for PROSODY. **Paper 4 (1000-word) due. QUESTION: Shakespeare's *King Lear* introduces a king from the Middle Ages whose mental health declines as he reaches old age. What similarities or differences do you see between Shakespeare's representation of kingly and kinship duty and earlier manifestations in the works studied so far? What might *King Lear* tell us about prevailing attitudes to the elderly and mentally infirm in Shakespeare's time? Include and analyze specific instances in the text to support your argument.**

Wed. 12: Shakespeare's Sonnets: 3, 12, 18, 29, 30, 55, 71, 73, 106, 116, 129, 130, 138, 146 (p. 1166 on).

Mon. 17: Edmund Spenser's *Faerie Queene* Book 1, cantos 1-12 (pp. 775-7 & 781-934). **ORAL REPORTS**

Wed. 19: John Donne (p. 1370 on), 'The Flea', 'The Good Morrow', 'Song', 'The Sun Rising', 'The Indifferent', 'The Canonisation', 'A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning'; Holy Sonnets 1, 5, 7, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14; Ben Jonson: 'On My First Daughter', 'To John Donne', 'On My First Son', 'On Gut'. PLUS 'The Early Seventeenth Century' (pp. 1341-68). Reading for LYRIC. **Paper 5 (500-word) due. QUESTION: Spenser's *Faerie Queene* offers an unpleasant representation of evil, gendered as a woman who personifies the Roman Catholic Church. Do you consider such representations consistent with male attitudes to women at the time? How might the religious and political climate in which Spenser was writing affect such a reading? How does**

Spenser suggest an archaic heritage for his epic poem?

Mon 24: George Herbert (p. 1705 on), 'The Altar', 'Redemption', 'Easter Wings'; Robert Herrick (p. 1756): 'To the Virgins', 'Upon Jack and Jill', 'To Marigolds', 'His Prayer to Ben Jonson'. Reading for TROPES.

Wed. 26, 27, 28: THANKSGIVING

DECEMBER

Mon. 1: John Milton's *Paradise Lost* (pp. 1897-1901): Book I; Book IV.

Wed. 3: *Paradise Lost*, Book IX. **ORAL REPORTS**

Mon. 8: Last Class. **Final 2500-word paper due.**

PLEASE NOTE: any aspect of this syllabus is subject to change at the discretion of the instructor.

GRADING POLICIES

Papers:

A = 93-100%; A- = 90-92% -- an "A" (90-100%) paper offers a persuasive, eloquent, stylistically sophisticated argument. It presents a compelling thesis, which is then developed into a well-structured, coherent essay. An "A" paper uses evidence effectively. Such a paper thoughtfully considers and analyzes

other viewpoints, including the views of the paper's intended audience. An "A" paper's style is distinctive, and this style helps further the writer's argument.

B+ = 87-89%; B = 83-86%; B- = 80-82% -- a "B" (80-89%) paper also offers a convincing argument. It has an interesting thesis and is, on the whole, well structured. Like an A paper, it too considers alternative positions and does so in a thoughtful manner. A "B" paper's style is clear and relatively free of errors that could hinder its readability and/or persuasiveness. A "B" paper grasps the significance of style in making an effective argument.

C+ = 77-79%; C = 73-76%; C- = 70-72% -- a "C" (70-79%) paper makes an argument but does not do so effectively. It may fail to present evidence in support of its thesis or it may present evidence in a haphazard and hence unconvincing manner. In addition, a paper will receive a "C" if it is stylistically unsophisticated, replete with digressions, lacks a sense of audience, or ignores opposing opinions.

D+ = 67-69%; D = 60-66% -- a "D" (60-69%) paper fails to present an argument. The paper lacks a thesis and is merely a string of ideas, some of which may be very interesting but none of which are developed into a clear, rational, coherent essay. Additionally, a plethora of typos, stylistic problems, or grammatical flaws may turn any paper into a "D" paper if such lapses significantly affect the essay's readability.

F = <60% -- an "F" (less than 60%) paper is the product of a lack of care on the part of the writer. In an "F" paper, the writer may neglect to hand in the assignment; refuse to address the paper topic; or violate common standards of decency.

Participation:

A student receiving an "A" for participation arrives to class on time, well-prepared and ready to join in the classroom discussion and other activities. This student contributes readily and thoughtfully, but does not dominate; shows respect for other students; and helps advance the conversation or activity.

A student receiving a "B" for participation is prepared and respectful of others, but may need to be prompted to participate. He/she is actively involved in all discussions and activities, but may take a less prominent role.

A student receiving a "C" for participation generally arrives on time and prepared, but needs to be prompted to participate in large and small group activities. Students who find large group discussions difficult should talk to the

instructor to determine ways to offset this challenge.

A student receiving a “D” for participation arrives late or unprepared regularly and/or disrupts the class in some way (disrespectful to other students; consistently tangential remarks etc.).

A student receiving an “F” for participation is often absent, late, or unprepared, and does not contribute to the discussion or class activities in a productive way.

Final Grades:

When final grades are calculated, later work will be weighted more heavily than earlier work in order to allow for improvement and development of skills in writing, participation, and textual analysis. Each student will receive a large number of grades during the course of the term (for papers, participation, attendance, oral reports etc.), so that you have a number of areas in which to succeed. Please come and see the instructor during office hours or by appointment at any point during the term when you would like to discuss your progress.

Oxford Student Honor Code

The responsibility for maintaining standards of unimpeachable honesty in all academic work and in campus judicial proceedings falls upon every individual who is a part of Oxford College of Emory University. The Honor Code is based on the fundamental expectations that every person in Oxford College will conduct his or her life according to the dictates of the Honor Code and will refuse to tolerate actions in others that would violate the Honor Code.

Article 1: Academic Misconduct

Academic misconduct is an offense generally defined as any action or failure to act that is contrary to the integrity and honesty of members of the academic community.

A. Such offenses include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Seeking, acquiring, receiving, or giving information about the conduct of an examination, knowing that the release of such information has not been

- authorized
- 2. Plagiarizing
- 3. Seeking, using, giving, or obtaining unauthorized assistance in any academic assignment or examination
- 4. Intentionally mis-shelving, damaging or removing library materials without authorization
- 5. Intentionally giving false information to professors or instructors for the purpose of gaining academic advantage
- 6. Intentionally giving false testimony in an Honor or Conduct Board hearing or refusing to give evidence when requested by the Honor Council
- 7. Intentionally giving unauthorized information regarding hearings of the Oxford College Conduct Board or Honor Council
- 8. Breach of any duties prescribed by this code

B. A duty of confidentiality is implicit in the Honor System. It is academic misconduct under this Code for any member of the Honor Council, a student witness, or any student (other than the accused) who has obtained knowledge of an Honor Council proceeding, past or present, to breach this confidentiality. Nothing in this paragraph shall restrict communications to officials of the University where knowledge is necessary to the performance of the officials' duties nor shall it restrict disclosure required by law.

C. Harassment of witnesses or anyone involved in an Honor Council hearing, before, during or after the hearing constitutes academic misconduct.

Article 2: Honor Pledge and Obligation

A. A student's submission of any work to be evaluated for course credit constitutes a declaration that he or she has neither given nor received unauthorized information on the work, nor has condoned the giving or receiving of unauthorized information by others.

B. Each student at Oxford College of Emory University agrees to abide by the honor pledge and takes upon himself or herself the responsibility of upholding the Honor Code. Each student is urged to inquire of the Honor Council about any doubtful case at any time throughout the year.

C. Each professor shall explain to his or her classes at the beginning of each semester any special aspects of the Honor Code as it pertains to that course.

D. "State of the Honor Code" meeting of the student body and the Council shall be

held periodically upon the call of the Council. The purpose of these meetings will be to discuss how the Honor Code is working, to strengthen understanding of the Code among members of the College community, and to promote improvements.

PLEASE NOTE:

Student work submitted as part of this course may be reviewed by Oxford College and Emory College faculty and staff for the purposes of improving instruction and enhancing Emory education.