

ENGLISH 255w: SURVEY OF ENGLISH LITERATURE TO 1660
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OXFORD COLLEGE of EMORY UNIVERSITY

OVERVIEW

Survey of English Literature to 1660

“Why in God’s name may not we, as else the Greeks, have a kingdom of our own language?” asked poet Edmund Spenser in a letter to his friend, Gabriel Harvey, in 1580. In a sense, this course is about how English writers built that kingdom. We will read British literary works from about 900 to 1660, with an emphasis on **questioning** the texts and each other, and by **exploring the critical lenses** through which medieval and early modern literary scholars make sense of the periods’ art.

Our primary literary texts will be *Beowulf*, Geoffrey Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales*, Thomas More’s *Utopia*, Edmund Spenser’s *Faerie Queene*, William Shakespeare’s *Twelfth Night*, and the sonnets, sermons, speeches, and lyric poems of the medieval and early modern periods.

English 255 seeks to develop critical abilities that are fundamental to a college education: the ability to read texts closely and critically, to express ideas effectively both in writing and aloud, and to synthesize other data and perspectives into your own argument.

IMPORTANT DATES

Tuesday, February 5	In-class essay writing
Tuesday, March 5	Second essay due
Tuesday, April 16	Research essay due
Monday, May 6	Final Exam (2-5 p.m.)

SPRING 2019

TuTh 1:00-2:15 p.m. Pierce 238

E-mail: sarah.higinbotham@emory.edu

Office hours: TTH 8-9 a.m.

Humanities Hall 205 B

MATERIALS

REQUIRED

Norton Anthology of English Literature,
Vol. 1, ed. Stephen Greenblatt et al

Articles, chapters, podcasts, and
film assigned on syllabus and
provided on my website

WEBSITES

[Canvas](#)

[Dr. Higinbotham’s Website](#)

[Library Research](#)

EVALUATION

Every assignment will have specific and thorough guidelines that explain the project. You can access the assignment information on the course website. You can also discuss an assignment with me before it's due. While the assignments themselves are challenging, you should never feel lost or confused about the actual parameters of an assignment or my expectations. If you do, please ask questions in class, make an appointment to see me, or e-mail me.

ASSIGNMENTS & GRADING



The **quizzes** will occur regularly at the beginning of class. The first quiz question will always be to write a quotation from the day's reading on the board, with your name beneath. Sometimes the quiz will be an impromptu essay on the reading, which you will then be asked to draw on during the discussion (although you will never be asked to read your own work out loud, unless you want to). Often the quiz will be for participation: in order to get full credit, you must ask the class a question, make a comment, and mention at least one peer by name when building on his or her point. I will drop your lowest quiz grade, which includes a 0 received for a quiz given during a class absence. The grade includes your attentive and active participation in class (explained more fully below in "Classroom Policies").

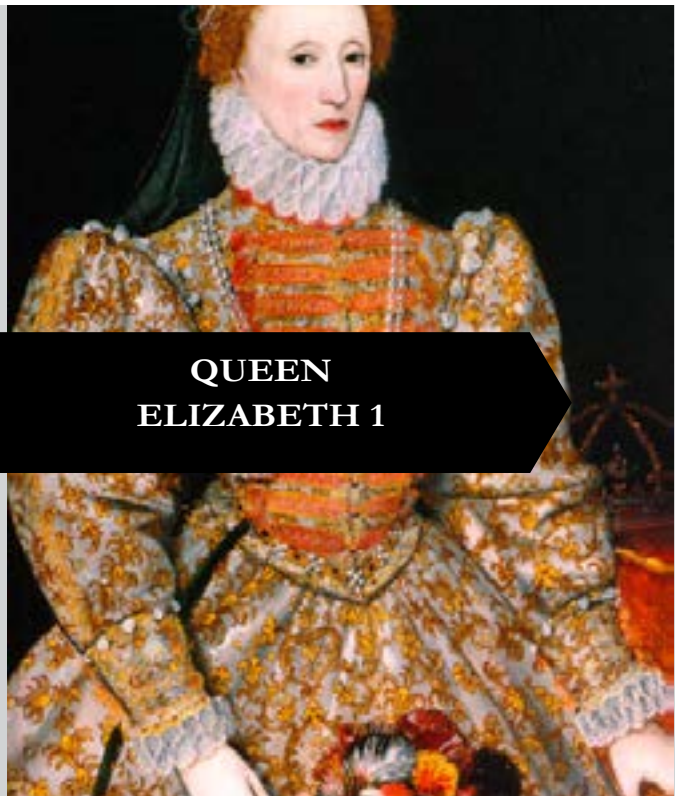
In the **research essay**, you will closely engage with one of the selected texts from this semester. ***First formulate a question about the text, then seek to answer it***, conducting research, wrestling with the idea, seeking counterarguments, and finally writing a 6-page paper.

The **two essays** will each develop different critical skills: 1) the first essay will be an in-class writing exercise that you may revise after my feedback. 2) The second essay will connect one of the literary texts with another discipline: history, science, public health, sociology, or law.

The **Commonplace Book** provides you the opportunity to choose, transcribe, and organize quotes from each week's reading.

The **Final** will be 50 quotations in which you will identify the author and the text.

QUEEN ELIZABETH 1

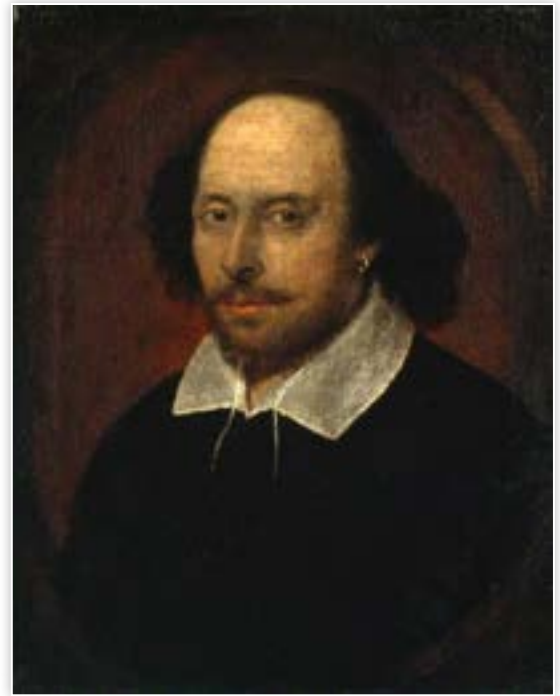


ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

“Plagiarism,” from the Latin word for kidnapping, is presenting another person’s work as your own. When you deliberately use someone else’s language, ideas, images, or other original material without fully acknowledging its source by quotation marks as appropriate, in footnotes or endnotes, in works cited, and in other ways as appropriate, you will be in violation of Emory Oxford’s Honor Code.

[Honor Code](#)

[Process for academic misconduct](#)



Taylor, John. *William Shakespeare*. 1651. Oil on canvas. National Portrait Gallery, London.

MISTAKES ARE WELCOME

A writing teacher I admire, Nick Carbone, has this to add about plagiarism:

Unfortunately, the term “plagiarism” is more technical than practical. It’s used to describe equally mistakes in handling and citing sources and deliberate cheating and lying about the authorship of the work you hand in. In fact, one refuge of many cheaters is to say that they merely made mistakes in source handling. So by plagiarism in this course I want us all to distinguish between fraud and cheating, which is always wrong, and mistakes in learning, which are inevitable, correctable, and for many people, necessary for learning. Mistakes are welcome; deliberate fraud is not. (“Talking about Plagiarism: A Syllabus Strategy”)

THE QUALITY OF FAILURE

One of the greatest obstacles to learning is the fear of failure. Students have sometimes been taught that they need to be perfect – or as close to perfect as possible – in order to be validated, approved, and rewarded. But I think that there are things far more important than perfection: curiosity, risk taking, persistence, integrity, self-awareness, and often failure itself. I want you, in the words of Edward Burger, to make for yourselves “a mind enlivened by curiosity and the intellectual audacity to take risks and create new ideas, a mind that sees a world of unlimited possibilities.”

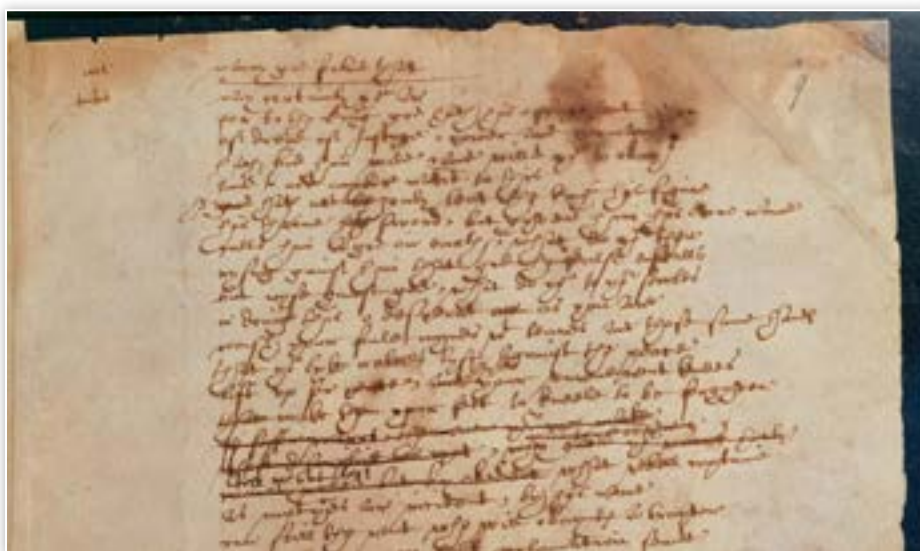
For this reason, part of the course will involve addressing how you handled failure this semester in English 255. Have you been willing to challenge yourself and take risks that might result in failure? Have you been aware of when you have failed, and refused to give up in the face of failure? Have you found ways to use your failure to create something new and interesting? Have you grown from your failures? I hope – in the spirit of our semester’s authors’ own risk-taking – that you will allow yourself to take risks and learn from them.

REVISION

You have the opportunity to revise any of your three papers or your Prezi this semester. The ability to accept and act on criticism is one of the most important critical abilities you can develop. Can you hear constructive criticism with an open mind, build on lessons learned, and make revisions in response to suggestions? If so, I will assess your revised project a second time. A revision isn't just a quick fix of the obvious errors, but a "re-vision," or another look at your project, in which you address feedback. If you choose to revise, it can only help, not hurt your grade. The revision must include a cover letter, in which you explain to me what and why you revised what you did. Please send the revision via e-mail attachments, with the cover letter in the body of the e-mail. Make sure I respond and tell you I received the revision. If I do not respond within two days, I did not receive the revision.

Revisions are due one week from when you receive a grade and feedback from me. If you revise an assignment, I will average the two grades as your assignment grade.

Please note: Some scholarships and academic tracks require that you maintain a certain grade point average. My grading policies are fair, and I'm always willing to discuss concerns you have over any specific grades when I return them to you. But I will not negotiate an overall course grade based on your jeopardized scholarship (or any other social or funding pressures). I am committed to fair, ethical, and equitable grading at all times.



Munday, Anthony and Henry Chettle. Rev. by William Shakespeare. *Sir Thomas More*. c. 1590. British Museum. Facsimile.

DISAGREEMENTS

Almost all that I have learned that is of any consequence has come through disagreement and further exploration. I welcome your respectful disagreements with me. If we all interpret what we read and discuss in the same way, we have a problem, because no true thinking will be occurring. Our classroom is not Plato's Cave.

Please note that the college classroom is a place where ideas are exchanged respectfully. I look forward to an environment where this will occur, but I don't have much tolerance for distracting behavior, such as rudeness, texting, sleeping, or updating your Facebook page during class. If your participation is disruptive to the classroom discussion, if it creates a hostile, intimidating, or offensive environment, you are subject to removal from the classroom at my discretion.

[Emory's policy on respect and consideration in the Code of Conduct](#)



Sir Thomas More



Thomas Wyatt

LATE ASSIGNMENTS

In order to make the evaluation process fair to students who submitted their work on time, I will accept late assignments only if you communicate with me about it before the assignment is due. Every day an assignment is late, the grade will be lowered by a letter grade (ten points). This includes weekends and there are no exceptions.

Any assignment that is not submitted will be recorded as a 0 ("zero") and averaged with the rest of your grades.

COMMON POLICIES

Emory Oxford common policies, course completion, attendance requirements, participation in class, non-discrimination, accommodations, academic misconduct, syllabus modifications, and learning outcomes are available on the website. You will be responsible for these policies, and when you sign the Statement of Understanding, you affirm that you are familiar with these policies.

CLASSROOM POLICIES

In addition to respectful, engaged participation, I have the following classroom policies: 1) no laptops unless we are specifically using them, for example during the workshop days; 2) cell phones on silent and in your bags; 3) you should ask at least two questions or make two comments in each class. **Participation is a core element of the course: to be actively learning and practicing the socratic dialogue, with me and more importantly, with each other.** If speaking during class is extremely uncomfortable for you, you may write down your comments and/or questions and give them to me at the end of class. Alternatively, if you are very enthusiastic about speaking in class, please refrain from making more than five comments or asking more than five questions. You may write down what you were not able to say and I will read it after class. I also urge you to come to my office hours, and if they do not suit your schedule, arrange alternative office hours with me. This is to keep the entire class equitably participating during the time we have together.



Lady Mary Wroth

CANTERBURY TALES



WEEKLY SCHEDULE

Tuesday	Jan. 15	Syllabus “AWE AS PROSOCIAL BEHAVIOR”
Thursday	Jan. 17	Introduction to the Middle Ages, <i>Beowulf</i>
Tuesday	Jan. 22	<i>Beowulf</i>
Thursday	Jan. 24	Geoffrey Chaucer, General Prologue
Tuesday	Jan. 29	“Nun’s Priest Tale,” “Squire’s Tale”
Thursday	Jan. 31	Sir Thomas Malory, <i>Morte D’arthur</i>
Tuesday	Feb. 5	In-class essay
Thursday	Feb. 7	Sixteenth Century, Introduction Have read President Carter’s Essays, here and here
Tuesday	Feb. 12	Sir Thomas Wyatt, “The Long Love,” “Whoso List to Hunt,” “What Vaileth Truth?” “They Flee from Me”
Thursday	Feb. 14	Sir Thomas More, <i>Utopia</i>
Tuesday	Feb. 19	<i>Utopia</i>
Thursday	Feb. 21	Elizabeth I, “A Letter to Mary,” “On Monsieur’s Departure,” Speech to Troops at Tilbury
Tuesday	Feb. 26	Edmund Spenser, <i>Faerie Queene</i> 1
Thursday	Feb. 28	<i>Faerie Queene</i> 2,3
Tuesday	March 5	Second Essay due (printed, stapled)
Thursday	March 7	Cooking from manuscript
Tuesday	March 12	Emory Spring Break
Thursday	March 14	
Tuesday	March 19	Sir Phillip Sidney, <i>Defense of Poesy</i>
Thursday	March 21	Astrophil and Stella 1, 28, 45,
Tuesday	March 26	Christopher Marlowe, <i>Doctor Faustus</i>
Thursday	March 28	William Shakespeare, Sonnets (all)
Tuesday	April 2	<i>Twelfth Night</i>
Thursday	April 4	<i>Twelfth Night</i>
Tuesday	April 9	John Donne, “The Flea,” “A Valediction, Forbidding Mourning,”
Thursday	April 11	George Herbert, “Prayer,” “Jordan (1), (2),” “The Collar”
Tuesday	April 16	Research Essay due (printed, stapled) Margaret Cavendish, <i>The Blazing World</i> (in class)
Thursday	April 18	Shakespeare Association of America (Dr. H in DC)
Tuesday	April 23	John Milton, “Lycidas”
Thursday	April 25	“Lycidas”
Monday	May 6	Final Exam 2 - 5 p.m.