

Major English Writers I (ENGL 340-01)

Professor Ingrid Nelson

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T/Th 10-11:20, Fall 2011

Office: Johnson Chapel 14

Office Hours: Tues., 11:30 am-12:30 pm; Weds., 1-2 pm; and by appointment.

Course Description

[before 1800] Readings in the literature of the British Isles from the medieval and early modern periods. We will read masterpieces of English literature by Chaucer, Shakespeare, and Milton alongside lesser-known works by anonymous authors, chroniclers, and women. Our focus will be on the emergence of a distinctly “English” literature, defined by shifting ideas of language, nation, and world from the seventh through seventeenth centuries.

Assignments

Test on Middle English: Oct. 6.

Critical Papers (2): Topics to be announced. 6-8 pages each. Due Oct. 20 and Nov. 17.

Reading Quizzes (unannounced)

Final Project: An essay, excursus, poem, collage, performance, or other meditation on the past as you have come to understand it through this course. What has medieval and/or renaissance literature, culture, or history, come to mean to you? What points of intersection have you found with your own life, with our culture or society today? Where does this past influence and inform our present? Projects will be judged on creativity, effort, and insight. Due Dec. 13.

Required Textbooks

Beowulf, trans. Seamus Heaney. Norton, 2001: 978-0393320978

The Canterbury Tales: A Selection, by Geoffrey Chaucer. Broadview, 2009: 978-1551119755

Richard III by William Shakespeare. Modern Library, 2008: 978-0812969139

Paradise Lost by John Milton. Modern Library, 2008: 978-0375757969

The Blazing World and Other Writings by Margaret Cavendish. Penguin, 1994: 978-0140433722

You must also get a coursepack from the English department office in Johnson Chapel 1. You will be billed for this on your term bill.

On Reserve

Middle English Lyrics (Norton Critical Edition), ed. Maxwell S. Luria and Richard L. Hoffman (Norton, 1974)

Penguin Book of Renaissance Verse, 1509-1659, ed. H.R. Woudhuysen (Penguin, 1992)

Policy on Turning in Papers and Extensions

All papers must be submitted in class in hard copy. No extensions will be granted except in case of documented emergencies.

Special Accommodations

Students needing special accommodations for test-taking or other assignments should provide a doctor's note and arrange to meet with me in the first two weeks of class to discuss their individual needs. I am committed to making this course accessible for all students; please do not hesitate to make an appointment with me to discuss any concerns.

Schedule of Readings and Assignments

Tu. 9/6: Introduction and Welcome; Bede and Caedmon's Hymn (handout)

Th. 9/8: *Beowulf*

Tu. 9/13: **No class**

Th. 9/15: *Beowulf*

Tu. 9/20: *Beowulf*

Th. 9/22: Marie de France, selected *Lais* (coursepack)

Tu. 9/27: Introduction to Middle English

Th. 9/29: *The Canterbury Tales*, General Prologue

Tu. 10/4: *The Canterbury Tales*, The Knight's Tale, Miller's Tale, Reeve's Tale

Th. 10/6: **Test: Middle English** *The Canterbury Tales*, The Wife of Bath's Tale, Pardoner's Tale

Tu. 10/11: **Fall break; No class**

Th. 10/13: *The Canterbury Tales*, The Nun's Priest's Tale; Chaucer's Retraction

Tu. 10/18: *The Second Shepherd's Play* (coursepack)

Th. 10/20: **Paper 1 due: themes.** Middle English Lyrics (coursepack; first lines given)

Sumer is icumen in
Fowls in the Frith
Now springes the spray
Bitwene Mersh and Averil
My deth I love, my lif ich hate
Kyrie so kyrie
When I see blosmes spring
I sing of a maiden
Stond wel moder under rode

Tu. 10/25: 16th century lyrics (coursepack; first lines given)
John Skelton, "The Rose both white and Rede"
Elizabeth I, "The dowbt off future foes exiles my present joye"
Mary Sidney, "Even now that Care which on thy Crowne attends"
Anonymous, "Westron wynde when wylle thow blow"
Thomas Wyatt, "They fle from me that sometyme did me seke"; "Whoso list to hount"
Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, "The soote season, that bud and blome furth bringes"

Th. 10/27: Shakespeare, *Richard III*, Act 1

Tu. 11/1: *Richard III*, Act 2-3

Th. 11/3: *Richard III*, Act 4-5

Tu. 11/8: Milton, *Paradise Lost*, Books 1-3

Th. 11/10: Milton, *Paradise Lost*, Books 4-6

Tu. 11/15: Milton, *Paradise Lost*, Books 7-9

Th. 11/17: **Paper 2 due: genre.** Milton, *Paradise Lost*, Books 10-12

*******Thanksgiving Break*******

Tu. 11/29: 17th c. lyrics: Love poems (coursepack)

William Shakespeare, Sonnets 19 and 20

John Donne, A Valediction Forbidding Mourning

Robert Herrick, Delight in Disorder

Andrew Marvell, To His Coy Mistress

Katherine Philips, To my Excellent Lucasia, on our Friendship

Th. 12/1: 17th c. lyrics: Not Love poems (coursepack)

Donne, Nocturne Upon St. Lucy's Day

Marvell, The Garden

Aemilia Lanyer, from *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum*

Ben Jonson, An Ode to Himself

Tu. 12/6: Margaret Cavendish, *The Blazing World*, pp. 120-202 ("To The Reader" and "The Description of a New World, Called the Blazing World")

Th. 12/8: Cavendish, *The Blazing World*, pp. 203-end ("The Second Part of the Description of the New Blazing World" and "The Epilogue to the Reader")

Tu. 12/13: **Final project due;** Wrap-up and review