

**English 350, English Literature before 1700
Fall 2011**

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Course Description

Chaucer, Shakespeare, and Milton wrote for broad popular audiences. They addressed issues of pressing concern to many, then and now: power, religion, gender, sexuality, identity. Their works continue to be read because they still reveal something important about what it means to be human—able to create meanings and meters, feel love and despair, know and doubt reality. Students are invited in this course to consider major works of early English literature closely in order to discern what meanings authors shape, how they use literary form to complicate and inflect those meanings, how they address their cultural moments as well as, potentially, our own. The readings in this course will seek to organize the astonishing flowering of English literature between about 1360 and 1660 into the coherent outlines of broad historical, generic, and cultural changes. We will touch on corruption in the church, civil wars, sexual revolutions, the construction of theaters, the rise of the middle class, the invention of printing, and innovative experiments in verse and narrative forms. Students may use this course to master the elements of early English literary history, and to enhance their aesthetic appreciation, skill with literary analysis, and cultural literacy.

Course Goals

We intend to focus our instructional efforts on the following goals:

- Developing your close reading methods and strategies;
- Improving your ability to interpret complex literary works and to explain your interpretations in writing;
- Encouraging you to develop historical empathy and the ability to interpret literary works of the past, works from cultures other than your own.

What goals might you realistically set for yourself?

Course Requirements

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| Essays (5 pp, 7 pp) | 50 % of final course grade (20, 30) |
| Online quizzes | 20 % |
| Close reading quizzes | 10 % |
| iClicker points | 5 % |
| Online posts | 5 % |
| Other writing | 10 % |

Assignments

- **Essays:** Essay prompts will invite you to develop close readings of assigned texts. In this class, the essays should demonstrate what you've learned both as a reader and as a writer. Essays will not require research—in fact, we'd much prefer to read just what *you* think. The first essay is about 5 pages, the second about 7. Our responses to your first essay will be designed to help you improve your performance on the second.
- **Online quizzes:** In order to discuss the formal features of literature, we need a shared language of terms for describing verse forms, genres, rhyme schemes, and the like. Four online quizzes will ask you to demonstrate your command of the terminology needed to discuss the literature. The quizzes will be out of class and may be taken multiple times. The point of the quizzes is to encourage your review of material and enhance your ability to use terminology correctly.
- **Close reading quizzes:** A week or so before each essay, we will ask you to develop a close reading online in the quiz section of CTools. The lecturer will respond to each close reading with the aim of giving you feedback so you can focus productively on where you might improve for the essay.
- **iClicker points:** You will be asked throughout the term to use your iClicker during lecture. This should help everyone participate in the class and give the instructors a fair idea of what students are (and are not) comprehending.
- **Online posts:** As your instructors prepare for discussion sections, they'll find it helpful to hear your questions, ideas, and responses to the literature. We'll ask you to post your responses to specific questions before sections throughout the term.
- **Other writing:** Some assignments will ask you to respond creatively to the literature, perhaps to imitate a verse form, or to write in a particular style. Other assignments will ask you to assess your progress as a reader, writer, and thinker.
- **Participation:** We take it for granted that you should participate—in order to develop your speaking skills, check your comprehension, and ensure that the discussion covers your areas of interest. You do not get set points for this, but your participation will improve your learning and life skills. If we think at the end of the term that particular students have demonstrated learning in this area, in section or lecture or both, we will acknowledge that in course grades.

Course Policies

1. If you require extra time or other adjustments in order to fulfill course expectations, please let us know in the first few weeks of the term so that we can begin planning any necessary adjustments to assignments and due dates.
2. If you must miss a lecture or section, please let us know in advance. It would be smart as well to arrange early in the term to trade notes with a classmate in case you have to be absent.
3. This course adheres to the Department of English plagiarism policy. Details are available at <http://www.lsa.umich.edu/english/undergraduate/advising/plagNote.asp>. We expect that the work you turn in will be entirely your own, written specifically for this course. Plagiarism will result in a failing grade for the assignment, possibly for the course; we will refer any plagiarized work to the Dean of Academic Affairs, who may impose other penalties.
4. Please show respect toward yourself, your instructors, and classmates during our class meetings: turn your cellphone off; do not IM; keep your laptop closed unless we ask you to use it; and stay for the entire class period unless you're genuinely unwell.

Required Materials

Norton Anthology of British Literature, 8th edition
iClicker (Get extra batteries and carry them!)

Syllabus

All readings are from the *Norton Anthology of English Literature* unless the syllabus notes it's "online," in which case you'll find it under Resources > ETexts on the CTools website for the course. An asterick (*) next to a date flags a reading of some difficulty and length, to alert you that you'll need to budget extra time for that class preparation.

Sept. 6 Introduction to course
Due after lecture: Post your learning goals for the course on CTools > Forum
Register your iClicker if you haven't already done so

Anglo-Saxon and Anglo-Norman: From the Shield Wall to the Knight Errant

Sept. 8 Read: "Introduction," 1-7; "Caedmon's Hymn," 24-27; Riddles 5, 7, 9, 11, 14, 25, 26, 30a, available online @ <http://www.technozen.com/exeter/1-10.htm> (link is on CTools > Resources > Electronic Texts)
Due Friday 9th in section: Write a riddle about a modern object, in an Anglo-Saxon style

Sept. 13 Read: "Dream of the Rood," 27-29; "The Wanderer," 111-13

Sept. 15 Read: "Introduction," 7-10; "Ancrene Riwe," 157-59; "Lanval," 141-55

Middle English: Class, Wealth, and Religion

Sept. 20* Read: "Introduction," 10-21; *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, 160-213 (first half)

Sept. 22 *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* continued (second half); "I Sing of a Maiden," 369-70
After lecture: CTools online quiz
Due Friday 23rd in section: Write a "medieval" poem about religion.

Sept. 27 Read: *Miller's Prologue and Tale*, 239-55

Sept. 29* Read: *The Wife of Bath's Prologue and Tale*, 256-84
After lecture: CTools quiz—Close reading

Oct. 4 Read: *York Play of the Crucifixion*, 398-406; Julian of Norwich, "Showings," 371-82

Oct. 6 Read: *Everyman*, 463-84
After lecture: CTools quiz
Due Friday 7th in section: Invent a speech for God to deliver at the end of the play.

Early Modern English: Humanism and the Reformation

Oct. 11* Read: "Introduction," 485-93; More, *Utopia*, 521-89

Oct. 13 Read: More, "Dialogue Concerning Heresies," 623-24; Askew, "The First Examination," 628-30; Foxe, *Acts and Monuments*, 631-32; Elizabeth 1, "Speech to the Troops," 699-700; Ryrie, "Age of Reformation" (online)
Due Friday 14th in section: Write a "memoir" about a character in the Reformation

- Oct. 18 Fall Study Break, No Class
- Oct. 20 Read: Shakespeare's sonnets, 1058-76
Due in lecture: Essay 1, with self-assessment
- Oct. 25 Read: Marlowe, *Dr. Faustus*, 1022-57
- Oct. 27* Read: Spenser, *Fairie Queene*, Book 1, 714-856 (first half)
- Nov. 1 Spenser, *Fairie Queene*, continued (second half)

The Seventeenth Century: Crisis, Civil War, and Restoration

- Nov. 3 Read: "Introduction," 1235-57; Herbert, 1605-1624
- Nov. 8 Read: Donne, Songs and Sonnets, 1260-81; Holy Sonnets, 1295-99
- Nov. 10* Read: Shakespeare, *King Lear*, 1139-1224 (acts 1-3)
- Nov. 15 *King Lear* continued (acts 4-5)
After lecture: CTools quiz
- Nov. 17 Read: Herrick, 1653-65; Halkett, *Memoirs*, 1764-67; Milton, *Tenure of Kings*, 1748-51; "The Execution of Charles I," 1741-46; Philips, "Double Murder," 1691-92
Due Friday 18th in section: Describe a character's motives for participating in the Civil War.
- Nov. 22* Read: Webster, *Duchess of Malfi*, 1461-1535 (acts 1-2)
- Nov. 24 Thanksgiving Break: No Class
- Nov. 29 Read: *Duchess of Malfi* (remainder of play); Hobbes, *Leviathan*, 1598-1601
After lecture: CTools quiz—Close reading
- Dec. 1 Read: Milton, Sonnets, 1825-29; *Areopagitica*, 1816-25; *Lycidas*, 1805-11
- Dec. 6 Read: Milton, *Paradise Lost*, Book 1, 1830-50 (from the 2nd Edition, 1674)
- Dec. 8 Read: Milton, *Paradise Lost*, Book 9, 1973-98
After lecture: CTools quiz
- Dec. 13 Read: Bacon, "Of Studies," 1561-62; Wilmot, "Imperfect Enjoyment," 2169-71
- Dec. 19 2nd Essay Due, with self-assessment