
ENGLISH 3327

MASTERPIECES OF BRITISH LITERATURE

FROM ANGLO-SAXON THROUGH THE 18TH CENTURY

FALL 2017

Class Format

Since this is a distance learning course, we will have no face-to-face classroom meetings. Instead, you can listen to the class lectures online at slow-reading.com/britlit-one. One great advantage of this format is that you can listen to the lectures at your own pace; one potential disadvantage is that it is very easy to fall behind. (See suggested schedule below.)

If you have questions, you can email me: drmarkwomack@gmail.com. (Don't rely on the Blackboard email system to contact me.) I will also hold virtual office hours on Skype or Google Hangouts by appointment. (My Skype username is drmarkwomack; my Hangouts username is my email address.) In addition, I will monitor and occasionally post on the Blackboard Discussion Forums.

Course Description

This course will introduce you to major works of British literature from the Anglo-Saxon period through the 18th century. We will study these literary texts *as* literary texts — works of verbal art designed to delight readers and auditors — not primarily as historical documents. We will spend virtually all our time analyzing specific passages in great detail, thinking about how the text in front of us works on our minds and ears as we read it. This course will thus provide an opportunity to learn how to read literature closely and to write about it with precision and clarity.

Although not organized around any particular themes, the course will grapple with two critical questions: 1) “Why have these works persisted in our culture for so long?” and 2) “How do these writers manipulate the resources of language to shape our experience as readers?” As you will see, I believe these questions about canon formation and about literary form are inseparably related.

Required Texts

- *The Norton Anthology of English Literature* Volume 1 (9th Ed.)
- *Hamlet*, A. R. Braunmuller, ed. (Pelican Shakespeare)
(You may use ANY well-annotated edition for the class.)

NOTE: You can probably find versions of all the texts we will read this semester online for free. But those free versions typically lack any footnotes or scholarly introductions. Such annotations are invaluable when studying complex works of literature, so please use the Norton Anthology, not Google, for these texts.

DR. MARK WOMACK

drmarkwomack@gmail.com

Office hours: by appointment

Skype Username: drmarkwomack

Blackboard

You will submit all your work online through Blackboard: uh.edu/blackboard/

Website

You can find all course materials — including the syllabus, assignment sheets, handouts, and so forth — on the class website: drmarkwomack.com/engl-3327/

*The Norton Anthology
of English Literature*
Volume 1 (9th Edition)



Hamlet
William Shakespeare



Assignments

You will write ten short Stylistic Analyses of texts discussed in class and one Critical Essay: either comparing translations of *Beowulf*, or analyzing a Renaissance sonnet. You will also take a comprehensive Final Exam. All the material for the final will come directly from readings and lectures. I do not assign extra credit or make-up work. Failure to complete *any* assignment may result in a failing grade for the course. You will submit all your work (analyses, essay, and final exam) online through Blackboard. Assignments not submitted on time will receive a zero. I never assign extra credit or make-up work. I discuss grades only in private, and only forty-eight hours (at least) after I have returned an assignment.

Stylistic Analyses

Throughout the semester, you will write *ten* brief analyses (about 300 words each) of specific stylistic choices in the works covered in class. For each analysis, you should pick a few lines from one of the assigned texts, then focus on a particular linguistic detail in them (a surprising word choice, an arresting metaphor, a complex allusion, a striking use of rhythm), and offer your insights into what that specific stylistic nuance does for a reader.

Everything you say in your analysis should relate directly to the actual words of the text. Don't get sidetracked; stick with the words. Think about how the author has shaped and arranged the language. I am looking for fine-grained analysis, not mushy generalizations.

Post your Stylistic Analyses in the Journal component of Blackboard. *Please DO NOT submit your analyses as attached files.* The final deadline for all analyses is **December 1**. But I encourage you not to wait till the last minute to submit them.

Critical Essay

You will find detailed assignment sheets for the Critical Essay on the main website. You have a choice of two topics — Topic 1: Compare Two Translations of *Beowulf* OR Topic 2: Analyze a Renaissance Sonnet. I will also discuss the essay assignments in detail during class lectures.

Final Exam

The final will be an essay exam: you will answer four questions, writing short essay answers for each of them. For each question, you will have a choice of three specific topics to write on.

The final will be available on Blackboard all day on Saturday, December 9. You will have 3 hours to complete the exam. On the honor system, you may use your text books during the exam but no other materials.

Course Grade

Stylistic Analyses	20%
Critical Essay	40%
Final Exam	40%

Numerical Values for Letter Grades

A+	100–97
A	96–93
A–	92–90
B+	89–87
B	86–83
B–	82–80
C+	79–77
C	76–73
C–	72–70
D	69–60
F	59–0

Submitting Essay

1. Find the submission link on the Blackboard page. (Use only the Blackboard links, *not* the TurnItIn web site.)
2. Click the View/Complete link for the assignment.
3. Enter your Name from the drop-down Author menu.
4. Enter a Title for your paper.
5. Click the “Browse” button.
6. Find the document file on your computer and click “Open.”
7. Click the “Upload” button.
8. Review the file and click on the “Submit” button.

SCHEDULE OF LECTURES, READINGS & ASSIGNMENTS

Week One

Monday 8/21	Wednesday 8/23	Friday 8/25
First Day Lecture: a review of the syllabus, assignments, and schedule	<i>Beowulf</i> (lines 1–1650)	<i>Beowulf</i> (lines 1651–3182)

Week Two

Monday 8/28	Wednesday 8/30	Friday 9/1
<i>Sir Gawain and the Green Knight</i> , Fitts 1 & 2	<i>Sir Gawain and the Green Knight</i> , Fitts 3 & 4	<i>The Canterbury Tales</i> “General Prologue” (lines 1–446)

Week Three

Monday 9/4	Wednesday 9/6	Friday 9/8
LABOR DAY	<i>The Canterbury Tales</i> “General Prologue” (lines 447–860)	“Miller’s Prologue & Tale”

Week Four

Monday 9/11	Wednesday 9/13	Friday 9/15
“Wife of Bath’s Prologue & Tale”	“Pardoner’s Prologue & Tale”	Wyatt & Surrey, selected poems*

Week Five

Monday 9/18	Wednesday 9/20	Friday 9/22
<i>Astrophil and Stella</i> , sonnets 1–56	<i>Astrophil and Stella</i> , sonnets 61–108	<i>The Faerie Queen</i> 1.1 [The Redcrosse Knight vs Error]

Week Six

Monday 9/25	Wednesday 9/27	Friday 9/29
<i>The Faerie Queen</i> 1.9.21–54 [The Redcrosse Knight & Despair]	<i>The Faerie Queene</i> 2.12 [The Bower of Bliss]	<i>The Faerie Queene</i> 3.6 [The Garden of Adonis]

Week Seven

Monday 10/2	Wednesday 10/4	Friday 10/6
<i>The Faerie Queene</i> 3.12 [The Masque of Cupid]	<i>Doctor Faustus</i> , Prologue–scene 6	<i>Doctor Faustus</i> , Chorus 2–Epilogue

Week Eight

Monday 10/9	Wednesday 10/11	Friday 10/13
Shakespeare's Sonnets (1, 3, 12, 15, 18, 20, 29, 30, 33, 60, 71)	Shakespeare's Sonnets (73, 94, 116, 127, 129, 130, 138, 144, 146, 147, 152)	<i>Hamlet</i> , Act 1

Week Nine

Monday 10/16	Wednesday 10/18	Friday 10/20
<i>Hamlet</i> , Act 2	<i>Hamlet</i> , Act 3	<i>Hamlet</i> , Act 4

Week Ten

Monday 10/23	Wednesday 10/25	Friday 10/27
<i>Hamlet</i> , Act 5	John Donne, love poems*	John Donne, religious verse*

Week Eleven

Monday 10/30	Tuesday 10/31	Wednesday 11/1	Friday 11/3
<i>Paradise Lost</i> , book 1	Last day to drop a course or withdraw with a "W."	<i>Paradise Lost</i> , book 2	<i>Paradise Lost</i> , book 3

Week Twelve

Monday 11/6	Wednesday 11/8	Friday 11/10
<i>Paradise Lost</i> , book 4	<i>Paradise Lost</i> , book 5 & book 8: lines 250–653	<i>Paradise Lost</i> , book 9

Week Thirteen

Monday 11/13

Wednesday 11/15

Friday 11/17

Paradise Lost, book 10: lines 1–228,
414–584, 720–1104
& book 12: lines 466–649

An Essay on Criticism Part 2, lines
337–83 & *The Rape of the Lock*

**Final Deadline for
Critical Essay**

Week Fourteen

Monday 11/20

Wednesday 11/22

Friday 11/24

Rochester, selected poems*

THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY

Week Fifteen

Monday 11/27

Wednesday 11/29

Friday 12/1

Gulliver's Travels, Part 1
[Lilliput]

Gulliver's Travels, Part 4
[Houyhnhnms]

**Final Deadline for
Stylistic Analyses**

Final Exam

Saturday 12/9

The final will be available on Blackboard all day on **December 9**. You will have three hours to complete the exam. On the honor system, you may use your text books during the exam but no other materials.

Selected Poems

WYATT

“The long love that in my thought doth harbor,” “Whoso list to hunt,”
“Farewell, Love,” “I find no peace,” “My galley,” “Divers doth use,” “They
flee from me,” & “The Lover Showeth How He Is Forsaken of Such as
He Sometime Enjoyed”

SURREY

“The soote season,” “Love, that doth reign and live within my thought,”
“Alas! so all things now do hold their peace,” “Th’Assyrian king, in
peace with foul desire,” & from *The Fourth Book of Virgil*

DONNE

Love Poems: “The Flea,” “The Good-Morrow,” “The Canonization,” “A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning,” “The Relic,” & “Elegy 19, To His Mistress Going to Bed”

Religious Verse: *Holy Sonnets*, “Good Friday, 1613, Riding Westward,” & “A Hymn to God the Father”

ROCHESTER

“The Disabled Debauchee,” “The Imperfect Enjoyment,” “Upon Nothing,” & “A Satire against Reason and Mankind”

Withdrawal Policy

I strongly encourage every student to complete the course, but I recognize that occasionally a student may need to withdraw, especially for non-academic reasons. Please bear in mind that it is your responsibility to fill out and turn in the necessary forms in order to withdraw formally from the course.

According to university policy, if you wish to withdraw from the course you must do so by the “Last Day to Drop a Course” on the official academic calendar.

If you have not withdrawn by then you will receive a grade for the course. Current university policy dictates that students who fail to submit their required work and do not qualify for an Incomplete will receive a failing grade for the course.

Last Day to Drop a Course
October 31

Policy on Incomplete Grades

The grade of “I” (Incomplete) is a conditional and temporary grade given when students are passing a course or still have a reasonable chance of passing in the judgment of the instructor but, for non-academic reasons beyond their control, have not completed a relatively small part of all requirements. Students are responsible for informing the instructor immediately of the reasons for not submitting an assignment on time or not taking an examination. Students must contact the instructor to make arrangements to complete the course requirements.

An Incomplete is granted only if (a) the student has sufficient non-academic reason for not completing the coursework within the term allotted; (b) the student has already completed a substantial portion of the coursework; and (c) the student requests a grade of Incomplete before the date of the Final Examination. Students who receive an Incomplete grade must complete all the course requirements by a deadline set by the instructor. If the student fails to submit the work on time, the grade will be changed to reflect the work completed in the course. Bear in mind that a grade of “I” automatically changes to “F” at the end of a calendar year if the student has not fulfilled all course requirements by then.

Final Exam Date
December 9

Your instructor, Mark Womack, reserves the right to revise or amend the policies listed here with sufficient verbal and written notice.
