

Winter 2020
Department of English
ENGL 2300B

British Literatures I: Major Authors from Spenser to Milton

Time: 10:05-11:25 Wednesdays and Fridays

Location: Loeb B146

(Please confirm location on Carleton Central)

Prerequisite(s): second-year standing or permission of the department.

Instructor: D.A. Beecher

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Office: 1908 Dunton Tower

Office hours: Wednesdays 11:45-1:00

Course Requirements: The orientation of this course is not only historical and thematic but critical. It is intended to serve as a thorough introduction to the chosen authors and their texts, and as an introduction to basic methodologies of textual criticism and critical terminology. The lectures will thus contain factual and theoretical information, thereby providing a variety of paradigms for the study of literature (not to mention numerous excursions important to me and to most students into matters cultural, contextual, and evaluative). Success in the course will ultimately depend upon the student's ability to work with critical ideas in the term paper and exam questions. Historically, the readings cover a period from 1580 to 1673, thus literature from the Tudor and Stuart eras. This was a dynamic period socially and politically that witnessed the reformation of the church, English mercantile exploration, major scientific revolutions, and the formation of the modern nation states constituting western Europe, with an emerging sense of national identities and concerns. It was also the period of the new learning and its effects upon pedagogy, mores and ethics, and of reconsidered social life, the family, expressions of love, marriage, and divorce. Their literature reflects many of these issues and anxieties. At the same time, the course should extend the critical acumen of students, adding new terms and concepts to their critical vocabularies, and provide opportunities for honing and perfecting their critical writing. All of these matters are related to **objectives** of the course which may be summarized as follows:

- To acquaint the student with representative works from the best writers of the period.
- To gain a sense of the chronological unfolding of early English literary styles.
- To achieve some insight into the historical and cultural developments of early modern England.
- To develop a sense of the themes and universal ideas of literature and to compare early themes with issues of our own day.
- To look at specific issues concerning protagonists, heroism, narrative and story telling, epic, comic and tragic forms, modes of allegory, symbolism, lyric styles, matters of love and friendship, satire, the destiny of the soul, questing and return, and many more related issues.

To extend the vocabulary of literary terms and critical concepts, and especially those which will be named and discussed in class.

To acquire and improve writing skills relating to literature, argumentation, research techniques, and the conventions pertaining to the presentation of scholarly writing in general.

There will be time in class for discussion, and questions about important points of information are always welcome, but essentially it is a lecture course—there is so much information to cover to get a full sense of Renaissance England. Had we worlds enough and time, procedures might have been more Socratic. But in compensation, I invite you all to visit during office hours, just to chat, lay plans for the future, get more information about the lectures, explore new points, strategize term papers—anything on your minds relating to the course, including my own approaches to literature. This I much prefer to e-mails. Alternatively, you might want to form study groups among yourselves, discuss the course materials, and share ideas. I comment that idea to you most enthusiastically.

The texts are:

Edmund Spenser *The Faerie Queene* (Book III)

Christopher Marlowe, *Doctor Faustus*

Benjamin Jonson, *Volpone*

John Donne, Poetry

Barnabe Riche, *A Farewell to Military Profession*

William Shakespeare, *The Sonnets*

John Milton, *Paradise Lost*

Course work: A 10-page term paper will be due on the last day of class: April 9. It will count for 20% of the final grade. At the end of the course there will be a scheduled 3 hour exam. It will consist of short essay questions, covering all the authors studied, with some latitude for choice. The exam counts for 25% of the final grade. That leaves 5% for the pop quiz. It is fair to remind students, moreover, that all term work must be submitted before a final grade can be assigned as per the university regulations.

Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor subject to the approval of the Faculty Dean. This means that grades submitted by the instructor may be subject to revision. No grades are final until they have been approved by the Dean.

Early Feedback: If you are concerned, you are invited to submit a 2-3 page essay on one of the first two authors studied which I can provisionally evaluate, although the grade will not be recorded. This paper is entirely optional. It should propose a specific point that is debated in the usual manner of literary-critical writing, giving you an opportunity to explore a methodical approach to a literary problem in miniature. This will give me an idea of your critical skills, and give you an idea of my expectations in a core course at the second-year university level. The thesis is open, but might touch upon allegory, narrative design, approaches to character, symbolism, myth, medieval or Renaissance social issues, literary genres, and much more. It is due by the second week in February.

Class time will be divided among several approaches: historical background, literary contexts, contemporary authors, themes, genres, textual analysis, and the many ways in which such works can be read according to types of critical thinking. These theoretical discussions may be wide ranging, speculative, and philosophical. The goal of the course involves both literary history and critical approaches, with an emphasis on literary ideas. Ideally, the lectures will provide paradigms of criticism that you can adapt to your own writing about literature. In particular, I will be concentrating on select critical terms germane to the study of literature, and for that reason would encourage you to include a good glossary or dictionary of literary terms in your personal library.

The schedule of readings is as follows:

January	8	Introductory lecture
	10	<i>Faerie Queene</i> Bk. III
	15	<i>Faerie Queene</i> Bk. III
	17	<i>Faerie Queene</i> Bk. III
	22	<i>Faerie Queene</i> Bk. III
	24	Marlowe, <i>Dr. Faustus</i>
	29	Marlowe, <i>Dr. Faustus</i>
	31	Ben Jonson, <i>Volpone</i>
February,	5	Ben Jonson, <i>Volpone</i> , p. 1443
	7	Ben Jonson, <i>Volpone</i>
	12	John Donne, Songs and Sonnets
	14	John Donne, Songs and Sonnets
		19-21 Study Week
	26	John Donne, Holy Sonnets and other Religious Poetry
	28	Barnabe Riche, stories 2, 3, 4
March	4	Barnabe Riche, stories 5, 6
	6	Barnabe Riche, stories 7, 8
	11	John Milton, <i>Paradise Lost</i> , Bks. 1-2
	13	John Milton, <i>Paradise Lost</i> , Bks. 3-5
	18	<i>Paradise Lost</i> , Bks. 6-8
	20	<i>Paradise Lost</i> , Bks. 9-10
	25	<i>Paradise Lost</i> , Bks. 11-12
	27	Shakespeare, Sonnets, 1-40
April	1	Shakespeare, Sonnets, 41-90
	3	Shakespeare, Sonnets, 91-152 Term paper due.

Regulations: For all the official university regulations, deadlines, and statements on plagiarism, see the University Calendar.

Writing-Attentive Course: See the entry for the Fall Term. Here are a few added thoughts: English 2300 has been designated “writing-attentive,” which means that writing skills are part of the course’s goals and part of its pedagogical design, including the writing on final exams—which is arguably a form of writing all its own. The term paper

is the heart of the course and represents a precious opportunity for students to gain real writing experience. To miss this learning opportunity by borrowing from the writing of others is pure folly. Skilled writing will be part of a successful career for many after university. Ideally, these creations should be under consideration well before the end of term, and they should be vehicles for all the critical and analytic insight you can bring to bear on a literary problem. They should be written in a considered, clear, logical, and idiomatic style, and should seek to avoid the many pitfalls associated with ineffective communication in English. Typically, such papers will have clear thematic direction, a well-marked unfolding of an argument, and they will employ a critical vocabulary requisite to the efficient and persuasive presentation of ideas. They should be instruments in literary problem solving, make use of secondary sources in an integrated way, and employ standard practices in documentation. Most if not all of these skills should now be in place for students of literature at the university level, but some generic and strategic matters may come up for reconsideration. Nevertheless, this cannot be a remedial course in writing and still leave time to move through the literature; hence students will be responsible for vetting their own work to address short comings. There are many guides and manuals to scholarly writing and documentation, including the famous MLA style guide, and there is help for those in real trouble through the Writing Tutorial Services.

Plagiarism: Adding to the university statement, all written work for this course must be your own. Where you borrow or adapt the ideas of others, you must cite them and their sources responsibly and reliably. Academic integrity and intellectual property are important concepts germane to all professional training. In a more legalistic sense, the university takes unqualified plagiarism quite seriously and imposes punitive measures. Similar principles apply to cheating during exams in all the ways known to and discussed among students. All these matters are regulated by Carleton's new student academic conduct policy. If you are in doubt about what constitutes the work of others and what constitutes your own work, you may consult, but the distinction seems rather patent in most cases. Plagiarism, in academic practice, also includes papers written for you, even if they are original to the "guest" author, and papers written by yourself but already submitted to other courses.

Deadlines: I've given up negotiating deadlines in order to be fair to all. Bona fide documentation, of course, is something else and will win for you all the accommodations proffered by the official system. See the Academic Calendar, Regulation 2.6. Term Papers are due on the last day of class.

Exams: If you miss the final exam, that too falls outside my jurisdiction; for that you have to make the appropriate arrangements with the Registrar—again check the Calendar. You must be in good standing in the course in order to apply.

Research: About Web and Net research essays: articles posted there are extremely uneven and very often lack the authority or the vetting of published material. I prefer you avoid them altogether unless you are really confident about separating the useful from the vacuous. In any case, surfers beware of third-rate materials! Vetted scholarly journals on line are, of course, quite another thing and may be cited in the normal way.

Term papers: I prefer well-researched term papers, those that have been built in dialogue with other scholarly voices. This is not to say that the paper should be a work-a-day gathering of opinions neatly linked; that formula, though much taught, is deadly. The topic and the direction should be your own, debating your own informed views in dialogic fashion with others. Above all, for a paper to succeed, it needs a clear statement of purpose, a sense of methodology, and a well-posted progression toward a cogently argued conclusion. This is predicated on the notion that literature makes complex demands upon its readers, raising problems that invite scrutiny, and that such scrutiny will lead to primary questions about the nature of literature, itself, and the multitudinous ways in which it generates experience from moral instruction to sheer aesthetic delight. In a larger sense, writing about literature is about reading accurately, reflecting critically, and writing cogently—operations not unlike those called for by all enquiries into the nature of things social or creative across the gamut of university disciplines. Keep back-up copies of your work in the event a paper gets lost, and always hand in paper copies; never submit them to me as an e-mail attachment.

Paul Menton Centre is available to students with learning disabilities or for those requiring accommodation for exams, Rm. 500 Unicentre.

The Writing tutorial Service provides coaching in the writing of essays and term papers on a one-to-one basis, 229 Paterson Hall.

The Student Life Services is located in 501 Unicentre.

The Student Academic Success Centre is located in 302 Tory.

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. For an accommodation request, the processes are as follows:

Pregnancy obligation

Please contact your instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details, visit the Equity Services website:

<https://carleton.ca/equity/contact/form-pregnancy-accommodation/>

Religious obligation

Please contact your instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details, visit the Equity Services website:

<https://carleton.ca/equity/focus/discrimination-harassment/religious-spiritual-observances/>

Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

If you have a documented disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact the Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) at 613-520-

6608 or pmc@carleton.ca for a formal evaluation or contact your PMC coordinator to send your instructor your Letter of Accommodation at the beginning of the term. You must also contact the PMC no later than two weeks before the first in-class scheduled test or exam requiring accommodation (if applicable). After requesting accommodation from PMC, meet with your instructor as soon as possible to ensure accommodation arrangements are made. For more details, visit the Paul Menton Centre Website: carleton.ca/pmc

Survivors of Sexual Violence

As a community, Carleton University is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working and living environment where sexual violence will not be tolerated, and its survivors are supported through academic accommodations as per Carleton's Sexual Violence Policy. For more information about the services available at the university and to obtain information about sexual violence and/or support, visit: <https://carleton.ca/equity/focus/sexual-violence-prevention-survivor-support/>

Accommodation for Student Activities

Carleton University recognizes the substantial benefits, both to the individual student and for the university, that result from a student participating in activities beyond the classroom experience. Reasonable accommodation must be provided to students who compete or perform at the national or international level. Please contact your instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. <https://carleton.ca/senate/wp-content/uploads/Accommodation-for-Student-Activities-1.pdf>