

**Fall 2018
Department of English**

ENGL 5305F

A Seminar: Elizabethan and Jacobean Prose Fiction

Prerequisite: graduate standing

**Mondays, 8:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.
Dunton 1816**

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English fiction in prose had its origins in the Renaissance as something of a new idea. The novel hasn't always been there and fiction hasn't always been in the form of novels and short stories. In fact, early story tellers had to rely on other models to cobble their earliest enterprises together: epic, romance, novella, broadsides, travel literature, pastoral, tricks and *beffe*, spectacular news, and folktales. By degrees they found their working formulae and settled down to imitating each other through the opportunities provided by the earliest age of commercial publishing in the absence of patronage, and during an age of rising mercantile classes and rising literacy, particularly among women. New kinds of writers came to the fore, soldiers, renegade recusants, failed dramatists and university men, many futilely seeking high civil service positions in times of downsizing and hardship. They brought not only their humanist learning, but their cynicism, subversiveness, and devil-may-care attitudes, along with views from the underworld, and from the world abroad. In the process, those wily Elizabethans wrote fiction for readers "as they liked it" we must presume, given that their livelihoods depended upon success through the presses and re-editions. The hack factor was decidedly present in generating the wish-fulfillment stories of love, travel, pastoral retreat, cross-dressing, abduction and error, hardship and suffering, parlour games, jealousy, revenge, and melancholy which were likely to appeal. This seminar will make a survey of six or seven contrasting but representative works by, arguably, the better writers—at least those who can be had in affordable and available editions! This fiction is, after all, the subject of scholarly attention only in the last 20 years, and scholarly editions are only now coming off the presses: *Brusanus Prince of Hungaria* only a few weeks ago. The course will also look at the critical status of this fiction today in an emerging critical environment. Finally, be it said: these are great stories, written in the age that produced Shakespeare and the King James Bible. There is also the matter of influence, especially by playwrights who pillaged for the theatres. The reading list proposes only a sampling of the earliest English fiction in prose, originating in both native and humanist forms of story-telling. Among the sub-genres are Euphuistic morality tales, travel satire, pastoral romance, the Italian novella, and contemporary working class relations. The artifice and stylistic self-consciousness brought to this genre of writing raises questions concerning Renaissance tastes and the uses of fiction. There were class differences in the readerships, as well, and contemporary circumstances that accounted for the diversity of voices. Book history is an added dimension, given the concern with publishers,

markets and readerships. All valid critical approaches are welcome, although that validity needs to be demonstrated through the arguments. Authors include Robert Greene, Thomas Deloney, Barnabe Riche, John Dickenson, Thomas Nashe, and Thomas Lodge.

The course requirements are straightforward: two seminar presentations and two papers of 6-8 pages in length, at least three on a different works. The seminars are graded as we progress. The two papers are due on the last day of class. Each unit will count for 25% of the final grade.

The seminar presentations should address pertinent critical topics clearly and methodically. Delivery style, well-paced and aware of the audience, is important. Make certain that you raise points for discussion, that you are prepared to defend your thesis (within reason!), and that you save some good points for the lively conversations to follow. By implication, this means that all other members of the class should be present at each meeting and prepared to participate in the colloquium. That is the bottom line of any successful seminar.

Textbooks: An Anthology of Elizabethan Prose Fiction, ed. Salzman, Oxford
Riche, A Farewell, Dovehouse/MRTS
Lodge, A Margarite of America, CRRS Publications
Dickenson, Greene in Conceit, CRRS Publications

Schedule of Readings:

Jan. 7: Introduction
Jan. 14: Unfortunate Traveller (Nashe)
Jan. 21: Unfortunate Traveller
Jan. 28: Pandosto (Greene)
Feb. 4: Pandosto
Feb. 11: A Margarite of America (Lodge)
Winter Break
Feb. 25: A Margarite of America
Mar. 4: Jack of Newbury (Deloney)
Mar. 11: Jack of Newbury
Mar. 18: Greene in Conceit (Dickenson)
Mar. 25: Greene in Conceit
April 1: His Farewell to Military Profession (Riche)
April 8: His Farewell to Military Profession (Riche)

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

Course Work: All seminars and written work must be submitted in order to receive a final grade.

Plagiarism: The University takes plagiarism as a serious offense. Any use of the ideas or texts of others must be cited in the normal academic manner. Of course, all work presented must be your own, and not have been presented in any former course.

Deadlines: Are firm, unless official accommodation is granted by the University Registrar.

Research: Materials from the WWW are to be used with caution, given that little of it is vetted in the usual ways pertaining to academic research, such as it is to be found in published and academic journals. Generally it is to be avoided. Academic journals on line, of course, are fine.

Early Feedback: If you are concerned about early feedback, be sure to sign up for a seminar presentation early in the course.

Religious Observance: Students requesting academic accommodation on the basis of religious observance should make a formal, written request to their instructors for alternate dates and/or means of satisfying academic requirements. Such requests should be made during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist, but no later than two weeks before the compulsory academic event. Accommodation is to be worked out directly and on an individual basis between the student and the instructor. Instructors will make accommodations in a way that avoids academic disadvantage to the student. Students or instructors who have questions or want to confirm accommodation eligibility of a religious event or practice may refer to the Equity Services website for a list of holy days and Carleton's Academic Accommodation policies, or may contact an Equity Services Advisor in the Equity Services Department.

Pregnancy: For pregnancy, students requiring academic accommodations are encouraged to contact an Equity Advisor in Equity Services to complete a *letter of accommodation*. The student must then make an appointment to discuss her needs with the instructor at least two weeks prior to the first academic event in which it is anticipated the accommodation will be required.

Honeymoons: Leaves for up to 24 hours will be granted upon unanimous approval of the class. May include charivarees.