

Masterworks of English Literature

Syllabus

Note: Except where indicated, assignments refer to the *Norton Anthology*. If a work is assigned for a given day, the entire work must be read for that day. The introductory sections must be read for each of the authors and works covered. You may read the general introductions if you wish to do so.

- Jan. 19. General Introduction to the course.
21. Introduction to the Middle Ages. Anonymous: "I Sing of a Maiden." Chaucer: "To Rosamond" and "Merciless Beauty" (packet).
26. *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* (complete).
28. *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*.
- Feb. Chaucer: *The Canterbury Tales*, "General Prologue."
4. *The Canterbury Tales*, "The Miller's Prologue and Tale." **Quiz #1 (February 4 or 5)**
9. *The Canterbury Tales*, "The Wife of Bath's Prologue and Tale."
11. Introduction to the Renaissance. Shakespeare: *Sonnets*: 3, 12, 18, 29, 30, 55, 60, 73, 116, 129, 130, 138.
16. Shakespeare: *Henry IV, Part 1*, Acts 1-3.
18. *Henry IV, Part 1*, Acts 4 and 5. **Quiz #2 (February 18 or 19)**
23. *Henry IV, Part 1*.
25. Milton: *Paradise Lost*, Book 1.
- Mar. 2. Milton: *Paradise Lost*, Book 2.
4. *Paradise Lost*, Book 4, lines 1-537, 689-775, + summaries of Books 3-8 (packet). **Quiz #3 (March 4 or 5)**
9. *Paradise Lost*, Book 9 and Book 12, lines 466 to the end, + summaries of Books 9-12.
11. **Mid-semester Examination.**
23. Introduction to the Enlightenment. Swift: *Gulliver's Travels*, Part 1.
25. *Gulliver's Travels*, Part 2 and Part 3 (all the excerpts).
30. *Gulliver's Travels*, Part 4.
- Apr. 1. Introduction to Romanticism. Wordsworth: "We Are Seven," "Expostulation and Reply," "The Tables Turned," "London, 1802," "The World Is Too Much with Us"; *The Prelude*, Book 1, lines 357-400. **Quiz #4 (April 1 or 2)**
6. Blake: *Songs of Innocence and Experience*. From *Innocence*: "Introduction," "The Lamb," "The Little Black Boy," "The Chimney Sweeper," "Holy Thursday." From *Experience*: "Introduction," "Earth's Answer," "Holy Thursday," "The Chimney Sweeper," "The Tyger," "The Garden of Love," "London."
8. No class.
13. Keats: "La Belle Dame Sans Merci." Joyce: "Araby."
15. Introduction to Modernism. Conrad: *Heart of Darkness* (complete). **Quiz #5 (April 15 or 16)**
20. *Heart of Darkness*.
22. Woolf: *Mrs. Dalloway*, pp. 3-48.
27. *Mrs. Dalloway*, pp. 48-94.
29. *Mrs. Dalloway*, pp. 94-151. **Quiz #6 (April 29 or 30)**
- May 4. *Mrs. Dalloway*, pp. 151-end.
6. **End-of-semester Examination.**

Texts: (1) *Norton Anthology of English Literature: The Major Authors*, Eighth Edition (2 vols.).
(2) Shakespeare, *Henry IV, Part 1* (Penguin).
(3) Woolf, *Mrs. Dalloway* (Harcourt).
(4) Packet: available at Speedway Copy in Dobie Mall.

(5) Chaucer, *The Canterbury Tales*, ed. A. Kent Hieatt and Constance Hieatt (Bantam). Note: this text is optional and should be purchased if you think you cannot read the Chaucer selections in Middle English in the *Norton Anthology*.

Note: You must bring the text we are reading with you to class.

Course Objectives: This course has two main objectives. The first one is to introduce students to the systematic study of English literature from the Middle Ages to the early twentieth century. It will include lectures about the texts as well as the various periods covered, focusing on social and political as well as literary, artistic, and intellectual history. Their purpose is to help students understand the ways in which a text embodies and helps shape the chief concerns of its age. The second objective of the course is to help students improve their skills as readers and interpreters of literature. Hence, you will be required to perform close and careful readings of the works studied. The course will include a wide variety of different kinds of literature from lyric to epic, satire to tragedy, and most class periods will be devoted to detailed readings of those works.

Prerequisites: In order to take this course you must have completed 27 credit hours of course work and have taken E306 or its equivalent. If you have any questions about your eligibility for this course, see the Head of Lower Division English or the Undergraduate Advisor.

Requirements

1. **Attendance.** Students are expected to attend both lectures and the discussion sections. Attendance will be taken in the latter, and if you miss more than two classes, your grade average for the semester will be reduced by one-third of a letter grade for each additional class you miss. There are no excused absences. Attendance also means attending the entire meeting of the class; if you leave early without getting the TA's permission, you will be marked absent. Every two latenesses will equal an absence.

2. **Examinations.** These must be taken at the times specified in the syllabus; there will be no make-ups (except in the rarest of circumstances involving such things as family deaths; documentation will be required). An unexcused, missed exam will be graded as a zero. Each exam will cover approximately half of the work for the semester and will consist of a set of short answer questions like those on the quizzes as well as essay questions on the readings and the lectures.

3. **Quizzes.** There will be six brief quizzes given at the start of discussion section meetings throughout the semester (note the dates on the syllabus). Each quiz will be short answer in format and will cover the reading as well as the material presented in both lectures and discussion sections in the weeks since the previous quiz or exam (or, in the case of the first quiz, since the start of the semester). One quiz grade may be dropped without penalty. If you are absent on a quiz day or miss a quiz because of lateness, your grade for that quiz will be a zero. There will be no make-up quizzes.

4. **Grading:** Each examination will count thirty percent of the final grade, the quiz average will count twenty percent, and class participation in the discussion sections will count ten percent. Your best performance on an exam or on the quizzes will count an additional ten percent. Final grades will use the plus/minus system.

5. **Grading Criteria for Essay Answers:** We will be generally looking for three things in the essays you write for the exams. First, you need to demonstrate that you are capable of analyzing the texts you have read as literature. This means that you can show how individual elements in them, such as imagery, style, tone, form, and genre, work to produce meaning. When Conrad, for instance, in *Heart of Darkness*, refers to European explorers as "pilgrims," you should identify this as irony and relate it to Conrad's general condemnation of colonialism. The more fully you discuss such individual elements, and the more elements you discuss, the more likely your essay will receive a grade in the A or B range. Essays that fail to explain how such elements create meaning or that fail to identify very many of them will receive grades of C or lower. Second, you may be asked to explain how elements in a text relate to its historical and cultural context (such as showing how Conrad's irony expresses Modernism's disillusionment with western culture generally), and the more fully and accurately you do this, the more successful your essay will be. Finally, the better written and argued your essay is—the more effective it is in communicating your ideas in a coherent and compelling manner—the more likely it will be to receive a higher grade.