

E316K Masterworks of English Literature

Spring 2010, The University of Texas at Austin

Instructor: Professor Samuel Baker, Ph.D.
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Calhoun 308
W 2:30-5:30 (and by app't)
(512) 471-8389

Lecture: Tuesdays & Thursdays 3:30-4:45

Discussion: Fridays (see UT direct for details)

Unique Numbers: 34360 – 34395

Assistants: Banafsheh Madaninejad
Michael Roberts

Katherine Briggs
Ashton Harding

Literature is many things; and in being many things, literature has been perhaps the most dynamic medium for human experience. In this course, we will study masterworks of English literature: great pieces of writing from the culture that bequeathed us our main language and much else besides. We will consider how these masterworks were engineered, how they were marketed, and how they were consumed. In so doing, we will improve our ability to read, write, and think critically about literature, and moreover about the histories, cultures, and experiences that literature mediates. We may not fully master literature—who, in the end, ever could?—but in getting to know it, we will sharpen our awareness of ourselves, our languages, and our worlds. As part of this process, we will attend especially to the material vehicles of the literary medium—to the voice, to the book, to the performance—and even to those more recent and more evidently “mixed” media, such as recorded music and cinema, where the inextricability of words from sonic and visual images is generally most acute for us.

Texts for the course:

The following books are available at the University Coop: Jane Austen, *Persuasion* (OUP), Aphra Behn, *Oroonoko, The Rover, and other Works* (Penguin), John Buchan, *The Thirty-Nine Steps* (OUP), Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness* (OUP), Charles Dickens, *Hard Times* (OUP), John Gay, *The Beggar's Opera* (Penguin), Thomas More, *Utopia* (Penguin), William Shakespeare, *Hamlet* (Arden), Tom Stoppard, *Arcadia* (Faber and Faber), Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One's Own* (Harcourt), William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Lyrical Ballads* (Broadview).

In addition, we will be reading various poems and short prose pieces, which will be made available via electronic reserve (eReserves) or Blackboard.

Feel free to use alternative editions or library copies, but do procure the books for the course, and understand that you are responsible for being aware of any differences between your text and that made available. Reading these texts online will not suffice. You will be expected to bring the relevant texts for each day to lecture and to section.

Finally, you are also required to procure and register an iClicker device (available at the University Coop) and bring it with you to each lecture after the end of January.

Requirements and Grades:

Here are the requirements for this class, and the proportion of the final grade allotted them:

Regular, prompt, and respectful attendance at lecture and discussion are required. Those with perfect or near-perfect attendance records will earn extra credit; those missing more than three classes will be penalized, with especially significant penalties for those missing six or more classes (see the section on attendance below for details).

There will be a pair of short writing assignments (300-500 words each) due early in the Semester in order to get you some feedback before you need to write exam essays. Each of these assignments will count for 3% of your final grade.

There will be seven pop quizzes given in the course of the Semester, some of them in lecture, but most of them in section. Your five best performances on these will count for 3% each of your final grade.

There will be two in-lecture tests, one at the Semester's one-third mark and one at its two-thirds mark; each will be worth 18% of your final grade. There will also be a final exam, consisting of two parts: a test on the last third of the Semester, and a test on the Semester as a whole. Each part will be worth 18% of your final grade, for a total of 36%.

Your contributions to section discussion will count for 7% of your grade.

Finally, there will be various opportunities for extra credit; details will come soon.

Assignment and final grades will be given across a range from A to F that will include the plus and minus grades (e.g. A- and C+) recently introduced at the University of Texas.

Policies:

Your continued enrollment in this course indicates acceptance of these course policies (including the foregoing grading policy), as well as any addition or modification thereto made orally or in writing during the semester. Ignorance of these rules will not excuse you from their effects. These course policies are mine, but they are consistent with the policies of the English Department and the University. Much of what follows, including specific policy language, has been drawn from the syllabi and practices of English Department colleagues such as Professors Elizabeth Richmond-Garza, Brian Bremen, and Douglas Bruster (Director of Undergraduate Studies).

Communication. Be sure to let me know what's on your mind, and be sure that you understand as best you can your texts, classmates, and professor throughout the semester. To these ends:

Email. Please be sure that you regularly check for email sent to the address you have on file with the University. (If you don't know how to change this, contact the ITS help desk, at <http://www.utexas.edu/its/help/> or 475-9400.) If I am awake, I am generally reachable by email; I can't promise, however, to respond to email immediately or extensively.

In Person. I can best help you in person, so do come see me at some point in my office hours on Wednesday afternoons, or email to make an appointment. (I am at my office at some point almost every day.) Obviously this is a large class, but I welcome visiting with you one-on-one; not only am I glad to try and help you, but it helps me to hear from you in person about your experience of the course. Meanwhile, each TA will hold regular weekly office hours for the purpose of answering specific questions pertaining to course content. I urge you to take advantage of this opportunity.

On the Web. We will likely be using both blackboard and the eReserves system at some point in the course of the semester. Here are the urls for the class:

<http://courses.utexas.edu> takes you to the main blackboard portal;
<http://reserves.lib.utexas.edu> takes you to the eReserves pages.

Disabilities. Students with disabilities may request appropriate academic accommodations from the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement, Services for Students with Disabilities, by calling (512) 471-6259. If you believe that one of the policies below should be adapted for your case because of a disability, talk to me about it, but be sure also to discuss the matter with Services for Students with Disabilities (as I will be doing as well).

Students in Athletic Programs. Students in athletic programs scheduled to miss a substantial number of lecture or discussion meetings for this class are urged to register for another E316K course in which a smaller number of classes will be missed. Those students who remain in this section must consult with their TAs, who will collect (and save) *official letters* establishing the dates in question and who will also explain the requirements for making up missed sessions. We are willing to negotiate some special accommodations for students in athletic programs and the like, but this must be handled through official channels.

English as a Second Language. We are also aware of the special situation of students for whom English is not a native language, and will provide what help we can. Those needing such help should also avail themselves of, for example, the resources that can be found through the undergraduate writing center (<http://uwc.utexas.edu/node/108>).

Reading. Read the assigned texts thoroughly and actively, formulating remarks, questions and concerns that you can voice in our discussions. Make use of the rubrics provided in the syllabus, but go beyond these as well. You must come to class with copies of the readings in hand.

Attendance. While what follows may seem like a complicated attendance policy, it is really very simple. In a nutshell: attend most every lecture and discussion section, and be on time!

When you arrive at each lecture and discussion, check in with your TA, who will mark you present. It is *your* responsibility to make sure you are accounted for. Try to arrive early; as a cushion, however, I will begin my lectures at 3:35, and you will be on time so long as you arrive and check in before I begin. (Discussion sections, which are shorter, will begin promptly at the appointed time.) The first time you are late to lecture or section, you can try to find your TA after class to have him or her mark you present; after that has worked for you once, however, you can't avail yourself of that exception again. (And if you can't find your TA after being tardy, you are out of luck for that day.) I will make special allowances for classes missed because of religious holidays: but per UT policy, in such cases the student is responsible for notifying the Professor of

the absence “at least 14 days prior to the classes scheduled.” Students otherwise expecting to miss more than a few lectures should probably be looking to transfer into one of the many other E316 courses being offered; I am happy to put a word in with any relevant administrator to facilitate this. If you miss lecture or section for any reason, do *not* approach me or your TA to find out what you missed: please get this information from a classmate. Finally, courtesy requires that you alert your section leader in advance to any sections you will miss, regardless of your reason for doing so. In general, we understand that you may occasionally have good reasons to miss class time, but nevertheless time spent learning collectively in the classroom is an irreplaceable component of this course.

Students with a perfect attendance record will receive two points of extra credit; students with only one class missed will receive one bonus point. Absences will result in the following penalties. Four absences will mean one point off your final grade; five absences will mean two points deducted; and from there onward the total penalty continues to *double* with each absence, so that six absences means four points off, seven absences eight points off, and so on.

Classroom Etiquette. Prepare for lecture by removing impediments to learning and furnishing yourself with the texts for the day, pen, paper, and iClicker. All other devices should be turned off and stowed while you are in the classroom. I may make individual exceptions for students because of a disability (see above) or an emergency situation, but I must be asked in advance of class in order to make such an exception. Along similar lines, students wishing to record the audio of the lecture may do so, but they must ask for permission in advance, and arrange to share any audio recording with me. (I may in turn make it available to the whole class.) If you wish to have course notes on your laptop, plan to transcribe them later.

Participation. In lecture, opportunities to speak will be comparatively rare, but intelligent contributions will be accordingly valued. Listen actively, sketch diagrams, note down key phrases and full sentences from the lecture, and record questions and thoughts that occur to you. Between classes, I suggest typing up your notes while reviewing the readings and the lecture’s PowerPoints (which will be made available on Blackboard). Meanwhile, make full use of the opportunity afforded by discussion section. No student will be required to participate at any given moment of a discussion session, but all students should strive to contribute to the overall conversation. While the quality of student contributions weighs more heavily than their quantity, risk-taking will be rewarded.

Academic Honesty. Follow MLA or Chicago style in citing texts in your papers (see the MLA handbook, widely available at libraries and bookstores). Plagiarism is forbidden, unethical, boring, and likely to fail, given the idiosyncratic course writing assignments, eagle eye of the instructor, and the University’s investment in anti-plagiarism search engines. The standard for this class is that any work submitted by a student is solely, entirely, that particular student’s own work. Students caught cheating—including the use of undeclared outside sources or ghostwriters for out-of-class work, or electronic devices with recorded class matter during the exams, among other possibilities—will receive an F for the course. For more details on academic integrity standards see http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/acint_student.php

Peer Commentaries. I reserve the right to circulate student work (both papers and exam essays) to the class; write with that possibility in mind.

Field Trips and Additional Meetings. I hope to schedule visits by our students to the Harry Ransom Center, one of the world's leading repositories of rare books, manuscripts, and other media artifacts, which is right here on our campus. There may also be other optional additional meetings outside of class time—review sessions, for example—so let me know if this interests you.

Quizzes. These short exercises are intended not only to help you read, but also to help you think, and thus to help us brainstorm before crucial class sessions. Prepare by studying assiduously: be sure that you can remember, without referring back to your book, the names and terms that you will need to know in order to say what you want to say in response to whatever questions might appear.

Discussing Grades. Should you wish to discuss a grade, you must put your discussion in writing, on paper. This written account must be very specific about what you consider to be erroneous, and it must be intelligently reasoned. Keep a copy of this written document and hand the original to the teaching assistant who graded your course materials. Upon consideration, the assistant to whom the student submitted his or her case will reply in writing (likely via email) if the student has failed to make a convincing case or interview the student if he or she has raised an issue which should be further discussed or clarified.

About the Instructor. Samuel Baker, Associate Professor of English, has taught at the University of Texas since 2001. He specializes in British literature of the Romantic period, also known as the “Age of Revolution,” but regularly teaches British and American literary works dating from the Renaissance to the First World War. His first book, *Written on the Water: British Romanticism and the Maritime Empire of Culture*, which reads the poetry of Wordsworth, Coleridge, Byron, and Arnold in relation to contemporaneous English overseas endeavors, is being published this spring by the University of Virginia Press. He is also the author of recent articles in *English Literary History (ELH)* and *Modern Language Quarterly (MLQ)*, among other journals, and the Principal Investigator for the “eComma” digital humanities project, a web interface for collaborative text annotation supported by Liberal Arts Instructional Technologies Services at UT and by the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Details of Class Dates, Topics, and Assignments from 1/19 through 2/05:

Be aware that the actual lectures delivered will no doubt depart somewhat from the capsule descriptions that follow, and that the reading assignments given may be tweaked as things proceed. That said, this schedule should provide you with a good guide.

Note that this detailed program for the first few weeks is followed by a sketchier plan for the rest of the Semester. I will soon provide you with a detailed program for February and March.

The reading assignment for each day is **bolded** below. Do that reading in advance of the class, record your experience of it in your reading notes, and be prepared to speak about what you have read, even in lecture!

Tuesday, January 19th • Introduction to the Course

What are Masterworks of English Literature and why are we reading them together? What is a multimedia approach? What is a literary work? What is reading? What is writing? What is England? What was England? How we will proceed through the Semester. Course policies, requirements, and grading scheme.

Thursday, January 21st • Introduction to the Disciplines, and More

What is a discipline? What is “English”? What is “literary criticism”? What is “literary history”? What is “media studies”? What is “cultural studies”? In what different ways have these disciplines been taught? How do these areas of study relate to history and its sub-disciplines, to the liberal arts, and to the other disciplines at the University? What will we gain from our multimedia approach to thinking, reading, and writing about masterworks of English literature? Conceptualizing Literary study as advanced study. Moving from literary transactions to literary transformations.

What was modern English education? Who was Thomas More, and what was Utopia? English Literature and the Latin Middle Ages. Utopia as a point of departure.

Read William Wordsworth’s poems “Expostulation and Reply,” “The Tables Turned,” “Lines Written on a Tablet in a School,” “The Two April Mornings,” and “The Fountain,” all in *Lyrical Ballads* (as well as on eReserves and Blackboard), and memorize one stanza (chosen out of all of these poems) that you find particularly striking. Consider what you find familiar, and what you find unfamiliar, in the debates over reading that Wordsworth records and in the memories of his teacher that he recounts.

Read the selections from Ralph Robinson and Thomas More’s front matter from Robinson’s sixteenth-century translation of *Utopia* (Blackboard and eReserves).

Begin Thomas More, *Utopia*.

Friday, January 22nd • Discussion Section

Thomas More, *Utopia* (entire book).

Tuesday, January 26th • Reading, Writing, and The Renaissance

European Modernity, Antiquity, Postmodernity, and the Medieval. The idea of the Renaissance and its actuality. Literary Humanism at Court, in the Church, and at the University. Philosophies of Natural Law and Civic Order in Europe and in England. The arrivals of the Renaissance in Britain. Thomas More as a case study in English Humanism. Hamlet and the Renaissance.

Review and continue thinking about More's *Utopia*.

Read Hamlet's soliloquies "O, That This Too Too Solid Flesh Would Melt" and "How All Occasions Do Inform Against Me," from William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, Act 1 Scene 2 and Act 4 Scene 4, respectively, and memorize one short passage of approximately 3 to 6 lines that you find especially evocative of Hamlet's philosophy.

Thursday, January 28th Tudor England and its Literature

Who were the Tudors? In what sense were they English (and in what sense not)? What was literature to them? Who was Queen Elizabeth, and what were the precedents and contexts for her and her court's patronage of literary artists? What writers from the era achieved lasting fame, and for what are they famous? Thomas Wyatt, Thomas More, Edmund Spenser, Philip Sidney, Christopher Marlowe, William Shakespeare.

What is Lyric Poetry? What kinds of people compose lyric poems? What kinds of people do lyric poems compose? Making and blurring distinctions between the narrative, the lyric, and the dramatic. Basic tools and resources for describing lyric poems.

Read Hamlet's soliloquy "O, What A Rogue and Peasant Slave am I," from William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*.

Read Queen Elizabeth's "Golden Speech," the short selection of excerpts from Edmund Spenser's *Amoretti and Epithalmion*, and the epigrams, ballads, and songs by Thomas Wyatt available on Blackboard and eReserves.

Friday, January 22nd • Discussion Section

Thomas Wyatt, "They Flee From Me," or other short poem of your section leader's choice.

Monday, February 1st • *** ASSIGNMENT DUE ***

Short Essay (two paragraphs, 300-500 words) due addressing a prompt to be distributed in Friday's section.

Tuesday, February 2nd • Shakespeare, Genius and Enigma

Who was Shakespeare? Where did he come from (in various senses of the phrase), and how can he be said to have come out of nowhere? Shakespeare and the contexts and conventions of the Elizabethan stage. The status of Shakespearean texts, and the presentation of the Arden edition of Hamlet. The main Shakespearean genres: history plays, tragedies, comedies, romances. Shakespearean language and form; his use of blank verse, rhymed couplets, and prose.

Hamlet: masterwork of masterworks. The structure and plot of the play. What we know about its inception and original performance, and how it has been received over time. Hamlet, Coleridge, and the very idea of Shakespeare.

Read Acts I, II, and III of *Hamlet*.

Read the short selection of excerpts from transcriptions of Samuel Taylor Coleridge's lectures on *Hamlet* (eReserves / Blackboard).

Thursday, February 4th • Interpreting and Experiencing Hamlet

How have audiences in general, and literary critics in particular, understood Hamlet differently from one another? Why do these different "takes" on Hamlet matter? Hamlet and the cinema. Hamlet and the literary culture of Britain in later epochs, and in European and world literature.

Finish *Hamlet*.

Friday, February 5th • Discussion Section

***Hamlet*, and in particular passages singled out in lecture and by your TA.**

Sketch of Class Dates, Topics, and Assignments from 2/9 through 5/7

Here is an outline of what to expect for the balance of the Semester. Assignment and test dates are fixed, but readings will no doubt be altered somewhat, with the proviso that I do expect to get to all of the books on order. (Note that titles of books, on the syllabus, are italicized, and poem titles placed in quotation marks when not books in themselves; this is standard practice which you should follow.)

Tuesday, February 9th • Literature and Reformation from Antiquity to Jacobean England

Paul, verses from First Corinthians, King James Version
Wordsworth, "Lines Written a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey"
Selections from John Donne, George Herbert, and Ben Jonson

Thursday, February 11th • Introducing Modernity

John Milton, "Lycidas,"
Lord Byron, "Prometheus"

Friday, February 12th • Discussion Section

Monday, February 15th • *** Second Short Writing Assignment Due ***

Tuesday, February 16th • Some Kinds of Pastoral

Philip Sidney, short selections from "Arcadia"
Andrew Marvell, "The Garden"
Wordsworth, "The Pet Lamb," "The Last of the Flock"
Christina Rossetti, "The Lambs of Grasmere"

Thursday, February 18th • Literature and Endless War

Coleridge, "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner"
Marvell, "An Horatian Ode Upon Cromwell's Return from Ireland"
Samuel Butler, short selections from *Hudibras*

Friday, February 19th • Discussion Section

Tuesday, February 23rd • *** FIRST TEST ***

Thursday, February 25th • Romance and Realism in Prose

Aphra Behn, *Oroonoko*
Opening pages of Jane Austen, *Persuasion*

Friday, February 26th • Discussion Section

Tuesday, March 2nd • Austen, the Home, and the World

Austen, *Persuasion*, volume I

Thursday, March 4th • British Literature and the Napoleonic Wars

Austen, *Persuasion*, volume II

Friday, March 5th • Discussion Section

Tuesday, March 9th • The Industrial Revolution and English Fiction

Charles Dickens, *Hard Times*, first half

Thursday, March 11th • Charles Dickens and The Popularization of Literary Culture

Dickens, *Hard Times*, second half

Friday, March 12th • Discussion Section

[SPRING BREAK]

Tuesday, March 23rd • Dark Places: The Literature of British Empire

Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*, first half

Thursday, March 25th • Joseph Conrad, English, and World Literature

Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*, second half

Friday, March 26th • Discussion Section

Tuesday, March 30th • *The Question of Women's Literature—and of Men's*

Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One's Own*

Thursday, April 1st • *** SECOND TEST ***

Friday, April 2nd • Discussion Section

Tuesday, April 6th • Restoration Drama and Popular Culture

Behn, *The Rover*
John Gay, selections from *The Beggar's Opera*

Thursday, April 8th • The Augustans and Grub Street

Gay, *The Beggar's Opera*, complete
Alexander Pope, short selections from *The Dunciad*

Friday, April 9th • Discussion Section

Tuesday, April 13th • Romanticism and Britishness

Robert Burns, selected poems
Wordsworth, poems from *Lyrical Ballads*

Thursday, April 15th • Victorian Civilization and Barbarism

Matthew Arnold, "The Scholar-Gipsy"
Arnold, excerpts from *Culture and Anarchy*

Friday, April 16th • Discussion Section

Tuesday, April 20th • Shock and Value: The Twentieth Century

T. S. Eliot, "The Hollow Men"
Eliot, "Tradition and the Individual Talent"
Begin John Buchan, *The Thirty-Nine Steps*

Thursday, April 22nd • British Cinema and the Master(y) of Suspense

Finish Buchan, *The Thirty-Nine Steps*, and watch the film by Alfred Hitchcock

Friday, April 23rd • Discussion Section

Tuesday, April 27th • The Grim Landscape of Midcentury Poetry

Philip Larkin, "This Be The Verse," "The Whitsun Weddings"
Stevie Smith, "Deeply Morbid"

Thursday, April 29th • The British Invasion

The Beatles, *The White Album*

Friday, April 30th • Discussion Section

Tuesday, May 4th • Literature in a Media Age: Thatcher, Blair, Beyond, and Back

Tom Stoppard, *Arcadia*

Thursday, May 6th • Conclusions and Final Exam Review

Friday, May 7th • Discussion Section