



Thinking with the Renaissance

How did Shakespeare's contemporaries *think*? What problems fixated the minds of Tudor and early Stuart writers? And what can these problems tell us about the birth of modern literature, genre, and aesthetic thought? This course will pursue these and other questions as an introduction to 16th and early 17th century British literature. Rather than a chronological survey, we will use the theme of *thinking* in order to think through what is variously called the "Renaissance" or "early modern" period of literature, in two ways: (i) by focusing on the Age of Spenser, and the broad influence of Spenser and Elizabethan "new poetry" before and after 1600; and (ii) by following, with the errant knights of Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, the utopian, pastoral, apocalyptic, Petrarchan / Ovidian, and satirical strains of that poetry, wherever it leads us. Course readings require you to read deeply each week in primary and secondary material, and to be able to do independent background research on the authors covered. Our goal is to know more by the end of the semester not only about the men and women writers of Shakespeare's England – including Sidney, Marlowe, Beaumont, and Cavendish – but the forms of close reading, source study, and critical scholarship necessary to understanding how they think.

Texts

Primary:

- Course Packet of Poetry and Prose [PDF Blackboard – please print in its entirety]
- Christopher Marlowe, *Edward II*, ed. Matthew Martin (Broadview, 2010) ISBN: 9781551119106
- Sir Thomas More, *Utopia*, ed. George M. Logan, 3rd edn. (Norton, 2010) ISBN: 978-0393932461
- Edmund Spenser, *Edmund Spenser's Poetry*, ed. Anne Lake Prescott and Andrew Hadfield, 4th edn. (Norton, 2013) ISBN: 9780393927856
- Francis Beaumont, *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*, ed. Michael Hattaway (Methuen, 2002), ISBN: 978-0713650693

Secondary:

Articles and secondary sources (.pdf) posted to Blackboard

John Guy, *The Tudors: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford UP, 2013), ISBN: 978-0199674725 (Recommended)

Objectives

- To survey a selection of major authors in early modern British literature before Milton, with special attention to the Age of Spenser and Spenser's *Faerie Queene*
- To gain a working knowledge of early modern English literary culture and its generic diversity, including the growth of lyric, prose, comedy, the history play, tragedy, romance epic, and satire
- To become familiar with critical approaches to early modern English studies, and to incorporate them in a longer written project

Requirements

Two Presentations (Marlowe's Sources and Group Article Debate)	20%
Blackboard Forum (Unit 1) / Commonplace Journal (Unit 2)	30%
Final Paper (12-15 pp., with Annotated Bibliography)	40%
Oral Exam	10%
In-Class Participation	(Mandatory)

Presentations: You will give two group presentations (in groups of 2) this semester, which are designed for you to work together remotely, if necessary, in preparation (via email, etc.). The first presentation will be a discussion of one of sources for Marlowe's *Hero and Leander* or *Edward II* in Weeks 5 and 6, in which you will need to do outside research on a source text either in the Broadview *Edward II* or posted to Blackboard for *H&L* in order to "teach" that source to the class in a brief 7-8 minute presentation (no more, no less). During our reading of Spenser's *Faerie Queene* in Weeks 7-12, you will host an approx. 15 minute "group article discussion" on the evening's required secondary article, using the article's claims, key concepts, and ideas to debate *one* stanza in the selected Cantos for that evening. Further instructions for both presentations will be provided in class.

Weekly Blackboard Posts: This semester, you will write a weekly Blackboard post of 250-300 words each Wednesday (due ½ hour before class). Each post is worth 100 points (graded 100/85/75/50), but will take two different forms during the semester:

Unit 1 Discussion Forum (Weeks 2-6) - For the first five weeks of the course, your weekly post will be a 250-300 word answer to one of the week's reading questions. I will post the discussion question after the previous Wednesday's class, and you will have a week to reply. Each written post should:

- answer the discussion question by drawing our attention to a textual lacuna or issue in the week's primary reading – a portion of the literary text that is debatable, inexplicable, has competing interpretations.
- use quoted evidence both from the assigned primary text and any required secondary reading.
- engage with at least one of the previous forum posts in your response.

Unit 2 Spenser Commonplace Journal (Weeks 7-12) – During our reading of Books 1-3 of *The Faerie Queene*, you will construct a "commonplace" journal in Blackboard Journal using a list of commonplaces – words, themes, images, objects – generated from your reading in Unit 1. Further instructions will be provided in Week 6.

Final Paper (with Proposal and Annotated Bibliography) – A final paper (14-15 pp.) on a work and issues of your choice from the course will be due at the end of the semester, with an annotated bibliography and proposal (and instructor conference) in Week 13.

Oral Exam: During finals week, you will each meet with me for a 30 minute oral exam on the semester's readings, which special attention to Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, Beaumont, and Cavendish. A list of questions and topics will be provided in advance.

Course Schedule

Note: Unless otherwise indicated, all required and recommended secondary readings are posted as PDF in Blackboard in the folder “Course Readings.” Readings in the Course Packet are listed “CP”; please print all.

I.

- Wk 1 W 1.20** *Introduction – Gesturing at the Second World*
Read: Sir Thomas Wyatt, “Mine Own John Pains”; John Donne, “Satire I”
- Wk 2 W 1.27** *Utopia*
Sir Thomas More, *Utopia*
Prologue, Bk 1 (all), and Bk 2 (focus pp. 38-52, 57-67, 84-97)
Read also: Norbrook, “The *Utopia* and Radical Humanism”
- Wk 3 W 2.3** *Pastoral*
Edmund Spenser, *The Shepheardes Calender*
“To His Book,” Dedicatory Epistle, “January,” “April,” “October,” and
“December” (Norton, 503-8, 509-12, 520-5, 527-32, 540-45)
Read also: Burrow, “On *The Shepheardes Calender*” (810-16) and Editor’s Note
(545-50)
- Wk 4 W 2.10** *Petrarchism / Courty Verse*
Sir Philip Sidney, *Astrophil and Stella* #1, 2, 7, 24-6, 34, 47, 49, 55, 106-7 and *The
Defence of Poesy* (excerpt) [CP]
Recommended: Norbrook, “Sidney and Political Pastoral”
- Wk 5 W 2.17** *Erotic Epyllia*
Christopher Marlowe, *Hero and Leander*
Read also: Brown, “Gender and Voice in ‘Hero and Leander’”
- Wk 6 W 2.24** *History and Sodomy*
Marlowe, *Edward II*
Read also: Bray, “Homosexuality and the Signs of Male Friendship”

II.

- Wk 7 W 3.2** Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, Book 1, Cantos 1-3
See also: “13 Ways of Looking at a Spenserian Stanza”
(pdf Blackboard)
Canto 4 read aloud in class
Group Article Discussion: Alpers, “How to Read *The Faerie Queene*” (Norton)
- Wk 8 W 3.9** *FQ*, Cantos 5-7
Canto 8 read aloud in class
Recommended: *The Spenser Encyclopedia*, “allegory”
Group Article Discussion: Berger, “Archimago: Between Text and Countertext”
- Wk 9 W 3.16** *FQ*, Cantos 9-11 and “A Letter of the Authors” (402-5)
Canto 12 read aloud in class
Group Article Discussion: Miller, “The Poem’s Two Bodies”

** *Spring Break – No class W 3.23* **

Wk 10 W 3.30	<i>FQ</i> , Book 3, Cantos 1-4 <i>Group Article Discussion</i> : Wofford, “Gendering Allegory”
Wk 11 W 4.6	<i>FQ</i> Book 3, Cantos 5-8 <i>Group Article Discussion</i> : Teskey, “Thinking Moments in <i>The Faerie Queene</i> ” (Norton)
Wk 12 W 4.13	<i>FQ</i> Book 3, Cantos 9-12 <i>Group Article Discussion</i> : “Readings of the House of Busyrane” (Norton)
Wk 13 W 4.20	<i>Optional Class*</i> – <i>Paper Proposal Conferences</i>

Paper Proposal / Bibliography Due

III.

Wk 14 W 4.27	Francis Beaumont, <i>The Knight of the Burning Pestle</i>
Wk 15 W 5.4	Margaret Cavendish, “Assaulted and Pursued Chastity,” from <i>Natures Pictures</i> (1656) [CP] <i>Read also</i> : Iyengar, “Royalist, Romancist, Racialist”

Final Paper Due

5.9-5.12 – Oral Exams (by appointment)

Additional Policies

Texts

Please purchase the assigned texts for this course and bring them with you to each class. Please print the Course Packet. Electronic or paper copies of all *required* secondary texts are expected on hand at each class as well.

Attendance

Please plan to attend all class sessions as class time and discussion are essential for negotiating the difficult reading material we will be covering in our course. You are allowed no more than two absences for the semester. Three absences or more will result in a reduction of your final grade; four absences will result in automatic failure.

Late Work

Papers are due at the beginning of class on the deadlines listed in the assignment sheets. Late work will be docked ½ letter for every 24 hour period the assignment is late.

Please note: *I do not accept written assignments via email.*

Plagiarism

Do not plagiarize. All work submitted for a grade must be the student's own original work. Any use of published material in your written work must be fully and properly cited. Please feel free to speak with me if you have any questions about the proper use and citation of a source. On recognizing and avoiding plagiarism, see the entry on Plagiarism at the Online Writing Lab ("OWL"):
<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/589/01/>.

Students with Disabilities

Southern Connecticut State University provides reasonable accommodations in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act for students with documented disabilities on an individualized basis. If you are a student with a documented disability, the University's Disability Resource Center (DRC) can work with you to determine appropriate accommodations. Before you receive accommodations in this class, you will need to make an appointment with the Disability Resource Center located at EN C-105A. To discuss your approved accommodations with me or other concerns, such as medical emergencies or arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment to meet as soon as possible.

Cell Phones

Please turn off all cell phones or place them on vibrate. As this is an early evening class, it's understandable that you may need to receive an urgent call. If at all possible, please wait until break; if not, please excuse yourself quietly.