AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

This course is one of the two most important courses you can take in English literature (that's why we require it). Together with English 251A, it forms the crucial foundation on which our department bases all further education in English. Literary criticism gives you the tools for close reading of texts and ways of approaching texts; this course provides the canon of the great works before 1800 and the historical and cultural framework which allows competent understanding of those works. We will discuss the canon and the especially relevant history and cultural framework; you will be responsible for learning the more general framework. Your text provides the best single source for that information in a remarkably concise form.

In addition to introducing the canon of great literature, this course should provide at least four benefits:

1. the intense pleasure of reading a lot of great literature and sharing your responses with a group of compatible individuals who have also just completed the same reading (book clubs around the world meet regularly for just such pleasure);

2. by hearing from the professor and fellow students what the works "mean" to them and WHY, an increased understanding and pleasure;

3. a sharpening of your rhetorical speech and writing skills by speaking and writing to the class and the professor on questions which require thought and synthesis, not just rote memory; and

4. most importantly, the expansion of your ability to synthesize what you learn by putting together what you learn from each reading assignment, lecture, and discussion with what you already know to form a useful pattern of knowledge to take with you in your advanced courses and throughout your life.

To receive these benefits, you must do your part:

1. Read all the assigned works by the assigned date. You cannot hope to benefit fully from the lectures (which, unlike book reviews, assume a reading of the work) unless you have the expected listening readiness. You insult your classmates by asking questions or making statements based on ignorance of later sections of the work during discussions.

2. Attend class regularly. I don't take attendance because I assume that if you are not in class you are ill or have something urgent to do. However, if you miss that's your problem, not your professor's or classmates'; do not expect anyone to redo the class for your private benefit.

3. Think about what you have read and be brave enough to comment usefully or to ask perceptive questions (or both) about your reading. Have opinions; express them. Defend them with citation and interpretation from the works themselves and from your experience of life.

4. As you read, take notes, make marginalia, ask yourself questions, answer them as you read on. Don't just sit there sucking up a neat poem or story; get actively involved with the reading experience. "Escape" reading or reading strictly for pleasure is great fun, but we don't learn as much as when we pay more active attention. When you finish a work or a section, sum up. Write a brief response, critique, ask questions about elements that puzzled you. Bring those notes to class and draw on them.
THE TEXTS

NOT THE MAJOR AUTHORS EDITION!

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. **Time**

Students should spend no less than two and up to three hours outside class for each class hour. Since this is one of the two most important courses English majors take, let us assume that you will spend three; that means an average of nine hours outside of class each week. Since you and I and almost everyone else in the world procrastinate, we will find the work piling up toward the end of the course. One way to avoid that is to read ahead, especially the big things: Canterbury Tales, Paradise Lost, Oroonoko, Gulliver’s Travels. You have only to review them before class later. Also, if you read ahead, you may find it easier to pick essay topics early and work on the essays a little each week for several weeks rather than banging them out at the last minute; (starting early has the concomitant effect of producing a more thoughtful, more organized, more effectively revised essay and therefore a better mark). We all know that when students tell professors they need more time to complete their essays, they usually mean they did not use their time wisely early in the term.

This course has a lot of reading. Know that right now and plan accordingly. If you fall behind in your reading, you’re doomed. This course surveys the literature of a millennium in twelve weeks to prepare you to take advanced courses where you will investigate less material more deeply. But in this course we must hustle our bustles.

2. **Class and Reading Schedule**

***** READ ALL POETRY ALOUD! (preferably TO someone else) *****

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Discussion Topic</th>
<th>Assigned Readings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td></td>
<td>(Norton pp.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>1-5, 14-21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Bede and Caedmon, Dream of the Rood,</td>
<td>69-75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wanderer, Battle of Maldon</td>
<td>21-69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Beowulf</td>
<td>5-15, 286-91, 384-94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Middle English Lyrics, Popular Ballads</td>
<td>298-308</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Margery Kempe</td>
<td>76-100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Chaucer: Canterbury Tales: General Prologue</td>
<td>101-17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>Canterbury Tales: Miller’s Tale</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Canterbury Tales: Wife of Bath’s Tale</td>
<td>117-44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Thomas Wyatt</td>
<td>395-413, 438-46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Sir Philip Sidney: Astrophil &amp; Stella 1, 2, 7, 31,</td>
<td>458-71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>39, 47, 52, 61, 69, 81, Fourth Song</td>
<td>501-3, 734-8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Edmund Spenser: Amoretti</td>
<td>738-48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Epithalamion</td>
<td>748-9, 767-8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Christopher Marlowe: The Passionate Shepherd</td>
<td>1022-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sir Walter Raleigh: The Nymph’s Reply</td>
<td>1092-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>John Donne: The Bait</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Shakespeare: Sonnets 18, 20, 29, 30, 55, 66,</td>
<td>801-3, 810-22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>71, 73, 97, 116, 130, 138, 144, 146.</td>
<td>1686-92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>MIDTERM EXAM</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
English 200A (Gosselink) - Fall 1995

24 John Donne
   Song, The Sun Rising, The Indifferent,
   The Canonization, Break of Day, The Flea,
   The Apparition, A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning,
   The Ecstasy, Elegy 19
   1069-1103

26 Ben Jonson: On My First Daughter, ...Son,
   Song: To Celia,
   Robert Herrick: Delight in Disorder,
   To the Virgins, Upon Julia’s Clothes,
   Andrew Marvell: To His Coy Mistress, The Garden
   Thomas Carew: A Song (Ask me no more)
   Sir John Suckling: Song, Out upon it
   Richard Lovelace: To Lucasta, To Althea
   Edmund Waller: Song
   1106-8
   1126-9, 1218-26

31 John Donne: sacred poetry & devotion
   1114-26

November

2 George Herbert: poems
   1369-88

7 John Milton: L’Allegro, Il Penseroso, Lycidas
   1433-5, 1443-56

9 Paradise Lost, Books 1-3
   1474-1532

14 Paradise Lost, Books 4-12
   1532-1610

16 John Dryden: MacFlecknoe, St. Cecilia
   1786-88, 1815-21, 1827-29

21 Aphra Behn: Oroonoko
   1864-1912

23 Jonathan Swift: Gulliver’s Travels, Books 1-3
   2007-9, 2039-2136

28 Gulliver’s Travels, Book 4, Modest Proposal
   2136-87

30 The Rape of the Lock
   2212-6, 2234-52

December

5 An Essay on Man
   2263-70

3. Class Format

Forced discussion courses do not work well for me, so I engage in the interruptible lecture, hoping that you will speak up whenever you do not understand what I say, or disagree with what I say, or have a different insight and we all have different insights because we are different. I hope to avoid the stereotyped lecture, in which the notes of the professor become the notes of the student without affecting the mind of either. In fact, I recommend taking no notes except marginalia in your texts. I encourage, but will not force you to share your ideas, because you need to learn how to read and interpret more effectively and how to defend your interpretations to your peers. You cannot depend on an undefended idea any more than an untried faith. You don’t really know how brilliant (or how silly) your interpretation is unless you let others break it or break themselves upon it. Take the risk of saying something foolish; I do every day. As you all know, the more you put in, the more you get out. Also, I will be aware of bright, alert, eager students, which may help them at final marks time.

4. Written Work

You will have the opportunity to write one essay and two exams. The essay, of no more than 2000 words, worth 30%, is due 7 November. Late papers are unacceptable unless accompanied by appropriate medical forms from the university. The midterm exam, worth 30%, is on 24 October, and the final exam, worth 40%, is during the exam period in December.

THE PROFESSOR

I am available outside of class and enjoy talking with students, professionally and socially, so come by. I provide tea and sympathy. You may consult me on general matters of curriculum, since I have been departmental undergraduate and co-op officer. Feel free to discuss anything that interests or concerns you.

During office hours I guarantee to be there for you. I am often in my office at other times, ready to talk with you, but I also work elsewhere (in the library or at home), so please do not come by expectating to find me outside office hours. That does not mean I am not happy to see you at any mutually convenient hour. Knock on the door, stop after class or call me for an appointment. If I’m not in when you phone, leave a mail message. I will return your call as soon as convenient.

Office HH 255
Phone: 2419

Office Hours:
2:30-4TR & by appointment