ENGLISH 200A  Survey of British Literature 1  
Fall 1997, Section 01, 11:30-1:00 TR, AL 207

Professor Lynne Magnusson, HH 264, phone ext. 2759, e-mail Imagnuss@watarts  
Office hours: Tuesday 1:30-2:30 and Thursday 1:00-2:30

A.  COURSE DESCRIPTION

English 200A is an historical survey of major figures, types, and trends in British literature from the Middle Ages to the late 18th century. This section will introduce you to some of the forms, genres, concerns and controversies of canonical British literature. Some key clusters of terms and issues we will consider include:

• canon, author, period, tradition, history, influence, marginality, ideological implications
• genre and form, including epic, lyric, sonnet, romance, history play, allegory, dream vision
• text and medium: orality and literacy, manuscript culture, print culture, electronic texts
• constructions of subjectivity, heroism, gentility, masculinity, femininity, nation, race, community, religion
• culture, civility, and social control
• the power of language, of reading, of writing, of verse.

B.  COURSE OBJECTIVES

English 200A has four key objectives.

1. To foster a close acquaintance and a critical appreciation of a selection from among the most celebrated works of English literature.

2. To encourage reading practices attentive to the words and text, to the literary tradition, to historical context, and to critical methodologies current in English studies.

3. To help you improve your writing ability.

C.  TEXTS

Recommended for writing and essay form: The Little, Brown Compact Handbook, First Canadian Edition (note: royalties go to UW scholarship fund)

D.  ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

1. 3 Issue Papers. 2 typed double-spaced pages each (500 word maximum). Due your choice of three of the following four dates: September 16, September 25, October 7, and October 28. Grade value 10% x 3 = 30%.
This assignment is meant to help you assimilate your reading, articulate issues and subjects for discussion and analysis relating to your reading, and to practice writing. An issue paper should treat one of the course readings—either the reading for the day or a reading done since the last assigned date for an issue paper (or 2 readings). For each “issue paper,” identify an issue or subject suitable for your thoughtful discussion within this page limit. Articulate your position or question about a text clearly in an informal essay format: give a clear account, with examples or sensible arguments for your views. Try to formulate issues that relate to or extend the class dialogue, or which seem to you overlooked in the class dialogue. I will try to bring some of the views expressed into the class discussion. Examples of the kinds of thing you might write on: What kinds of inner feeling are depicted in “The Dream of the Rood” and how? Where are women mentioned in Beowulf and in what roles? What makes a man considered to be a great and heroic in Beowulf? What connections are there between Beowulf and adventure heroes in popular culture today? What kinds of relationships with others are valued in Beowulf? What serious value can you see in “The Miller’s Tale”? Try a close analysis of one of the portraits in “The General Prologue” of The Canterbury Tales. Compare the Wife of Bath and Margery Kempe as resisting women. — Try for your own topics.

2. **In-class test.** Will include poetry analysis and an essay question. October 21. Grade value 15%.


4. **Final examination.** Scheduled in examination period at the end of term. Grade value 30%.

**E. CLASS AND READING SCHEDULE**

**September**

9  Introduction. The British tradition and ideas of canon.
16  Beowulf (selections) 27-37
18  Chaucer, “The General Prologue,” The Canterbury Tales, selected 81-100
23  “The Miller’s Prologue and Tale” 101-17
25  “The Wife of Bath’s Prologue and Tale” 117-44
30  Julian of Norwich, from “A Book of Showings” Margery Kempe, from “The Book of Margery Kempe” 293-98 299-308

**October**

Selected sonnets of Sidney, Spenser, Wroth 460-73; 735-38; 1688-92
Shakespeare’s Sonnets, selected 808-22 selected
Spenser, The Faerie Queene, Book I 519-651 selected

21 **In-class test**
23, 28 Shakespeare, King Henry IV, Part One 824-88

November
6 Catch-up, respite
11 **Holy Sonnets**, #1, 7, 10, 14, 18; Prose from “Devotions upon Emergent Occasions”; Herbert, “The Collar,” “The Pulley” 1114-18; 1121-25
13 **Reminder:** **Essay Due Date**
13, 18 Milton, Paradise Lost, selections from Bks. I, II, IV, and IX 1475-1593 selected
20 Behn, Oroonoko, or the Royal Slave, selected 1866-1910 selected
25 Swift, A Modest Proposal 2181-87
27 Pope, from An Essay on Man 2263-70

December
2 Gray, “Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard” 2458-61

*Reading and class attendance:*
Reading is at the centre of this course, and it moves at a relatively fast pace. It is critical to keep up as we go along. That way you should be able to find the course pleasurable, full of new surprises. As well as in your reading sessions, classes are where it happens: please attend and take part in the discussions. Get involved—and enjoy!

*Obligatory notices:*
*Late assignment policy:*
The late penalty for essays for which an extension has not been granted in advance is 2% per day. Where necessary, for clear and sufficient cause involving illness or other serious difficulties, the extension of a due date should be negotiated with the instructor in advance of the deadline. You must write tests and examinations on the date announced unless you are seriously ill: if this should occur, please be sure to leave a voice-mail message on my phone (888-4567, ext. 2759) on the day of the test if possible.

*Expectation about presence and instructor notification:*
The underlying expectation is that we will all behave in a professional way in trying to fulfill our mutual responsibilities in the course. Please notify me by e-mail or voice-mail if serious problems arise that make attendance or fulfillment of course requirements really difficult: please do not appear after long absences without prior explanation expecting to continue with the course.

*Plagiarism warning:*
The Faculty of Arts requires instructors to remind students that plagiarism—the use of another’s words or ideas as one’s own—is a serious academic offence, and it will be treated as such in this course. For further information, see the undergraduate calendar.