ENGLISH 200A (05)
SURVEY OF BRITISH LITERATURE I

AL 206 Tuesday & Thursday 10-11:30

Instructor: Paul Kreller Telephone: (H) 669-2421
Office: HH 258 (O) 885-1211, ex. 2121
Office Hours: Tues. & Thurs.
12:30-2:00.

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COURSE DESCRIPTION:

English 200A is an introductory survey of British literature from the Middle Ages to the late eighteenth century. Although it is a required course for English majors, it is also suitable for non-majors or students majoring in other disciplines.

The course will focus on representative authors from the various literary periods: the Middle Ages (c. 1000-1485), the sixteenth century (1485-1603), the early seventeenth century (1603-1660), and the Restoration and eighteenth century (1660-1798).

For students wishing to continue their study of English literature, English 200B continues the survey through the Romantic period (1798-1832), the Victorian period (1832-1901), and into the twentieth century.

OBJECTIVES:

English 200A has six related objectives:
1) To give you practice and training in reading and interpreting individual pieces of literature with greater insight and in making comparisons among them.
2) To make you aware of the historical context of the works.
3) To make you aware of the different artistic forms of the literature.
4) To give you practice in critical analysis of individual works and comparative analysis of several works.
5) To help you write more effectively.
6) To give you some enjoyment reading (I hope!).

These objectives will be achieved by your own reading and studying of the primary texts, by reading the secondary historical and critical material included in the texts, and by writing essays and one examination.
**TEXTS:**

The following texts are **required:**


The following text is **recommended:**

Jane E. Aaron and Murray McArthur, *The Little, Brown Compact Handbook,* First Canadian Edition (Addison-Wesley). [This text has very useful sections on punctuation, grammar, and sentence errors, as well as suggestions for writing essays and a summary of the MLA style. **Please note:** All royalties derived from the sale of this text will be donated to the Department of English scholarship fund.]

In addition, some poems and short works on the course will be provided on handouts.

**TENTATIVE SCHEDULE OF READINGS:**

*(NOTE: Page references are to the Norton Anthology. Works marked with an asterisk will require about three classes.)*

1. Anglo-Saxon lyrics:
   "Caedmon’s Hymn" (17-18).
   "Three Riddles" (handout).
   "The Wanderer" (handout).

2. Selections from *Beowulf:*
   "The Hall Heorot Is Attacked by Grendel" (28-29).
   "The Fight with Grendel" (35-37).
   "Grendel’s Mother’s Attack" (43-46).
   "Beowulf Attacks Grendel’s Mother" (46-48).
   "Beowulf and the Dragon" (55-59).
   "Beowulf Attacks the Dragon" (59-63).

3. Some Middle English Lyrics:
   "Alison" (287-88).
   "The Wily Clerk" (handout).
   "I Have a Young Sister" (289).
   "Adam Lay Bound" (291).

4. Chaucer, Selections from *The Canterbury Tales:*
   "General Prologue" (lines 625-716): Description of the Summoner and the Pardoner (95-97).
   "The Pardoner’s Prologue and Tale" (164-79).

*5. Sir Gawain and the Green Knight (202-254).*


8. A selection of love poems:
   Sidney, Sonnet 9 (462).
   Spenser, Sonnet 64 (735); Sonnet 75 (737).
   Shakespeare, Sonnet 18 (810); Sonnet 130 (820).
Lady Mary Wroth, Sonnet 1 (1689).
Donne, "The Flea" (1090-91); Elegy 19 (1101-03).
Herrick, "To the Virgins" (1361-62).
Marvell, "To His Coy Mistress" (1420-21).

9. A selection of religious poems:
   Donne, Sonnet 14 (1117); "Hymn to God My God" (1120).
   Herbert, "Easter Wings" (1372).
   Marvell, "Bermudas" (1416).

*10. Milton, Selections from Paradise Lost:
   Book I, lines 1-49 (pp. 1476-77).
   Book II, lines 629-898 (pp. 1509-15).
   Book III, lines 56-134 (pp. 1520-22).
   Book IV, lines 393-535 (pp. 1541-44).
   Book V, lines 1-94 (pp. 1549-51).
   Book IX, lines 412-1016 (pp. 1576-89).

12. Eighteenth-century Social Writings:
   Boswell, from the London Journal (handout).
   Addison and Steele, from The Spectator (handout).
   Lady Montagu, "Epistle from Mrs. Yonge" (2005-07).

GRADING AND ASSIGNMENTS:

Two essays of six to eight double-spaced, typewritten pages, or the equivalent in handwriting (1500-2000 words). These two essays, taken together, will account for 60% of the final grade (i.e., 30% each).

One three-hour final exam will account for the remaining 40% of the final grade.

Class participation will affect the final grade positively (up to 5%). There may be some deduction of marks (up to 5%) if your attendance is noticeably irregular.

(Note also: One number grade (1%) may be subtracted for each day a paper is late, unless an extension has been granted in advance. No paper will be accepted after the other students' papers have been returned to them.)
ENGLISH 200 A

ESSAY TOPICS

1) These essay topics require a careful and thoughtful reading of the texts and little or limited use of secondary material. That is, they are not research essays that require consultation in secondary sources. However, if you want to do some extra reading in critical material, feel free to do so. But because plagiarism is a serious offence punishable by suspension or even expulsion, make certain that you acknowledge all borrowings from all your sources.

2) Use the MLA style for documenting page or line references from your primary sources, as well as any secondary sources that you may use. Also, use the MLA style for your list of works cited (bibliography). I will give you some basic points on the MLA style; see also the section on MLA style in The Little, Brown Compact Handbook.

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ESSAY 1:

DUE: Thursday, October 22, 1998.

LENGTH: Six to eight double-spaced, typewritten pages (1500-2000 words) or the equivalent in neat handwriting.

TOPICS: One of the following:

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1. Beowulf undergoes three tests, and Sir Gawain is tempted three times by Lady Bercilak. Compare the tests of Beowulf with the temptations of Sir Gawain. You may wish to comment on the pattern or development of the episodes in each work, their significance, and/or the significance of the number three.

2. Aristotle defined "rhetoric" as "the faculty of observing in any given case the available means of persuasion." Of what does the Pardoner attempt to persuade his audience (the other pilgrims) in his prologue and tale? What devices or "means of persuasion" does he use? Comment on his apparent failure.

(NOTE: For this essay, you may find Aristotle’s terms, ethos, pathos, and logos, helpful; these are the basic "appeals" by which a speaker attempts to win over an audience.)

3. To what extent are the Green Knight and his chapel symbolic? How do they relate to the meaning of Gawain’s journey?

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topic #4 on next page.
4. How do you, on the verge of the 21st century, react to the supernatural elements in two of Beowulf, Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, and Dr. Faustus? To what extent do you think that your reaction is different from the intended audience?

Essay 2:


LENGTH: Six to eight double-spaced, typewritten pages (1500-2000 words) or the equivalent in neat handwriting.

TOPICS: One of the following:

1. Compare two of the following:
   i) Lady Bercilak's seduction of Sir Gawain in Part III,
   ii) Iago's temptation of Othello,
   iii) Satan's temptation of Eve (Paradise Lost IX. 417-784).
   (You may wish to consider some of these questions: What motivates the tempter in each case? What sort of arguments or strategies does he/she use? Which strategies seem most effective? How does the relationship between the tempter and his/her victim change in the course of their encounter? Issues of ethos, pathos, and logos may be helpful.)

2. What does Milton's allegory in Book II of Paradise Lost suggest about the nature of sin and death, as well as the way in which they are interrelated? To what extent do the other parts of Paradise Lost that you have read support this view?

3. Discuss the metaphor of travel in Donne's "Elegy 19" and in his "Hymn to God My God."

4. Compare Donne's Sonnet 14 ("Batter my heart") with Wroth's Sonnet 68 ("My pain, still smothered": page 1691). Consider carefully the sonnet form, the speaker, the circumstances, the language, and anything else you think is significant. (If you wish, you may also refer to Wroth's Sonnet 1.)

5. Compare Othello and Oroonoko (as characters).

6. How effective is the use of the first person narrator in Swift's "Voyage to Brobdingnag" and in Behn's Oroonoko. Compare these works as much as possible. (You may wish to consider some of these questions: To what extent do you sympathize with each narrator? How reliable is each narrator? How does the point of view affect your acceptance of the story? How does the point of view contribute to each author's social or political purposes?)
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