ENGLISH 330 B—SIXTEENTH-CENTURY LITERATURE II

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Required Texts:

*MLA Handbook.*

Course outline and objectives:

Sixteenth-Century Literature II focuses closely on Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene,* and Sir Philip Sidney's *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia,* arguably the greatest literary achievements of Elizabethan culture. Since their appearance on the literary scene in the 1590s, both the works and their authors have exerted considerable influence on later British audiences and writers from John Milton to John Keats. We will consider these two works in the context of the history and culture of the waning decade of Elizabeth's reign (paradoxically, the flowering of Elizabethan culture) and attempt to formulate questions on the use of print culture in the shaping of England's national consciousness, the effect of the patronage system on literary production, the differing cultural uses of epic and romance, and the effect of gender, both the writers' and the readers'.

Students who have not taken English 330 A or have little or no background in sixteenth-century literature are advised to read Book IV of Castiglione's *The Courtier,* transl. Hoby, and Sidney's *The Defence of Poetry* for a general overview of the concepts that inform the two works. The excerpt from the English translation of *The Courtier* can be found in the *Norton Anthology of English Literature,* and Sidney's *Defence* if not still in the bookstore, is in the *Norton Anthology,* and, both are in the Dana Porter library. I will also be glad to discuss these works with students who may have questions. The course will in any case begin with a general introduction to the period.

**Grading and assignments:** Two essays, 1500-2000 words and a final examination. One essay must be on the *Arcadia,* and one on *The Faerie Queene*—topics to be handed out.

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<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Essay one</td>
<td>June 6</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Essay two</td>
<td>July 18</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final exam.</td>
<td>TBA</td>
<td>40%</td>
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Class attendance & participation 10%

**A note on the participation mark:** Active class participation is essential for an interchange of ideas and in working through the texts. Attendance is imperative, and the course material must be read in advance of the lectures.

**Late penalty policy:** Essays must be submitted on time. If unable to meet the due date, you must see me for an extension, or provide a medical certificate to avoid penalty. Otherwise an automatic 5% will be deducted for late essays, and a further 1% for each weekday they are late. **No essays will be accepted more than two weeks after the due date.**
TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

The first six weeks of the course are devoted to the *Arcadia* and the remaining six weeks to *The Faerie Queene*, Books I, II and III, and excerpts from Books IV, V, & VI. You've probably taken either Books I or III in whole or in part in 200 A, so they will be easy going. The weekly topics are not fixed in stone but are devised to guide our reading, and provide a focus for class questions and discussions. The attached bibliography is by no means prescribed or required; it is highly selective and meant as a primary guide to other material in the library that may prefer to help you think about and shape your own arguments for the essays.

*The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia*

Week 1) Introductory remarks; course organization; General history of the period, cultural shifts, Elizabethan romance from its Greek antecedents to the supermarket racks.

Week 2) The plot of romance illustrated by Sidney's *Arcadia*.

Week 3) The characters of romance in the *Arcadia*.

Week 4) From romance distractions to epic quest or eros to heros: Sidney's revisions.

Week 5) The gender of the reader: what evidence is there that Sidney inscribes a gendered readership?

Week 6) Domination and defiance: parents and children in the *Arcadia*.

*The Faerie Queene*

Week 7) "A Letter of the Authors," *The Faerie Queene*, Book I, "a continued Allegory, or a darke conceit."

Week 8) *FQ*, Book II, the Knight, the Lady, and questing the Bower of Bliss.

Week 9) Book III, Britomart, Gloriana, Belphoebe and Queen Elizabeth. Images of the feminine/images of the ruler.

Week 10) Books IV and V: love, friendship; "The Temple of Venus.", Justice & the vision of Britomart.

Week 11) From Book VI, the courtier and the poet.

Week 12) The "endlesse worke" of romance: *FQ*, closure, and failure,

Week 13) The "endlesse worke" of 330 B: revision and open discussion
SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Davis, Walter. Idea and Act in Elizabethan Fiction

Frye, Northrop. The Secular Scripture: A Study of the Structure of Romance

Goldberg, Jonathan., Endlesse Worke: Spenser and the Structures of Discourse. (difficult, deconstructive approach worth it)

Greenblatt, Stephen. Renaissance Self-Fashioning (seminal book with an excellent chapter on Book II of The Faerie Queene)


---ed. The Spenser Encyclopedia (great short summaries of everything you need to know about Spenser; copy in my office as well as the library)

Helgerson, Richard. The Elizabethan Prodigals.

---Forms of Nationhood


Richard McCoy, Sir Philip Sidney: Rebellion in Arcadia.

Louis Adrian Montrose, "The Elizabethan Subject and the Spenserian Text," in Literary Theory/Renaissance Texts, eds. Patricia Parker and David Quint. (seminal article)

James Nohrenberg, The Analogy of "The Faerie Queene."

Parker, Patricia. Inescapable Romance.

Patricia Parker, "Romance" in A.C. Hamilton, ed. The Spenser Encyclopedia.

Gordon Teskey, "Allegory" in The Spenser Encyclopedia

Kenneth Thorpe, Romantic Love and Parental Authority in Sidney's "Arcadia"

There are many, many other books on both Spenser and Sidney, including two entitled Essential Articles for the Study of . . . to say nothing of many, many recent journal articles in The Sidney Newsletter and Journal, The Spenser Journal, English Literary Renaissance, The Sixteenth-Century Journal, The Renaissance Quarterly, to name just a few resources in the periodicals section.