ENGLISH 400: The Development of English Literature

SYLLABUS for 1972-73

I. RATIONALE

To the study of the development of English literature there are various perspectives. One of the most obvious, that of literary periods, is also the most arbitrary and hence potentially the most tyrannical. At least as valid is the development of the various genres, along with the development within each genre and form. A third is the various themes that have preoccupied major writers over the centuries and have been expressed through the changing forms. A fourth is the literary principles on which literature has been written, and the changes that have occurred in them. A fifth is the larger philosophical ideas that have informed works of literature over the centuries, and the waxing and waning of those ideas. And a sixth is the influence of other art forms, as these have varied with the ebb and flow of taste over the centuries.

Accordingly, in the two-hour lecture and discussion period of each week, the course will proceed within the larger framework of literary periods, but will carefully examine the developments within each of the other perspectives. Frequent reference will be made to reading that students have already completed in other courses (such as Shakespeare), and this will be integrated with detailed examination of the representative texts listed below.

The third hour of each week will serve two purposes. Approximately one in four will be devoted to more extended showing of pictures and playing of records that illustrate the interaction of other art forms with literature. The other hours will be given over to individual direction concerning essays: the selection of topics, the finding of material, the forming of the argument, and the structuring of the presentation.

II. EDITIONS OF THE TEXTS

2. The Story of Troilus, ed. R. K. Gordon (Dutton)
3. Milton, Paradise Lost and Paradise Regained (Collier-Macmillan)
4. Shakespeare, Measure for Measure (Pelican Shakespeare)
5. Jonson, The Alchemist (Crofts)
6. Synge, *The Playboy of the Western World* . . . (Crofts)
7. Miller, *The Death of a Salesman: the text and criticism* (Viking)
13. Hemingway, *The Old Man and the Sea* (Scribner)

III. ORDER OF TEXTS TO BE DISCUSSED

*Note:* In addition to the in-class discussion of these texts, frequent reference will be made to reading completed in other courses (e.g., *The Canterbury Tales* and the plays of Shakespeare).

A. Mediaeval Literature

I. Old English

a. Range and variety (part of the introductory lecture)

b. *The Dream of the Rood*

c. *Beowulf*

II. Middle English

a. Romances:

1. Chaucer, *Troilus and Criseyde* (in *The Story of Troilus*)

2. *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*

b. Lyrics and ballads (*Norton Anthology*, I, 249-58, 303-21)

c. Drama:

1. *Everyman*

2. *The Second Shepherds' Play*
B. Classical Literature

I. Tudor

a. Spenser, selections from The Faerie Queene, with auxiliary reading from Sidney's Apology for Poetry, Hoby, Hooker, and the topic "Order and Degree" (NA, I, 720-24)

b. Drama:

1. Tragedy: Marlowe, Dr. Faustus (with reference to Shakespeare)

2. Elizabethan comedy: relevant portions of King Henry IV, Part I (with reference to other Shakespearean plays)

3. Tragi-comedy: Shakespeare, Measure for Measure

c. Sonnets by Wyatt, Surrey, Sidney, Spenser, and Shakespeare

d. Prose style (NA, I, 724-36)

II. Early Stuart

a. Milton, Paradise Regained (with auxiliary reading from Areopagitica)

b. Lyric poetry:

1. Metaphysical poems of Donne (with auxiliary reading from his Meditations), Herbert, Vaughan, Marvell

2. Cavalier: poems of Herrick (as derived from Elizabethan lyrics through Jonson's poems)

3. Milton, Lycidas

c. Forms and ideas:

1. Prose style: Bacon's Essays and Browne's Hydriotaphia, Chap. V.

2. Characters (NA, I, 1089-1102)

3. Topic of "Wit" (NA, I, 1112-20)

d. Drama: Jonson, The Alchemist

III. Augustan

a. Drama: Congreve, The Way of the World
b. Verse essay: Pope, selections from *Essay on Man*

c. Critical principles:

1. Pope, *Essay on Criticism*

2. Johnson, *Preface to Shakespeare* and selections from *Lives*


e. Prose essay: Addison and Steele

f. Satire:

1. Dryden, *Mac Flecknoe*

2. Swift, *A Modest Proposal*

C. Romantic Literature

I. Sentimental and Romantic

a. Sentiment:

1. Sterne, *A Sentimental Journey*

2. Sheridan, *The School for Scandal*

b. The individual: revolt, liberty, and self:

1. Burns, *Holy Willie's Prayer*

2. Topic of "The Satanic and Byronic Hero" (NA, I, 607-14)

3. Shelley, *Prometheus Unbound*

c. Nature and the noumenal:

1. Wordsworth, *Tintern Abbey* and the Preface to the *Lyrical Ballade*

2. Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria*, Chap. XIV & XVII, and selections from *Lectures on Shakespeare*

3. Shelley, *Adonais*, *A Defence of Poetry*

d. Lyrics, esp. the ode:

1. Shelley, *Ode to the West Wind*
2. Wordsworth: Ode: Intimations of Immortality

3. Keats, Ode on a Grecian Urn, La Belle Dame sans Merci, Ode to a Nightingale
   e. Prose style: essays of Lamb and DeQuincey

II. Victorian

a. Concern for society:
   1. Tennyson, The Lady of Shalott, Locksley Hall
   2. Dickens, A Christmas Carol
   4. Arnold, selection from Culture and Anarchy, Chaps. I & II

b. Faith
   1. Arnold, Dover Beach
   2. Carlyle, selections from Sartor Resartus, Chaps. VII & IX
   3. Tennyson, selections from In Memoriam
   4. Browning, Caliban upon Setebos
   5. Melville, Billy Budd

c. Use of earlier cultures
   1. Tennyson, Ulysses
   2. Morris, The Haystack in the Floods
   3. Browning, "Childe Roland to the Dark Tower Came," My Last Duchess

III. Aesthetic

a. Four poetic strands:
   1. Hardy and the Georgians, selected poems
   2. Hopkins, selected poems
   3. Pater, selections from The Renaissance, and D. G. Rossetti, selected poems
4. Yeats, The Second Coming, Sailing to Byzantium, Byzantium, Leda and the Swan

b. Conrad, The Heart of Darkness

c. Shaw, Arms and the Man

d. Synge, The Playboy of the Western World

D. Modern Literature

I. From 1920 to c. 1950

a. The topic of anti-romanticism (MA, II, 1638-60)


c. Dylan Thomas: selected poems

d. Woolf, The Mark on the Wall

e. Hemingway, The Old Man and the Sea

f. Miller, The Death of a Salesman

IV. ESSAYS

Two essays are required each term. Each will be on an individual topic arrived at in consultation with the instructor and based on primary reading not included in other courses taken by the student. Each will run in length from 4000 to 5000 words and in format will follow the principles of the MLA Style Sheet as reflected in Correct Form in Essay Writing.

The four due-dates are these: Oct. 24, Dec. 5, Feb. 13, and Mar. 27. Extensions beyond these due-dates will be granted only for reasons which will not place the other members of the class at a disadvantage.

The following proto-topics are offered solely by way of example and are meant simply to stimulate thought that will lead to different, individual topics:

- Changes in the Arthurian theme

- Changes in the concept of irony

- Changes in the concept of tragedy
- The Romantic ode
- Varieties of pastoral
- The Pastoral Elegy (Milton, Gray, Shelley, Arnold, Whitman)
- Satire in a given period
- "The accession of George I marks the beginning of the decline in British culture."
- Sentiment before the Age of Sentiment
- Ballads: folk and literary
- Expressions of justice in Tudor literature
- What happens when a literary mode is nearing its end
- Ut pictura poesis
- In language such as men do use: fact or fiction?
- Type or individual: which is more effective?
- Expressing the noumenal in physical terms
- The development of fictional point of view
- Modern literature: in transit to what?