

**English 2701: Introduction to Literary History I**  
(Middle Ages - Eighteenth Century)

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class meets: never (online asynchronous)

office hours: by appointment

**Required Text:**

– *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, Tenth Edition, Volumes A, B, C.  
Ed. Stephen Greenblatt. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 2018.  
ISBN-13: 978-0393603125

**Course Description:**

My primary aim with this course is to introduce you to a representative sampling of English literature from the Middle Ages to the Eighteenth Century and to expose you to some of the most influential and widely-read authors from these periods (Chaucer, Spenser, Milton, Swift, *etc.*). Such a sampling will prove useful to you as you continue your studies in English literature, both because you will encounter these and similar works again, and also because you will encounter allusions and references to the works and authors of these time periods in the more recent works of literature and criticism you study. Moreover and more importantly, a sense of how the English language and its corpus of imaginative literature has developed will inform and enrich your understanding of all English literature in a way that transcends specific knowledge of particular texts and authors, ancient and contemporary. (Trust me!)

Unfortunately, it is impossible to give an exhaustive sampling of centuries worth of influential literature in a matter of weeks. Certain works that I've chosen to neglect are no doubt considered indispensable by others, and I myself have wept over certain great works that I had to cut from this syllabus in the interest of time constraints. So, I like to think of the literature I have included in our reading schedule as a partial but intriguing synecdoche that represents and points to a greater whole. I think that one of my jobs in this course is to suggest further avenues of potential study related to the works we actually read, and I hope you'll consider it one of your jobs to try to imagine a vibrant world of textual history beyond the specific reading assignments.

While our focus in this course will be broad, we will look at some more specific developments in works of literature across a range of time periods. For instance, we'll see how English drama develops from late medieval morality plays like *Everyman* to Renaissance tragedies like *Doctor Faustus*. Even more specifically, we'll see how utopian literature changes from the early Renaissance work of Sir Thomas More to the Restoration and Eighteenth Century satires of Margaret Cavendish and Jonathan Swift. This will be fun!

## Grading and Assignments:

100-93% – A	89-88% – B+	79-78% – C+	69-68% – D+	59-0% – E
92-90% – A-	87-83% – B	77-73% – C	67-63% – D	
	82-80% – B-	72-70% – C-	62-60% – D-	

short papers (3 total)	– 60% of total course grade (20% each)
lecture worksheets (12 total)	– 30% (2.5% each)
discussion posts (10 total)	– 10% (1% each)

You will write three papers, each 2-3 pages long (double-spaced), each in response to a choice of prompts I will post on Canvas a week in advance of their deadlines (for specific due dates, see the course schedule below). I will expect you to respond to these prompts with critically interesting theses, supported by textual evidence (quotations and references).

Each week of the semester, there will be two lecture worksheets. Both worksheets will be due at the end of the week (for more specific deadline information, see the course schedule below). The worksheets will not be quizzes on the reading or on the course material; but rather, they will be a component of the lectures themselves. The lectures will be written documents (pdf format) that I post to Canvas, and the documents will include discussion/response-style worksheet questions for you to answer. For instance, in the lecture on More's *Utopia*, I may ask you to write a sentence or two explaining what the word "utopia" means to you. Or I may provide a passage from an assigned reading and ask you to list some keywords from the passage. Basically, this is my way of prompting you to actively engage with the lecture material, the way you might in a classroom discussion.

Because the lecture worksheet questions will not typically be about testing for correct answers, I'll grade the worksheets on a completion basis. If you do them, you get the points; though I reserve the option to give no credit or partial credit for wildly inapplicable or barely engaged responses.

In addition to the lecture worksheets, there will be an online discussion each week of class, relevant to that week's reading, in a thread in our course's Canvas Discussion forum. You will be required to post twice in each discussion thread (except the first week's "welcome" thread, in which participation will be optional and ungraded), some time over the course of each week. Your first post must be an original contribution to the discussion. Your second post must be a reply to a post by one of your peers in the class. Both posts must be no shorter than 100 words and should probably not be longer than 250 words (the idea is to discuss, not pontificate).

Like your responses to the lecture worksheets, your posts will be graded on completion, but to receive credit, they must be relevant to the discussion and appropriate in length.

### Late Work:

I will give short deadline extensions on the papers if you contact me about this possibility in advance of the assigned due dates. If you do not arrange an extension with me in advance, I will accept late papers only for three-fourths credit.

I will not accept late lecture worksheets or discussion posts, as their purpose is to encourage and track your regular engagement with the course materials and with your peers, equivalent to attendance and participation in traditional in-person courses. The frequency of these short assignments, each one worth a small amount of points on its own, will allow you to miss one or two due to personal situations without significantly impacting your grade. But if you frequently miss these assignments, the effect will add up. In special cases consistent with University policy, make-up work for missed lecture worksheets and discussion posts may be arranged.

### **Course Schedule:**

On Mondays and Wednesdays, I will post lectures (including lecture worksheet questions) on Canvas that correspond to the reading assignments listed below for those days. And on Mondays, I will open Canvas Discussion threads. I recommend you complete the reading assignments on or before their assigned days, then proceed to read the corresponding lectures, do the worksheets and participate in the discussions—with two exceptions. I will be posting lectures on Memorial Day (5/27) and Juneteenth (6/17), but I recommend you complete the reading assignments listed for 27 May and 17 June prior to those days and read my lectures on the following days (Tuesday, 28 May, and Tuesday, 18 June), so as to have the two holidays free.

Of course, since this is an online course, you can budget your reading time throughout the week any way you see fit. However, to insure you keep up with the reading on a weekly basis, you will need to submit the lecture worksheets and make your posts to the discussion threads before 5 pm (not midnight) on Fridays. I will not accept lecture worksheets or posts on Friday nights or on weekends. Let me explain why below.

This is a six-week course for three credit hours, so it is necessarily reading intensive. And the reading is from texts written centuries ago, so the language, style and assumptions will be unfamiliar and challenging to you. I know this. I've tailored the reading schedule to this kind of rapid, online course, so that with some commitment to the course, you can succeed. And if you find yourself struggling, I will be a constantly available resource to help. This course shouldn't intimidate you, but you should be prepared for a challenge. And for that reason, you're going to need to keep up weekly with the reading and devote some time to the course every week (during the workweek, not just on weekends). The schedule for this online course gives you more flexibility than an in-person course with regular meetings. But if you already know that you can't spend some time on this course every week—on weekdays, not just weekends—this isn't the course for you.

## **Week 1: Medieval Drama**

- M (5/13) introduction to the course  
W (5/15) *Everyman* (pages 558-580)  
F (5/17) lecture worksheets due

## **Week 2: Chaucer's Canterbury Tales**

- M (5/20) "The General Prologue" (pages 261-268)  
W (5/22) "The General Prologue" (pages 268-281)  
F (5/24) Paper #1 due, posts and lecture worksheets due

## **Week 3: Renaissance Humanism, Catholic and Protestant**

- M (5/27) Sir Thomas More, *Utopia* (pages 44-61, 69-72, 83-85, 101-106, 116-118)  
W (5/29) Sir Philip Sidney, *The Defense of Poesy* (pages 547-554, 568-576)  
F (5/31) posts and lecture worksheets due

## **Week 4: Italian Imports: Sonnets and Pastorals**

- M (6/3) Sir Thomas Wyatt, "Whoso list to hunt" (p 121);  
Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, "The soote season" (pages 134-135);  
Sir Philip Sidney, from *Astrophil and Stella* – Sonnets 1, 9, 45, 69, 72, 74,  
Eleventh Song (pages 586-7, 588-9, 594, 597, 598, 602-3);  
Mary Wroth, from *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus* – 1, 28, 39, 64, 74, 77, 103  
(pages 1116, 1117-8, 1119, 1120-1);  
John Milton, "On the New Forcers of Conscience Under the Long Parliament"  
(pages 1490-1491)  
W (6/5) Edmund Spenser, from *The Shepheardes Calender* – "To His Booke,"  
"October" (pages 241-246);  
John Milton, "Lycidas" (pages 1468-1473)  
F (6/7) Paper #2 due, posts and lecture worksheets due

## **Week 5: Renaissance Drama**

- M (6/10) Christopher Marlowe, *The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus* (pages 680-700)  
W (6/12) Marlowe, *Doctor Faustus* (pages 700-715)  
F (6/14) posts and lecture worksheets due

## **Week 6: Politics, Satire and Utopia in the "Long 18th Century"**

- M (6/17) Margaret Cavendish, from *The Description of a New World, Called The  
Blazing World* (pages 1441-1447);  
Jonathan Swift, from *Gulliver's Travels* (pages 407-434)  
("Part 4. A Voyage to the Country of the Houyhnhnms")  
W (6/19) Swift, from *Gulliver's Travels* Part 4 (pages 434-454)  
F (6/21) Paper #3 due, posts and lecture worksheets due

## **Course Policies:**

### Plagiarism:

It is expected that students adhere to University of Utah policies regarding academic honesty, including but not limited to refraining from cheating, plagiarizing, misrepresenting one's work, and/or inappropriately collaborating. This includes the use of generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools without citation, documentation, or authorization. Students are expected to adhere to the prescribed professional and ethical standards of the profession/discipline for which they are preparing. Any student who engages in academic dishonesty or who violates the professional and ethical standards for their profession/discipline may be subject to academic sanctions as per the University of Utah's Student Code: <https://regulations.utah.edu/academics/6-410.php>

### Students with Disabilities (ADA):

The University of Utah seeks to provide equal access to its programs, services and activities for people with disabilities. If you will need accommodations in the class, reasonable prior notice needs to be given to the Center for Disability & Access, 162 Olpin Union Building, 801-581-5020. CDA will work with you and the instructor to make arrangements for accommodations. All written information in this course can be made available in alternative format with prior notification to the Center for Disability & Access. To read the full accommodations policy for the University of Utah, please see Section Q.

### Campus Safety Statement:

The University of Utah values the safety of all campus community members. To report suspicious activity or to request a courtesy escort, call campus police at 801-585-COPS (801-585-2677). You will receive important emergency alerts and safety messages regarding campus safety via text message. For more information regarding safety and to view available training resources, including helpful videos, visit [safeu.utah.edu](http://safeu.utah.edu).

### Addressing Sexual Misconduct:

Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender (which includes sexual orientation and gender identity/expression) is a civil rights offense subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories such as race, national origin, color, religion, age, status as a person with a disability, veteran's status or genetic information. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you are encouraged to report it to the Title IX Coordinator in the Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action, 135 Park Building, 801-581-8365, or the Office of the Dean of Students, 270 Union Building, 801-581-7066. For support and confidential consultation, contact the Center for Student Wellness, SSB 328, 801-581-7776. To report to the police, contact the Department of Public Safety, 801-585-2677(COPS).