English 261: English Literature Before 1800

Class Meeting: Tuesday and Thursday 11.00 – 12.20pm

Professor: Rebecca Lemon, English Department, THH 429
Email: rlemon@usc.edu
Office Hours: Tuesday 2-4pm, or by appointment

Course Description

English 261 will introduce you to the joyful variations of the English language and its literatures before 1800. This course moves from the playfulness of Chaucer’s Middle English in *The Canterbury Tales* to the Thomas More’s witty rhetorical games in *Utopia*; from the dazzling formal accomplishment of sonnets by Wyatt, Shakespeare and Donne, to the dramatic immediacy of plays by Marlowe and Shakespeare; from the coy flirtation of Cavalier poets to the moving chronicle of Behn’s *Oroonoko*. In the process, we will study the formal properties of these texts (genre, rhetoric, form) as well as their engagements in the political, social, and religious conversations of their time.

Textbook


Course Requirements

- Two essays of 5-6 double spaced pages (one inch margins; times, times new roman font or similar; 12 point) (40% of grade). The essays are due on the dates shown below.
- A mandatory in-class midterm exam (20%).
- Participation in class (20%). Participation includes the General Prologue assignment (explained below) as well as attendance, and thoughtful contributions to class discussion.
- Attendance and class participation are an important part of the course. Any more than six absences will be reason for a failing grade in the course. Being tardy counts as half an absence (i.e. 2 tardies = 1 absence).
- Take home final exam. This will include a creative option for those interested in it.

The two papers, the midterm, the take home final, and participation are each worth 20% of your grade (roughly – I like to leave room for improvement). (NB: with essays, I am available to look at drafts up to one class period before the essay due date (i.e. Tues before Thurs due date; or Thurs before Tues due date)).

General Prologue Assignment:
You are responsible for memorizing the first 18 lines of the General Prologue with a decent Middle English pronunciation. For a good reading of these lines, visit the Luminarium website:
http://www.luminarium.org/medlit/gp.htm. (If this doesn't work then enter “Chaucer general prologue audio” into Google and it will bring up this site.) You might also find this YouTube video helpful: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GihrWuywgc or this one: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NXqiwRRJTxA.

**Assignment Submission Policy**

All papers are due in lecture on the date listed on the syllabus. **You are also required to submit a copy through Turnitin on Blackboard.**

**Computer Policy**

In this class you are invited to take notes in your book and in a notebook. Please do not use an electronic device (computer, phone, iPad, etc.) to take notes, unless you have a documented disability that requires it (in which case, please provide me with this notification). If you need more information on why I have this policy, please feel free to ask me! I put this policy in place with your health, wellbeing, and education in mind. For more information, please see:

http://www.scientificamerican.com/article/a-learning-secret-don-t-take-notes-with-a-laptop/
http://www.slate.com/articles/health_and_science/science/2013/05/multitasking_while_studying_divided_attention_and_technological_gadgets.html
http://pss.sagepub.com/content/early/2014/04/22/0956797614524581.abstract

**Course Goals**

- To introduce you to three key periods of English Literature: Medieval, Renaissance and Restoration
- To teach you about the range of literary genres of these periods, including epic, prose travel writings, drama, lyric poetry and political theory
- To foster skills of close reading and analysis through deep engagement with texts
- To develop skills of argumentation and comparison by encouraging cross-textual analysis
- To encourage skills of written and spoken communication through class participation, on Blackboard and through papers

**Class Schedule, Fall 2018**

Week One:
8/21: Introduction; Geoffrey Chaucer, *Canterbury Tales*, General Prologue, 1-200
8/23: General Prologue, 200-541

Week Two:
8/28: General Prologue, 542-end
8/30: Summary of the Knight's Tale; Miller's Prologue and Tale

**Individual meetings on General Prologue, 1-18**

Week Three:
9/4: Wife of Bath’s Prologue
9/6: Wife of Bath’s Tale
Week Four:
9/11: Pardoner’s Introduction, Prologue and Tale
9/13: Introduction to the Renaissance: Thomas Wyatt, especially “The long love that in my thought doth harbour;” “My galley,” “Whoso list to hunt,” “They flee from me”; Thomas Howard, earl of Surrey, “Love that doth reign and live within my thought” and “Wyatt resteth here”

**Chaucer paper due**

Week Five:
9/18: Thomas More, *Utopia*
9/20: Thomas More, *Utopia*

Week Six:
9/27: Christopher Marlowe, *Dr. Faustus*

Week Seven:
10/2: Christopher Marlowe, *Dr. Faustus*
10/4: Sonnets: Shakespeare, esp. 12, 18, 19, 20, 60, 73, 116, 129, 130, 147

Week Eight:
10/9: William Shakespeare, *Twelfth Night*
10/11: Shakespeare, *Twelfth Night*

Week Nine:
10/16: Shakespeare, *Twelfth Night*
10/18: *Midterm Exam*

Week Ten:
10/23: Ben Jonson, *Volpone*
10/25: Jonson, *Volpone*

Week Eleven:
10/30: Francis Bacon, selections from the *Essays*

Week Twelve:
11/6: Donne, Holy Sonnets #7, 10, 14 and “Good Friday, Riding Westward”

Week Thirteen:
11/15: Marvell, “To his coy mistress,” “The Garden”

**Second paper due**

Week Fourteen
11/20: Creative day for us to design
11/22: Thanksgiving Break

Week Fifteen:
11/27: Aphra Behn, *Oroonoko*
11/29: Aphra Behn, *Oroonoko*

**Take Home Final Exam, due by Tuesday, December 11th at 10am. To be submitted via Turnitin, and to my mailbox in Taper Hall 404.** You are welcome to submit your exam early.

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**University Policies**

**Academic Accommodations**
Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open 8:30am-5:00pm, Monday through Friday. The phone number for DSP is (213) 740-0776.

**Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems**

**Academic Conduct:**
Plagiarism – presenting someone else’s ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in *SCampus* in Part B, Section 11, “Behavior Violating University Standards” [policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b](http://policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b). Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in *SCampus* and university policies on scientific misconduct, [http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct](http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct).

**Support Systems:**
*Student Counseling Services (SCS) – (213) 740-7711 – 24/7 on call*
Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention. [engemannshc.usc.edu/counseling](http://engemannshc.usc.edu/counseling)

*National Suicide Prevention Lifeline – 1 (800) 273-8255*
Provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. [www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org](http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org)

*Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP) – (213) 740-4900 – 24/7 on call*
Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm. [engemannshc.usc.edu/rsvp](http://engemannshc.usc.edu/rsvp)

*Sexual Assault Resource Center*
For more information about how to get help or help a survivor, rights, reporting options, and additional resources, visit the website: [sarc.usc.edu](http://sarc.usc.edu)

*Office of Equity and Diversity (OED)/Title IX Compliance – (213) 740-5086*
Works with faculty, staff, visitors, applicants, and students around issues of protected class. [equity.usc.edu](http://equity.usc.edu)

*Bias Assessment Response and Support*
Incidents of bias, hate crimes and microaggressions need to be reported allowing for appropriate investigation and response. studentaffairs.usc.edu/bias-assessment-response-support

The Office of Disability Services and Programs
Provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange relevant accommodations. dsp.usc.edu

USC Support and Advocacy (USCSA) – (213) 821-4710
Assists students and families in resolving complex issues adversely affecting their success as a student EX: personal, financial, and academic. studentaffairs.usc.edu/ssa

Diversity at USC
Information on events, programs and training, the Diversity Task Force (including representatives for each school), chronology, participation, and various resources for students. diversity.usc.edu

USC Emergency Information
Provides safety and other updates, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible. emergency.usc.edu

USC Department of Public Safety – UPC: (213) 740-4321 – HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24-hour emergency or to report a crime.
Provides overall safety to USC community. dps.usc.edu

Statement on Student Behavior
Behavior that persistently or grossly interferes with classroom activities is considered disruptive behavior and may be subject to disciplinary action. Such behavior inhibits other students’ ability to learn and an instructor’s ability to teach. A student responsible for disruptive behavior may be required to leave class pending discussion and resolution of the problem and may be reported to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs for disciplinary action. These strictures may extend to behaviors outside the classroom that are related to the course.

Discrimination, sexual assault, and harassment are not tolerated by the university. You are encouraged to report any incidents to the Office of Equity and Diversity http://equity.usc.edu/ or to the Department of Public Safety http://capsnet.usc.edu/department/department-public-safety/online-forms/contact-us. This is important for the safety whole USC community. Another member of the university community such as a friend, classmate, advisor, or faculty member – can help initiate the report, or can initiate the report on behalf of another person. The Center for Women and Men http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/cwm/ provides 24/7 confidential support, and the sexual assault resource center webpage sarc@usc.edu describes reporting options and other resources.