

# USCDornsife

## Department of English

ENGL 261g: English Literature to 1800  
Section 32608D  
4.0 Units  
Fall 2919  
MWF 12:00-12:50pm  
Room – THH106.

Rick Berg  
Office # THH 402A  
Office Hrs: MW 1-2 & 4:30 – 5:30  
and by appointment

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### **English 261: English Literature to 1800**

English 261 is a survey of British Literature. It is an introduction. It promises to build on and extend the nodding acquaintance that most readers have with British writers of the past. As an introductory survey course, English 261 requires both breadth and depth of study. The course intends to move from the Anglo-Saxons to the Romantics, introducing students to a variety of periods and genres, texts and authors, and the many questions they raise about literature and its place in the world. We will even look at some of the answers.

### **COURSE GOALS AND LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

The course's goals are many. For instance, exercising, developing and expanding the methods and skills needed to improve reading and writing habits. Secondly, there is the desire to prepare a foundation for further studies. Thirdly, there is the simple celebration of literature's challenge to doxa and all the uninformed opinions that rule and regulate our everyday. Finally, there is relishing the sheer pleasure of the texts.

### **Learning Objectives:**

- appreciate the relations between representation and the human soul, between words and ideas, and the social utility of a sophisticated understanding of discourse;
- reflect on what it means to be human and consider how literary texts can enact human experience;
- develop an understanding of poetic language and develop a critical vocabulary to talk about it;
- learn to read closely, interpret actively, and analytically;
- develop analytical and persuasive speaking skills, including participating in group discussions;
- learn to evaluate ideas from multiple perspectives and formulate opinions about complex issues.

These objectives are explored more fully on the Dornsife College website at:

<https://dornsife.usc.edu/2015ge/ge-b>

### **REQUIREMENTS:**

There will be THREE papers and a TAKE-HOME FINAL EXAM. Class participation matters. The Required Texts are required reading and viewing. I expect students to read and prepare the required texts for each class session. Students need to bring the texts to class so that they will be ready to engage in an informed class session. Come prepared.

## GRADING BREAKDOWN

Assignment	Points	% of Grade
1st Paper		20
2nd Paper		20
3rd Paper		20
Final Exam		25
Participation		15
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>100</b>

See also **COURSE POLICIES** at the end of this syllabus for details about Papers, Examinations, and Participation (including Reading, Viewing, and Electronics).

## REQUIRED READINGS AND SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIALS

### **Required Texts:**

Equiano, Olaudah The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, Or Gustavus Vassa, The African, Written by Himself

Greenblatt, Stephen (Editor),  
The Norton Anthology of English Literature (Ninth Edition)  
(Package 1: Volumes A, B, C)

Morrison, Toni. "Nobel Lecture"  
<https://is.gd/t1A72c>

### **Recommended Texts:**

Adler, Mortimer J, How to Read a Book

Fish, Stanley, How to Write and Sentence and How to Read One

Graff, Gerald, and Cathy Birkenstein, They Say, I Say: The Moves that Matter in Academic Writing

Jacobs, Alan, The Pleasures of Reading in an Age of Distraction

### *Online Reference Texts*

Guide to Grammar and Writing <https://is.gd/xGhve9>

The Chicago Manual of Style Online <https://is.gd/Ji2una>

The Columbia Dictionary of Modern Literary and Cultural Criticism <https://is.gd/vHuMN0>

The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms <https://is.gd/sOggXm>

The New Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics <https://is.gd/nEc3b9>

Literature On Line <https://is.gd/F5BrW9>

The Cambridge Companion to Narrative <https://is.gd/aTfeN9>

Key Terms in Literary Theory <https://is.gd/cyrwgs>

**READING SCHEDULE**  
**Adjustments might be made during the course of the semester**

M. 8/26  
Introduction

W. 8/28  
Toni Morrison Nobel Lecture  
<https://is.gd/t1A72c>

ANON  
“The Ruins,” **(BLKBD)**, “The Wife’s Lament,”  
Ezra Pound, “The Seafarer” **(BLKBD)**

Recommended Reading:  
Norton Anthology: English Literature  
The Middle Ages: Introduction

F. 8/30  
ANON.,  
Beowulf (translated by Seamus Heaney)

M. 9/2 Labor Day

W. 9/4  
ANON.,  
Beowulf (translated by Seamus Heaney)

F. 9/6  
ANON.,  
Sir Gawain and the Green Knight

Recommended Reading:  
Norton Anthology: English Literature  
The Middle Ages: Introduction

M. 9/9  
ANON.,  
Sir Gawain and the Green Knight

W. 9/11  
GEOFFREY CHAUCER, The Canterbury Tales  
“The General Prologue”  
<http://www.librarius.com/cantales.htm>

F. 9/13  
GEOFFREY CHAUCER, The Canterbury Tales  
“The General Prologue”  
<http://www.librarius.com/cantales.htm>

M. 9/16  
GEOFFREY CHAUCER, The Canterbury Tales  
“The Miller’s Prologue and Tale”  
<http://www.librarius.com/cantales.htm>

W. 9/18  
GEOFFREY CHAUCER, The Canterbury Tales  
“The Miller’s Prologue and Tale”  
<http://www.librarius.com/cantales.htm>

F. 9/20  
GEOFFREY CHAUCER, The Canterbury Tales  
“The Wife of Bath’s Prologue and Tale”  
<http://www.librarius.com/cantales.htm>

M. 9/23  
GEOFFREY CHAUCER, The Canterbury Tales  
“The Wife of Bath’s Prologue and Tale”  
<http://www.librarius.com/cantales.htm>

W. 9/25  
MYSTERY PLAYS  
ANON  
“The Wakefield Second Shepherds’ Play” (**BLKBD**)

F. 9/27  
MYSTERY PLAYS  
ANON.,  
“The York Play of the Crucifixion” (**BLKBD**)

M. 9/30  
ANON.,  
Everyman

W. 10/2  
ANON.,  
Everyman

Recommended Reading:  
Norton Anthology: English Literature  
The Sixteenth Century: Introduction

F. 10/4  
SIR PHILIP SIDNEY, *Astrophil and Stella* 1 (“Loving in truth, and fain in verse my love to show”), 6 (“Some lovers speak, when they their muses entertain”). WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE, 29 (“When, in disgrace with Fortune and men’s eyes), 73 (“That time of year thou mayst in me behold”) 129 (“Th’ expense of spirit in a waste of shame”) JOHN DONNE , *Holy Sonnets*, 10 (“Death, be not proud”).

M. 10/7  
JOHN DONNE,  
“The Canonization,”

W. 10/9  
JOHN DONNE,  
“Elegy 19. To His Mistress Going to Bed”

F. 10/11  
GEORGE HERBERT,  
“The Collar,”

Recommended Reading:  
Norton Anthology: English Literature  
The Early Seventeenth Century: Introduction

M. 10/14  
WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE,  
King Lear

W. 10/16  
WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE,  
King Lear

F. 10/18  
Holiday

M. 10/21  
WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE,  
King Lear

W. 10/23  
WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE,  
King Lear

F. 10/25  
JOHN MILTON,  
Paradise Lost, Bk 1

M. 10/28  
JOHN MILTON,  
Paradise Lost, Bk 1

W. 10/30  
JOHN MILTON,  
Paradise Lost, Bk 2

F. 11/1  
JOHN MILTON,  
Paradise Lost, Bk 2

M. 11/4  
JOHN MILTON,  
Samson Agonistes (BLKBD)

W. 11/6  
JOHN MILTON,  
Samson Agonistes (BLKBD)

F. 11/8  
ANDREW MARVELL,  
"To His Coy Mistress"

Recommended Reading:  
Norton Anthology: English Literature  
The Restoration and the 18th Century: Introduction

M. 11/11  
JOHN WILMOT, SECOND EARL OF ROCHESTER,  
"The Disabled Debauchee," "The Imperfect Enjoyment," "Upon Nothing"

W. 11/13  
APHRA BEHN,  
Oroonoko, or The Royal Slave

F. 11/15  
APHRA BEHN,  
Oroonoko, or The Royal Slave

M. 11/18  
JONATHAN SWIFT,  
"A Modest Proposal"

W. 11/20  
ALEXANDER POPE,  
Rape of the Lock

F. 11/22  
ALEXANDER POPE,  
Rape of the Lock

M. 11/25  
OLIVER GOLDSMITH,  
The Deserted Village

W. 11/27 F. 11/29  
Thanksgiving

M. 12/2  
OLAUDAH EQUIANO,  
The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano,  
Or Gustavus Vassa, The African, Written by Himself

W. 12/4  
OLAUDAH EQUIANO,  
The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano,  
Or Gustavus Vassa, The African, Written by Himself

F. 12/6  
Conclusion

## COURSE POLICIES

### **Papers:**

There will be THREE papers (5-7 pages TBA). I will assign topics. (If a student wishes to pursue a topic of his/her own, this is acceptable. To do that the student must meet with me before she/he starts writing.) All papers are due in class on the assigned due date. Late papers are seldom tolerated.

All papers will be typed. Students should follow the proper manuscript conventions. (If you are unclear about those conventions, please consult the usual manuals of style, e.g., The Chicago Manual of Style Online <http://tinyurl.com/oettzvx>).

When writing the paper, I encourage all students to meet with me during office hours, consult with the folks in the writing center, or consult a writing manual, e.g., Greene, Gayle, Writing a Paper (BLBD). I also encourage all students to meet with me after I have returned the papers. I can then clarify my comments and students can exercise their editorial skills. (There is one rule for these meetings: the student must read their own paper before they come to speak to me).

Good papers meet the usual minimal standards. Excellent papers excel them. It is understood that there will be at least one re-write before the final draft is submitted. The papers are to be well written. The subject is to be presented in a literate manner.

- The papers should have a sound and substantial thesis.
- The papers should have a defined structure, one that is organized, coherent and intelligible.
- Aspects of the topic should be developed without going into unnecessary detail.
- The prose should be clear and concise, free from confusing syntax.
- The spelling and grammar should be correct.
- Assertions need supporting evidence, usually taken from the text under discussion.
- Counter-intuitive or controversial statements need proper citations from reliable sources.

### **Exams:**

The Final Exam will be a take-home test. It will be comprehensive. I will hand out the test on the last day of class. It will consist of FOUR essay questions. Students will choose TWO. Students will put a hard copy of the exam in my mailbox on or before the date and time listed in the USC schedule of examinations. Neither USC nor I permit late exams: the deadline is absolute. NO LATE EXAMS.

**Participation: Reading & Viewing:** Students are required to keep up with the reading and viewing. Each text and film are to have been read or seen before class, several times if possible. (“I have not read it,” is neither an acceptable response nor one that will be tolerated with good humor.) Students must bring the readings to class and be prepared to discuss particulars of the texts.

When reading texts or watching films, when preparing for class lectures and discussions, students should keep in mind that we are not engaged in the repeating of received opinions. We are engaged with critical and reflective thinking. The texts we will be reading and seeing are challenging. They raise questions about what we know, how we came to know it, the validity of that knowledge and the adequacy of our understanding. They encourage us to engage in critical and reflective thinking, and to reexamine our responses and answers. A useful guide to consult is S. Samuel Shermis, Critical Thinking: Helping Students Learn Reflectively (BLKBD)

**Discussion Topics:** Occasionally I will post a discussion topic on Blackboard. When I do, I will send an email notifying you. The responses will be considered part of the participation grade.

### **Electronic Gadgets**

Computers, iPads, iPhones etc. etc., are part of our lives. They are extraordinary tools. They help in a number of ways. They are not only a part of our personal and professional lives; they are also a part of our educational and classroom experience. They are pedagogically useful. But they can also be annoying toys. Therefore, I encourage their use and discourage playing with them in class. To be clear, as long as students use these tools in class for class, as long as students use them to enhance education, it's all good. But students are not to use them to answer and send emails, to shop, to play online games, or to surf the net, unless the surfing pertains to class. All that behavior is unacceptable. It is disruptive. It is rude and disrespectful to other students. It interferes with the class. I do not tolerate it.

## 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” <https://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>.

### **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. <https://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. <http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org>

### **Relationship & 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. <https://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: <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. <https://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. <https://studentaffairs.usc.edu/bias-assessment-response-support/>

### **Student Support & Advocacy** – (213) 821-4710

Assists students and families in resolving complex issues adversely affecting their success as a student EX: personal, financial, and academic. <https://studentaffairs.usc.edu/ssa/>

### **Diversity at USC** – <https://diversity.usc.edu/>

Tab for Events, Programs and Training, Task Force (including representatives for each school), Chronology, Participate, Resources for Students

### **Emergency Preparedness/Course Continuity in a Crisis**

In case of a declared emergency if travel to campus is not feasible, USC executive leadership will announce an electronic way for instructors to teach students in their residence halls or homes using a combination of Blackboard, teleconferencing, and other technologies.

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.



## **Definition of Excellence in Teaching** **USC Department of English**

All writing is creative, and all civic engagement requires a sophisticated understanding of discourse and interpretation. The USC Department of English is committed to the power of the story, the word, and the image. We analyze and organize complex ideas, evaluate qualitative information, anticipate how real audiences respond to language, and study behaviors of complex characters leading uncertain lives with competing values. We develop critical abilities for a successful life, but our stories tell us why life is worth living.

Excellence in teaching is an active engagement with these commitments, perspectives, and values. A student with a major in English should graduate with an appreciation for (1) the relations between representation and the human soul, and (2) the relations between words and ideas. Teachers will encourage this appreciation through their knowledge and conveyance of the subject, the appropriateness of instructional materials, and the quality of their students' responses.

We expect our students to:

- understand the major representations in English discourse from earliest beginnings to the current moment; all literatures exist in conversation with earlier literatures;
- organize and interpret evidence;
- feel the experiences of others, both by engaging in literatures and by their own efforts to create new literatures;
- understand how periods, cultural intentions, and literary genres differ;
- grasp the skills and theories of interpretation, and the history of our own discipline;
- see how interpretive interests shift with time and place;
- attend to linguistic details of semantics, phrasing, and structure;
- assume there are reasonable alternative understandings of a text;
- adjudicate differences through reasoned arguments that honestly engage counter-arguments.

Our students will have lives in very different arenas, but all calling for skills in discourse, empathy, civil argument, and civic engagement. We cannot and should not say what those careers will be; we train students for jobs that have not yet been invented.

English Department students with an interdisciplinary major in Narrative Studies should expect instruction that inculcates an appreciation for all of the above, and coordinates with definitions of teaching excellence in USC's corresponding departments.

The Department of English adheres to the modalities of instruction published in the "USC Definition of Excellence in Teaching."

Approved September 18, 2018  
Undergraduate Studies Committee  
Department of English