

USC Dornsife

Dana and David Dornsife
College of Letters, Arts and Sciences

**ENGL261g: English Literature to 1800, featuring
*Stages of Power: Marlowe and Shakespeare, 1592.***

Units: 4

Spring 2020

Tue-Thu: 9:30-10:50am

Location: VKC 154

Instructor: Andrew McConnell Stott

Office: ADM 304H

Office Hours: Flexible, but best to make an appointment by emailing Tracie Cacatian:

cacatian@usc.edu

Contact Info: astott@usc.edu

Course Description

This is a course in two parts. The first part takes the form of a traditional literature survey considering English literary texts from the late medieval period through to the eighteenth century. The aim is to introduce you to three significant literary periods – Medieval, Renaissance/Early Modern, and Restoration – as well as key forms and modalities, such as epic, tragedy, romance, history play, satire, and the early novel. The authors covered are Geoffrey Chaucer (1343-1400); Edmund Spenser (1552-1599); John Milton (1608-1674); Aphra Behn (1640-1689); and Jonathan Swift (1667-1745). By virtue of evolving linguistic forms and historical distance, these can be difficult texts, so we will take our time, considering the ways in which literary artifacts interact with some important cultural issues such as politics, sovereignty, social order, religion, identity, rebellion and disobedience, gender, race, colonialism, and the concept of nationhood.

Armed with a sense of historical context and the multiple tensions and forces at play in early-modern society, the second part of the course will be devoted to an immersive exploration of art, politics, and culture by playing *Stages of Power: Marlowe and Shakespeare, 1592*, a “Reacting-to-the-Past” role-playing game. The game requires students to inhabit the roles of historical characters with a view to persuading the a special commission to grant an exclusive license to perform one of two plays: *Doctor Faustus* by the controversial genius, Christopher Marlowe (1564-1593), or *Richard III* by the upstart William Shakespeare (1564-1616). At this point in the semester, the students take over, forming two rival acting companies – the Admiral’s Men and Lord Strange’s Men – who will edit, rehearse, and perform sections of each play for a panel of Elizabethan grandees, each with ambitions and priorities of their own. Pursuing the right to have their play performed at the Rose Theatre, each acting companies will seek to argue their case based on artistic, moral, civic, political and religious grounds, just as the Commissioners will deliver arguments for and against based on their own perspectives. Each character has a set of conditions which, when met by the end of the game, mean they have “won.” As such, everyone acts according to their personal interests, with all of the deal-making and subterfuge that implies. Against this politicking swirls a culture of “broadsides” – anonymous texts generated to support one side and unsettle the other. These circulate around the players spreading rumors, casting aspersions, proclaiming the moral high-ground, and satirizing the opposition. Once we enter the game, we’ll be occupying sixteenth-century space. Everyone stays in-character with no anachronism is allowed. The only arguments permitted will be based on concepts in circulation at the time.

To recap (and in the spirit of full disclosure), this course contains: lots of reading, archaic language, play-acting, team-work, public speaking for everybody with no exceptions, and a decent amount of writing. Also, fyi, I really hate it when people show up late.

Learning Objectives

Upon completion of the course, students will be able to:

- a) Describe the chronology of early-modern English literature and its key periods: Medieval, Renaissance, and Restoration;
- b) Identify a range of literary genres from these periods, including epic, drama, satire and the novel;
- c) Analyze how literary texts are shaped by cultural forces, and illustrate how they reflect them;
- d) Develop critical arguments about literary texts based on close readings of primary sources;
- e) Organize materials and arguments in a collaborative, team-based setting;
- f) Apply written and oral communication skills;
- g) Evaluate the merits of written and oral arguments.

Booklist (available at the USC Bookstore)

- Stephen Greenblatt et. al. (ed.), *The Norton Anthology of English Literature, The Major Authors, vol.1* (Norton, 2018).
- Eric S. Malin and Paul V. Sullivan, *Stages of Power: Marlowe and Shakespeare, 1592* (Reacting Consortium Press, 2016).
- William Shakespeare, *Richard III* – Folger Digital Text (<https://www.folgerdigitaltexts.org/html/R3.html> or PDF on BlackBoard).

Please ensure you have read the assigned week’s reading prior to class, and are ready to discuss it!

Assignments

This course will be assessed by means of the following activities and assignments:

- **Response Paper 1: “Place and Identity”** – a three (3) page paper reflecting on the concepts of place and identity in one of the texts we have studied so far. Due in class as per the class schedule.
- **Response Paper 2: “Politics and Form”** – a three (3) page paper reflecting on the relationship between politics and literary form in one of the texts we have studied so far. Due in class as per the class schedule.
- **Imaginative Strategic Writing** – this takes various forms, depending on your character, but is essentially a piece of creative writing (grounded in the period and reading) intended to advance your character’s agenda. Commissioners write advice to the players; while most (but not all) actors write broadsides that can take many forms, including pleas or petitions addressed to specific individuals, high-minded moral polemics, open letters to the citizens of London, handbills, reports, poisonous libels and scandal-mongering, poems, songs, ballads, and

satires. Broad­sides are anonymous, and should be emailed to me so that I can circulate them.

- **Formal Argument** – Every character has to write and deliver a formal piece of argumentation based on the priorities of their character and the assigned reading. Players argue on behalf of the qualities of their play; Commissioners make recommendations as to which play should be licensed and why. These will be read in class, but emailed to me ahead of the session.
- **Performances** – each team will receive a single grade for all members (Admiral’s, Strange’s, Commissioners), judged on the strength of text selection, preparation, team-work and staging.
- **Final Paper** – The final paper is a four to six (4-6) page paper reflecting on the relationship between literature and politics using evidence from the texts studied. Due on Thursday May 7th, 2020, it should be emailed to me (astott@usc.edu) no later than 11:59pm that day.

Note: Late submission of assignments results in a loss of one fraction of a letter grade for the assignment (+/-) for each 12-hour period they are late.

Assignment	Learning Objectives Evaluated	% of final grade
Participation	a,b,c,d,e,f,g	10
Response Paper 1	b,c,d	10
Response Paper 2	b,c,d	10
Imaginative Strategic Writing	b, d, f	10
Formal Arguments	b,c,d,f,g	20
Performances	b,c,d	20
Final Paper	a,b,c,d	20
Total		100

Note on Absences

Due to the collaborative structure of the class, attendance and participation are a condition of everybody doing well. Excused absences (medical, religious, athletic, etc.) are permitted only – and please provide advance warning whenever possible. Unexcused absences will result in the loss of one fraction of a letter grade (+/-) for the Participation grade for each absence.

Grading Scale

Final grades will be determined using the following scale:

A	95-100
A-	90-94
B+	87-89
B	83-86
B-	80-82
C+	77-79

C	73-76
C-	70-72
D+	67-69
D	63-66
D-	60-62
F	59 and below

Grading Timeline

Feedback on timely submissions will be received within seven days.

Academic Integrity

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. Plagiarists are the worst. 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. 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>

Disruptive 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 (SJACS) for disciplinary action. These strictures may extend to behaviors outside the classroom that are related to the course.

Class Schedule

Week	Date	Activity/Reading	Assignment (Due Before Class)
1	1/14	Introduction to Class	
	1/16	Literature and Power in Early Modern England	
2	1/21	Geoffrey Chaucer, General Prologue to <i>The Canterbury Tales</i>	
	1/23	Geoffrey Chaucer, General Prologue to <i>The Canterbury Tales</i>	
3	1/28	Edmund Spenser, from <i>The Faerie Queene</i>	
	1/30	Edmund Spenser, from <i>The Faerie Queene</i>	
4	2/4	John Milton, from <i>Paradise Lost</i>	Response Paper 1: Place and Identity
	2/6	John Milton, from <i>Paradise Lost</i>	
5	2/11	Aphra Behn, <i>Oroonoko; or, The Royal Slave</i>	
	2/13	Aphra Behn, <i>Oroonoko; or, The Royal Slave</i>	
6	2/18	Jonathan Swift, <i>A Modest Proposal</i>	
	2/20	Jonathan Swift, <i>A Modest Proposal</i>	
7	2/25	Introduction to the theater of 1592	Response Paper 2: Politics and Form
	2/27	Christopher Marlowe, <i>Doctor Faustus</i>	
8	3/3	Christopher Marlowe, <i>Doctor Faustus</i>	
	3/5	William Shakespeare, <i>Richard III</i>	
9	3/10	William Shakespeare, <i>Richard III</i>	
	3/12	“Stages of Power” -- Understanding the Game: Assigning Roles & Readings from Role Sheets	Read the <i>Stages of Power</i> game book
		SPRING BREAK	Research your role in the <i>Oxford Dictionary of National Biography</i> (available via USC library databases)
10	3/24	Presentations on Assigned Readings	Ensure you’ve read your Assigned Reading
	3/26	Group Meetings: Companies pick scenes; Privy Council scrutinize texts	Circulation of Broadsides
11	3/31	Rehearsals: Acting Companies rehearse scenes; Privy Council review scenes, engage actors, etc.	Acting Companies provide Master Tilney with copies of the scenes they intend to perform; Circulation of Broadsides continues
	4/2	Rehearsals, continued	Circulation of Broadsides continues
12	4/7	Disputation in Council – Admiral’s Men	Circulation of Broadsides continues; Written Arguments from Admiral’s Men must be sent to me before class
	4/9	Disputation in Council – Strange’s Men	Circulation of Broadsides continues; Written Arguments from Strange’s Men must be sent to me before class
13	4/14	Performances for Council – Admiral’s Men	Circulation of Broadsides continues
	4/16	Performances for Council – Strange’s Men	Circulation of Broadsides continues
14	4/21	Council Meets to Deliver Closing Arguments and Final Vote	Written recommendations from Councilors must be sent to me before class
	4/23	Debrief	
15	4/28	Meetings to Discuss Final Paper Drafts	Draft of Paper
	4/30	Meetings to Discuss Final Paper Drafts	Draft of Paper
FINAL	5/7	FINAL PAPER DUE	

Please note that, per university policy, for each unit of in-class contact time, students are expected to devote two hours of out-of-class work per week over the course of the semester. This means you should plan to set aside at least **EIGHT HOURS** a week reading/writing/studying for this class.

Student Support

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/> Tabs 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.

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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