

English 261

Byron Nelson, ENGL 261, Spring 2004, British Literature Survey, I

English 261, Lec. 001 Byron Nelson

Spring 2004 341 Stansbury Hall

CRN 12336 Off-cc: MWF, 8:30-9, 11:30-12:30

48 Stansbury (304) 293-3107

10:30 MWF

bnelson2~wvu.edu

BRITISH LITERATURE SURVEY, I

REQUIRED TEXTS:

Abrams, et al., *Norton Anthology of English British Literature*, 7th ed., Vol. I (Norton)

Geoffrey Chaucer, *The Canterbury Tales*, ed. Heatt and Heatt (Bantam)

Thomas More, *Utopia* (Dover Thrift Edition)

Andrew Marvell, *To His Coy Mistress and Other Poems* (Dover Thrift Edition)

Tobias Smollett, *The Adventures of Roderick Random* (Oxford World's Classics)

READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS:

I 1-12 Introduction

1-14 The Wanderer 99-100; Cowper, The Castaway 2880-81

1-16 The Dream of the rood 26-28; Wyatt, They Flee From Me 529-30; QUIZ

II 1 -19 Martin Luther King Holiday

1-21 Beowulf 29-32, 42-49

1-23 Beowulf 63-68; QUIZ

III 1-26 *Chaucer, *Canterbury Tales*, General Prologue (Bantam ed.) 3-41 (read the modern English translation on the right-hand pages)

1-28 *Canterbury Tales*, General Prologue continued

1-30 *Canterbury Tales*, Miller's Tale, 147-81

IV 2-2 *Canterbury Tales*, Miller's Tale continued

2-4 *Canterbury Tales*, Wife of Bath's Prologue, 183-221

2-6 *Canterbury Tales*, Wife of Bath's Prologue continued

V 2-9 FIRST EXAM

2-11 Bede, Story of Caedmon and Caedmon's Hymn 24-26; Chaucer's Retraction 313 (Norton Anthology)

2-13 Kempe, Book of Margery Kempe 366-79

VI 2-16 *More, Utopia (Dover ed.), Book I, 1-27

2-18 Utopia, Book II, 28-57

2-20 Utopia, Book II, 57-85; QUIZ

VII 2-23 Skelton 499-503; Queen Elizabeth 593-600 (Norton Anthology)

2-25 Wyatt 525-37 (esp. Mine Own John Pains 535-37)

2-27 Surrey 569-77 (esp. So Cruel Prison 572-73, Wyatt Resteth Here 574-75)

VIII 3-1 Spenser 614-16, Faerie Queene 622-27, I I 628-41

3-3 Faerie Queene, II xii 773-83

3-5 Lanyer 1281-82, Description of Cooke-ham 1287-92; PAPER DUE

IX 3-8 Jonson 1292-94, To Penshurst 1399-1401

3-10 Donne 1233-35, 1236-39 (The Flea through The Sun Rising)

3-12 Donne 1248-54 (Valediction through The Relic)

SPRING VACATION, March 13-21

X 3-22 Milton, Paradise Lost 1815-17, Book I, 1817-36 (esp. pp. 1818, 1820, 1825-26)

3-24 Milton, Paradise Lost, Book IV, 1874-95 (esp. pp. 175-76, 1880-81, 1889-90)

3-26 Milton, Paradise Lost, Book IX 1961 -86 (esp. temptation of Eve, 1972-78)

XI 3-29 SECOND EXAM

3-31 *Marvell, To His Coy Mistress and Other Poems (Dover ed.): Mower poems, 3-8

4-2 Marvell, Nymph complaining 14-17; Picture of Little T. C. 23-24; To His Coy Mistress 1 -2

XII 4-5 Marvell, The Garden 24-26; Bermudas 26-27; Upon Appleton House 47-49 (from "And now from the abyss I pass" to bottom p. 49)

4-7 Pope 2505-08, The Rape of the Lock, Book V, 2541-44; QUIZ

4-9 Easter Holiday

XIII 4-12 *Smollett, Roderick Random (Oxford World's Classics)

4-14 Roderick Random

4-16 Roderick Random

XIV 4-19 Roderick Random; QUT

4-21 Roderick Random

4-23 Roderick Random

XV 4-26 PAPER ON SMOLLETT DUE; Boswell, Death of Samuel Johnson 2779-83 (Norton Anthology)

4-28 Gray, Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard 2830-33

4-30 Cowper, The Castaway 2880-81

FINAL EXAM: Friday, May 7, 8-10 am

RATIONALE:

The course offers a rapid survey of the major authors and persistent themes of English literature, from the Anglo-Saxon period through the late Eighteenth Century, or from the anonymous epic *Beowulf* (8th Century) through James Boswell's *The Life of Samuel Johnson* (1791). Although the concept of a "canon" of great works of literature has come under fierce attack, the goal of the course is to make you aware of the themes, types, genres and varieties of prose, poetry and drama written in Old, Middle and modern English, from the 5th Century AD to the late 18th Century. The readings are usually placed in chronological order, but some texts have been moved out of order for purposes of comparison. To keep the readings manageable, there is a greater emphasis on poetry than on prose, and I regret having to neglect English drama. Last year we commemorated the 400th anniversary of the death of Queen Elizabeth I and the accession of King James I, and this gives us the opportunity to discuss the importance of monarchy in English literature. We will also discuss the rise of English as the primary language of the British Isles and, today, of universal communication—and the decline of Old and Middle English (actually four distinct dialects) and the decline of Latin and Greek as the medium of scholarly communication. John Milton knew at least ten languages and wrote in four (English, Latin, Greek and Hebrew), and until the late 17th Century a knowledge of Latin and Greek was considered indispensable. We will also discuss the changing concepts of heroism, from *Beowulf* to Roderick Random, and note the changes in the audience for English literature. The widening of the audience for literature parallels the rise of the common person as the subject of literature, from the monk Caedmon to Smollett's Roderick Random.

POLICIES:

Regular attendance is expected—and, as on the job, attendance will be recorded for each class. Your grade will drop after THREE ABSENCES, and SIX ABSENCES can result in failure. I take attendance at the beginning of each class, so make it a point to be on time. ALWAYS bring the assigned texts for the dates given above and develop the habit of scribbling in the margins and responding vigorously with the texts. Because the Norton Anthology is bulky, you may prefer to use the three-volume edition instead of

the one-volume version. Because you will find it easier to read Chaucer in modern translation, we will read the General Prologue, The Miller's Tale and The Wife of Bath's Prologue from The Canterbury Tales in the separate paperback volume. I will be using the Dover Thrift Editions of More's Utopia and Marvell's poetry; but since these contain no notes, I recommend that you read the Norton introductions to More and Marvell. The long text of the semester will be Smollett's picaresque 18th Century novel, Roderick Random, and you will write the longest paper of the course on this text. Purchase the correct editions of the texts NOW. I like to call on students to read aloud, so always be prepared to read and then comment a portion of the text of the day. Please make sure that all cell-phones are switched off.

There will be a mixture of quizzes, short papers, two exams, a long paper on Roderick Random and a final exam, in addition to occasional unannounced in-class writing exercises. Papers and exams are due on the dates listed above; late papers must be turned in but can suffer from a drop in grade. DO NOT send papers as e-mail attachments, but I will be happy to respond to e-mail questions. Feel free to visit during office hours (or to find me in the library), but try to let me know before hand that you are coming.