

English 261

Lara Farina, ENGL 261, Fall 2006, British Literature to 1800

English 261:
British Literature to 1800
Professor Farina
Fall 2006, Tu-Th 1:00-2:15

This course attempts to capture the diversity of British literary traditions in their first 1000 years, when “English” literature was profoundly shaped by a variety of influences: invasion and conquest, religious schism, continental humanism, civil war, and contact with the New World. Throughout this period, British society was dynamic and often caught in conflict; its writers and readers looked to literature for both guidance and consolation, using it as a means of confronting social upheaval. Readings for the course emphasize the creativity with which they adapted literary forms to meet pressing social needs. We will look in particular at works that portray imaginary “Otherworlds,” or alternate societies that invite comparison with British custom. The imagination of “foreign” world or different reality allowed writers to comment on their own. When they did, they touched on topics such as: the perception of class and gender, the relation of individuals to their communities, and the reconciliation of entertainment and education. Note: This class requires that you do a substantial amount of reading, often of quite difficult works in their original language. You must do this consistently and on schedule and be prepared to actively participate in class discussion.

Required Texts:

The Longman Anthology of British Literature, Vol. I. A,B,C (in three parts)

Gulliver's Travels, by Jonathan Swift

Coursework:

You are first and foremost required to read the assigned texts before we discuss these in class. In addition to this fundamental responsibility are:

- your active participation in class (20%)
- 8-10 unscheduled quizzes or short writing assignments (20%)
- two mid-semester exams (20% each)
- final exam (20%)

Quizzes cannot be rescheduled if missed; to allow for chance absence, I will drop one quiz grade from the final average. Exams can be rescheduled if there is good cause. Exams will be closed book and focused on passage identification and analysis. Note that there will be no extra credit options in this class.

Attendance:

You are allowed two absences with no penalty, after that, your class participation grade will suffer. While there is no ultimate limit on absences, you will receive an “F” for class participation and will lose the right to reschedule exams after six absences. In general, I do not care why you are absent or late and do not want to see any notes. The only exceptions to this are if a condition or situation requires that you be absent for more than a week at a time or for an exam.

Contact Info:

I encourage you to take advantage of my drop-in office hours: Tuesday and Thursday, 12:00-1:00, in 357 Stansbury Hall. You can also make an appointment to see me. You can email me at either my MIX address or at Lara.Farina@mail.wvu.edu. Do not email me to find out what you missed in class: get in touch with another student for notes. If I make any important announcements in class, I will also email notification of these to the class via MIX.

Social Justice:

WVU is committed to social justice. I concur with that commitment and expect to maintain a positive learning environment based on open communication, mutual respect, and nondiscrimination. Our university does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, disability, veteran status, religion, sexual orientation, color or national origin.

Schedule:

Tu. 8/22 Introduction. “Gnomic Verses”; Holzer, “Truisms”

The Middle Ages:

Th. 8/24 Longman pp. 3-10 and plates 1-4; Bede et al. (120-135)

Tu. 8/29 Beowulf, pp. 27-67 Th. 8/31 Beowulf, pp. 67-92

Tu. 9/5 “Judith” (109-114); “Wulf”; “Wife’s Lament” (156-158) Th. 9/7 Taliesin’s poems (135-139); Tale of Taliesin (139-152)

Tu. 9/12 Longman pp. 10-20, Marie de France, Lais (181-200) Th. 9/14 Longman pp. 20-26, Chaucer, General Prologue to CT (316-357)

Tu. 9/19 Chaucer, The Wife’s Prologue (375-394) Th. 9/21 Chaucer, The Wife’s Tale (394-403)

Tu. 9/26 Mankynd (631-657) Th. 9/28 Christine de Pizan, Book of the City of Ladies (658-665); Review

Tu. 10/3 Exam #1

The Early Modern Period:

Th. 10/5 Longman pp. 667-676; Montaigne, *Essais* (e-reserve)

Tu. 10/10 Longman pp. 641-647; More, *Utopia*, pp. 714-741 Th. 10/12 More, *Utopia*, pp. 741-784

Tu. 10/17 Marlowe, *Faustus*, pp. 1177-1207, viewing of Svanmajer's *Faust* Th. 10/19 Marlowe, *Faustus*, pp. 1207-1229

Tu. 10/24 Lanyer, poems (1126-1137) Th. 10/26 Shakespeare, *Sonnets* (1273-1288)

Tu. 10/31 Milton, *Paradise Lost*, Books I-II (1823-1869) Th. 11/2 Milton, *Paradise Lost*, Book IV (1888-1911)

Tu. 11/7 No Class: Election Day Th. 11/9 Milton, *Paradise Lost*, Book IX (1983-2010), and pp. 2070-2072

Tu. 11/14 Exam #2 Th. 11/16 Behn, *Poems* (2267-2278)

Thanksgiving Break

Tu. 11/28 Swift, *Gulliver's Travels*, excerpts from Books 1 & 2 Th. 11/30 Swift, *Gulliver's Travels*, Book 4

Tu. 12/5 Johnson, *The History of Rasselas* (2910-2919) Th. 12/7 Review

12/11--12/16 Finals Weeks: Final Exam during scheduled period.