

# ENGL 387: Women & Literature Before 1700

Prof. Farina, T R 4:00-5:15

Office Hours: T 2:30-3:30, 335 Colson Hall

This course will survey women's participation in early British literature. The study of "women's literature" in other periods typically surveys female-authored works. Because literary composition was often anonymous in medieval Europe, however, we will take a broader view, considering women's practices not only as authors, but also as patrons, readers, and interpreters. Even in restricting circumstances, female patronage and curatorship could be as powerful as authorship in early periods. Topics will include: literature as public relations (a woman's job), women and translation, mercantile literacies, women's devotional cultures, critiques of courtly love and marriage, rhetoric and sexuality, transgender subjects, and re-writing medieval women.



While having taken ENGL 261 (British Literature I) will be helpful, it is not necessary. However, students should have some experience writing about literature. Because this is a 300-level English class, you will learn how to develop a research project, find secondary sources relevant to its topic, and draft and revise a literary-studies research paper.

## Required Texts

Your life will be easier if you acquire the editions listed below, preferably as a print copy. In class, I will be referring to these, and E-books are not very conducive to class discussion. That said, we will be using a free online translation of the *Roman de Silence*, and I will also place other readings on e-campus. I do expect you to have a way to access the e-campus texts when you are in class, but not necessarily as a print copy.

- 1) Beroul, *The Romance of Tristan*, trans. Alan Fedrick. Penguin: ISBN 978-0-140442304.
- 2) Christine de Pizan, *The Book of the City of Ladies*, trans. Earl J. Richards. Persea: ISBN 978-0892552306.
- 3) *The Lais of Marie de France: Text and Translation*, trans. Claire M. Waters. Broadview: ISBN 978-1-55481-082-6.
- 4) *The Life of Christina of Markyate*, trans. C.H. Talbot. Oxford World's Classics. ISBN 978-0-19-955605.
- 5) *The Book of Margery Kempe*, trans. Barry Windeatt. Penguin: ISBN 978-0-140432510.
- 6) *Isabella Whitney, Mary Sidney, and Amelia Lanyer: Renaissance Women Poets*, ed. Danielle Clarke. Penguin: ISBN 978-0-140424096.

## Graded Coursework (100 points)

- Informed participation in class discussion (1 point per day, 20 points total)
- Five of six in-class quizzes (5 points each, 25 points total)
- Midterm exam (20 points)
- 5-page essay (15 points)
- 8-page research essay (20 points)

You must complete the midterm exam and both of the papers to pass the course. Failure to submit the exam or papers in a timely manner will result in failure of the class.

The midterm exam can be made up if missed for good reason (though it will be a different, equivalent exam). The quizzes cannot be made up, but I will drop your lowest quiz grade to allow for chance absence on a quiz day. Late essays will be penalized at the rate of a half grade per day.

You will earn one participation point every day you contribute to class discussion, complete an in-class assignment, or actively contribute to groupwork.

Your earned points will be posted to e-campus as soon as I finish grading an assignment. You can also keep track of your class participation points there.

All your work for this course must be original work, produced by you, and not previously submitted for credit for another class. Plagiarism is defined by WVU's Academic Standards policy and may result in failure of the class (see:

<http://catalog.wvu.edu/undergraduate/coursecredittermsclassification/#academicintegritytext> ).

## Course Policies:

Attendance: This is a seminar-style discussion class, which means that you need to be present to participate. You can miss class two times without penalty. After that, absences will adversely impact your grade. At six absences, you will automatically fail the class.

If you need to miss class for military service or a university-sponsored activity, I won't count that as an absence. Otherwise, I will not accept notes from doctors, parents, teachers, auto mechanics, traffic cops, counselors, or others.

Lateness: is really rude. If you are more than five minutes late, I will count that as half an absence (unless it is PRT-related).

Learning accommodations: If you need particular arrangements to succeed in your coursework, please let me know at the beginning of the semester. I can usually help with these needs, provided I know about them in advance.

Comportment: I expect everyone to be considerate of each other and not discriminate, harass, or denigrate on the basis of race, gender, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, nationality, social class, etc. Abusive or disruptive behavior is grounds for removal from class.

Announcements/Contact Info: I will email any important announcements, using your university email address. My office is 335 Colson Hall (3<sup>rd</sup> floor, front corner). Please feel free to come see me to discuss course materials, assignments, class discussion, or anything else. Just email me @ [Lara.Farina@mail.wvu.edu](mailto:Lara.Farina@mail.wvu.edu) to schedule an appointment.

## Schedule

“PDF” denotes a reading that will be posted on e-campus

- |           |   |
|-----------|---|
| Th. 8/16  | Introduction (Eleanor Rykener)                                      |
| Tu. 8/21  | Terms (Cadden) (PDF)  |
| Th. 8/23  | Women in Old English: Judith, Elegies, Lees & Overing (PDF)         |
| Tu. 8/28  | Women in Old Irish: <i>The Tain, Life of St. Brigit</i> (PDF)       |
| Th. 8/30  | Women in Middle Welsh: <i>The Mabinogion</i> (PDF)                  |
| Tu. 9/4   | Anglo-Norman Women: <i>Beroul</i> , 39-98                           |
| Th. 9/6   | Anglo-Norman Women: <i>Beroul</i> , 99-165                          |
| Tu. 9/11  | Anglo-Norman Women: Patronage & Power (PDF)                         |
| Th. 9/13  | Marie de France, <i>Lais</i> : Guigemar, Equitan, Laustic           |
| Tu. 9/18  | Marie de France, <i>Lais</i> : Lanval, Le Fresne, Yonec, Chevrefoil |
| Th. 9/20  | Courtly love: Burns, Cappelanus (PDF)                               |
| Tu. 9/25  | 5-page paper due  |
| Th. 9/27  | Religious Women: <i>The Life of Christina of Markyate</i> , 3-53    |
| Tu. 10/2  | Religious Women: <i>The Life of Christina of Markyate</i> , 53-88   |
| Th. 10/4  | Christina the Astonishing: Cantimpre, Valdez Quade (PDFs)           |
| 10/9      | Female Readers: Meale, Farina, Bell (PDF)                           |
| 10/11     | Fall Break  |
| Tu. 10/16 | Transpersons: <i>Silence</i> , pt 1 (PDF)                           |
| Th. 10/18 | Transpersons: <i>Silence</i> , pt 2 (PDF)                           |
| Tu. 10/23 | Transpersons: <i>Silence</i> , pt 3 (PDF)                           |

Th. 10/25 Jahan Malek Khatun, trobairitz (PDF)

Tu. 10/30 Midterm Exam

Th. 11/1 *The Book of Margery Kempe*, 33-76

Tu. 11/6 Election Day, No Class

Th. 11/8 *The Book of Margery Kempe*, 96-130, 148-167

Th. 11/13 Christine de Pizan, *City of Ladies*, 3-55

Th. 11/15 Christine de Pizan, *City of Ladies*, 62-83, 99-112, 153-157, 184-190, 254-257  
Research Proposal due

11/17-11/25 Thanksgiving Break

11/27 *Renaissance Women Poets*: Amelia Lanyer, 222-235, 249-252

11/29 *Renaissance Women Poets*: Isabella Whitney, 4-28

12/4 Draft of Research Essay due

12/6 Writing workshop