

## **ENGL 261, Brit Lit 1 Survey Course Britain in the World: 800 to 1800**

From its inception around 800AD, the English literary tradition has explored what it means to be part of the world. The very concept of "English" literature is political in kind: the discipline of English invokes a small region whose political borders have, over the centuries, expanded then contracted substantially, currently taking the form of the United Kingdom. Indeed, the very idea of England, and later Britain, has developed in part through the region's writings, as well as the uses to which those texts have been put. Like its literature, Britain has sometimes rejected the wider world in favor of its own insular borders; sometimes, it has embraced intercultural and global connections. And while the idea of Englishness or Britishness is predicated on a presumed cultural, geographical, and linguistic unity that presupposes a clear distinctiveness from other regions and peoples, Britain's global connections are apparent from its literary tradition's earliest days: from the Norse setting of *Beowulf* and its Germanic mode, to the Celtic and Norman influences woven throughout chivalric romances like *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*; from the persecution of European Jews that is signaled in *The Merchant of Venice*, to the assessment of British imperialism and chattel slavery in *Oroonoko*.

Exploring a millenium of English literature, from 800 to 1800, this course identifies a common interest in the world across a wide variety of genres, modes, and authors. Recognizing the diversity and global situatedness of English literature right from the start of its long history, this course asks: What does it mean to be part of the world, and how have the answers to that question changed over the course of a millennium? How have literary texts written in and around England addressed the concept of political, economic, and cultural relationships to other states or polities? What are the ethical rights and responsibilities that come with being in a world? And why might literary study be a particularly rich lens for exploring our worldly location? These questions are assessed through a range of modes, including a close-reading essay, a creative project, a group presentation, reading quizzes, and participation within the small world of this course. By approaching the English literary tradition through the concept of worldliness, this course brings old texts into conversation with some of the most pressing questions in literary study today, addressing in particular the ideologies behind how we imagine Britain's past, and exploring how the very lens we use to analyze literature is always contemporary in kind.

### **REQUIRED TEXTS (please use *only* the editions below)**

*The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, 9<sup>th</sup> ed., Vol. 1 (A, B, & C). ISBN: 978-0-393-91300-2.

Margaret Cavendish, *The Blazing World and Other Writings*. ISBN: 9780140433722.

William Shakespeare, *The Merchant of Venice*. (Arden Shakespeare, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition). ISBN: 9781903436813

### **ASSIGNMENTS**

Group presentation 20%

Analytic essay (midterm take-home) 20%

Creative project (final take-home) 30%

Reading quizzes x6 20%

Participation 10%

Note: reading quizzes will be held without notice. Only five quizzes will count, so if you miss one of them, you won't be penalized. The lowest score will be dropped.

## **LEARNING OUTCOMES**

By the end of the course, students should be able to

- Interpret British literature from 800 to 1800 within their varied cultural, political, and historical contexts.
- Connect assigned literary texts to one another and to other literary or cultural products.
- Identify and analyze genre conventions in literary texts, including in dream poetry, epic poetry, mystic prose, alliterative verse, narrative verse, morality tales, political satire, drama, science fiction, prose fiction, autobiography, and the early novel.
- Recognize stylistic, thematic, conceptual, and generic connections across texts spanning a century of writing.
- Employ skills in close-reading and critical analysis to identify and analyze textual complexities or ambiguities.
- Demonstrate a general knowledge of the English language's social and structural aspects, including the changes evidenced in Old English, Middle English, Early Modern English, and Contemporary English.
- Engage respectfully with peers in a way that encourages collaborative thinking, intellectual stimulation, scholarly community, and individual academic development.
- Demonstrate a range of contextually effective writing strategies.

## **POLICIES**

**IMPORTANT: Please read this section carefully. A syllabus is a contract so it is vital that you read these policies thoroughly before the course begins.**

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:** All WVU students must abide by the university's strict codes of academic integrity. Practices that flout these codes includes plagiarism (i.e. falsely representing someone else's work as your own); dishonesty in connection with examinations, papers, and/or projects; and forgery, misrepresentation, or fraud as it relates to academic or educational matters. **Academic dishonesty is a serious offence with serious consequences.** It is your responsibility to read the university's policies on academic integrity: <http://catalog.wvu.edu/undergraduate/coursecreditstermsclassification/#academicrightspenaltiesappealstext>

**ACCESSIBILITY AND ACCOMMODATIONS:** West Virginia University is committed to creating and fostering a positive learning and working environment based on open communication, mutual respect, and inclusion. If you are a person with a disability and anticipate needing any type of accommodation in order to participate in this class, please advise me and make appropriate arrangements with the Office of Accessibility Services (OAS). For more information on WVU's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion initiatives, please see <http://diversity.wvu.edu/>

**ATTENDANCE:** Attendance is required in this course for two reasons: first, students who attend classes regularly tend to earn higher grades; and second, your regular attendance improves the learning experience not only for yourself but for all class members. In taking this course you are committing to being part of an academic community, with all the rights and responsibilities that being a community member entails.

The specifics of this course's attendance policy are as follows:

- You are allowed up to three absences without penalty and without requiring a note; examples include school trips, illnesses, family emergencies, and days of special concern.
- If you miss 4-6 classes you will receive an F for participation.
- If you miss seven classes you will fail the course.

If serious circumstances arise that prevent you from attending class (for instance, prolonged illness, family tragedy, mental health or emotional well-being), please contact the Division of Student Life in Elizabeth Moore Hall (293-5611). The Dean of Student Life will authorize arrangements for you. Please also reach out to relevant support services on campus: e.g., the Carruth Center.

**DEADLINES AND PENALTIES:** Deadlines for work to be submitted are final. Exceptions will be made only in cases of serious illness or personal emergency, for which written documentation (e.g., a doctor's note) is required. Papers are due at the beginning of class on the due date. If they are not handed in at the beginning of class, they will be considered late.

For each day that an assignment is late, you will lose 10% of your grade. This penalty includes both weekend days; hence, an assignment that is due on Friday but handed in on Monday will lose 30% (i.e., 10% for Saturday, Sunday, and Monday).

**EMAIL:** I am happy to respond to your emails but for any kind of substantive discussion about your work you should attend office hours or make an appointment to meet with me. Please expect me to respond to emails Monday to Friday only, and allow at least twenty-four hours for a response.

**GRADING:** Grades will be provided as letter grades, corresponding to the following percentage range:

A range	90-100%	A+	97-100	B+	87-89	C+	77-79
B range	80-89%	A	93-96	B	83-86	C	73-76
C range	70-79%	A-	90-92	B-	80-82	C-	70-72
D range	60-69%						
F	0-59%						

See also <http://catalog.wvu.edu/undergraduate/enrollmentandregistration/#gradestext>

**PARTICIPATION:** Participation is a crucial component of this course but it encompasses far more than just answering questions in class. It also includes completing the required reading on time, being punctual and professional, bringing detailed notes and/or questions to class, contributing to discussion, demonstrating active listening skills, and engaging respectfully with other people's ideas.

Participation will be evaluated according to the following rubric:

<b>A</b>	up to 3 absences and excellent participation
<b>B</b>	up to 3 absences and strong participation
<b>C</b>	up to 3 absences and weak participation
<b>D</b>	up to 3 absences and no participation
<b>F</b>	more than 3 absences

**PUBLIC WRITING:** The writing that you produce for this course is public work. You should expect to share your writing with your classmates as well as with me. You will share some of your work online, through eCampus, as well as in class.

**SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS AND FORMATTING:** All assignments *must* be printed out and handed to me. I will not accept emailed assignments. Assignments are due at the start of class unless otherwise stipulated, and they will be considered late if they are not handed in by this time.

Papers should be typed in a legible 12pt font and should be double-spaced with 1-inch margins. Always number your pages and staple them together. Cover pages are not required; instead, include your name, my name, and the date on the first page of your paper. Always use MLA style (see below for links). Finally, always provide an informative title for your assignments.

## Resources

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Many resources are available on campus to support your educational attainment and emotional and physical wellbeing. Please make use of them! Here are just some of the resources you can use (this list is by no means exhaustive):

### ACADEMIC SUPPORT (at WVU and ONLINE)

MLA Style: <https://lib.wvu.edu/instruction/guides/mla.pdf> & <https://lib.wvu.edu/instruction/guides/citation/>

WVU Library: <https://lib.wvu.edu/collections/>

Online Writing Lab (“OWL”) at Purdue University: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/>

Grammar: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/1/5/>

Mechanics: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/1/4/>

MLA Style: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>

The Eberly Writing Studio: <http://speakwrite.wvu.edu/writing-studio>

Writing handouts: <http://speakwrite.wvu.edu/writing-studio/writing-handouts>

Speaking resources: <http://speakwrite.wvu.edu/writing-studio/speaking>

### HEALTH & WELLBEING

Counseling Services at the Carruth Center: <http://carruth.wvu.edu/>

Dept. of English Advising: <http://english.wvu.edu/students/current-undergraduate-students/advising>

Diversity Initiatives: <http://diversity.wvu.edu/home>

Division of Student Life: <http://studentlife.wvu.edu/about>

Emotional and Physical Wellbeing: <http://well.wvu.edu/>

Office of Accessibility Services: <http://accessibilityservices.wvu.edu/accomm>

Student Support Services (for first-generation students): <http://sss.wvu.edu/>

Title IX Office (Sexual Misconduct & Support): <http://titleix.wvu.edu/>

**SEXUAL MISCONDUCT & STUDENT SUPPORT:** WVU does not tolerate sexual misconduct, including harassment, stalking, sexual assault, sexual exploitation, or relationship violence [BOG Policy 44]. It is important for you to know that there are resources available if you or someone you know needs assistance. You may speak to a member of university administration, faculty, or staff, but keep in mind that they have an obligation to report the incident to the Title IX Coordinator. If you want to speak to someone who is permitted to keep your disclosure confidential, please seek assistance from the **Carruth Center, 304-293-9355** or **304-293-4431** (24-hour hotline), and locally within the community at the **Rape and Domestic Violence Information Center (RDVIC), 304-292-5100** or **304-292-4431** (24-hour hotline). For more information please consult WVU policies at <http://titleix.wvu.edu>.

*NB: The course outline below is subject to change. If changes are made, adequate notice will be given and a new schedule will be distributed*

## SCHEDULE

Date	Reading	Assignments Due
R 8/17	Introduction and Overview	
<b>8<sup>th</sup> - 13<sup>th</sup> Century Literature</b>		
T 8/22 R 8/24	"OE Meter & Style" (eCampus); <i>The Dream of the Rood</i> (pp. 32-36) <i>The Wanderer</i> (pp.117-120)	Group 1 Presentation
T 8/29 R 8/31	<i>Beowulf</i> : Intro (pp.36-41); ll. 1-1250 <i>Beowulf</i> : ll. 1250-2199	
T 9/5 R 9/7	<i>Beowulf</i> : ll. 2199-3182 <i>Ancrene Wisse</i> : pp. 138-140	
<b>14<sup>th</sup> - 15<sup>th</sup> Century Literature</b>		
T 9/12 R 9/14	<i>Sir Gawain &amp; the Green Knight</i> : Intro: (pp. 183-5); <i>FITT i &amp; ii</i> (pp.186-209) <i>Sir Gawain &amp; the Green Knight</i> : <i>FITT iii &amp; iv</i> (pp.209-238)	Group 2 Presentation
T 9/19 R 9/21	<i>The Canterbury Tales</i> : "The Miller's Prologue & Tale" (pp. 264-279) <i>The Canterbury Tales</i> : "The Wife of Bath's Prologue and Tale" (pp.282-309)	Group 3 Presentation
T 9/26 R 9/28	<i>Margery Kempe</i> : pp. 424-438 <i>Julian of Norwich</i> : pp. 412-424	
<b>16<sup>th</sup> - 17<sup>th</sup> Century Literature</b>		
T 10/3 R 10/5	<i>Utopia</i> pp. 575-609 <i>Utopia</i> pp. 610-645	Analytic Essay Due
T 10/10 R 10/12	RARE BOOKS VISIT 1 RARE BOOKS VISIT 2	
T 10/17 R 10/19	<i>The Merchant of Venice</i> : Acts I & II (pp. 161-279) <i>The Merchant of Venice</i> : Acts III, IV, & V (pp. 280-391)	Group 4 Presentation
T 10/24 R 10/26	<i>The Blazing World</i> pp. 119-180 <i>The Blazing World</i> pp. 180-225	Group 5 Presentation
T 10/31 R 11/2	<i>Paradise Lost</i> : Book I, Book IV, & Book VII <i>Paradise Lost</i> : Book IX, Book X, & Book XII	Group 6 Presentation
<b>Mid-17<sup>th</sup> Century to 18<sup>th</sup> Century Literature</b>		
T 11/7 R 11/9	Andrew Marvell, "Upon Appleton House" (pp. 1811-1833) <i>Oroonoko</i> : All (pp. 2313-2358)	Group 7 Presentation
T 11/14 R 11/16	<i>Gulliver's Travels</i> : Introductory material & Part 1 (Lilliput): pp. 2487-2530; Part 2 (Brobdingnag): pp. 2531-2573. <i>Gulliver's Travels</i> : Part 4 (Houyhnhnms): pp. 2587-2633	Group 8 Presentation
T 11/21 R 11/23	FALL RECESS; University closed FALL RECESS; University closed	
T 11/28 R 11/30	<i>Equiano</i> : excerpt from textbook, pp. 3033-3043 <i>Robinson Crusoe</i> : excerpt available on eCampus	
T 12/5	<b>Last class; creative project due at start of class</b>	<b>Creative Project Due</b>