

English 261

English 261, Marilyn Francus, Spring 2008

Professor Francus

English 261, Spring 2008

British Literature I

Tuesdays and Thursdays, 10:00-11:15

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Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 2:30-4:00, and by appointment.

January 15 Introduction

January 17 Beowulf (Heaney translation, pp. 3-81)

January 22 Beowulf; Judith (Heaney translation, pp. 83-213; Longman, pp. 109-114)

January 24 Chaucer, "General Prologue" to *The Canterbury Tales* (pp. 316-357)

January 29 Chaucer, "The Wife of Bath's Prologue" (pp. 375-394)

January 31 Chaucer, "The Wife of Bath's Tale" (pp. 394-403)

February 5 de France, "Prologue" and "Lanval" from *Lais* (pp. 181-198)

February 7 Sir Gawain and the Green Knight (pp. 200-213)

February 12 Sir Gawain and the Green Knight (pp. 213-258)

February 14 Kempe, excerpts from *The Book of Margery Kempe* (pp. 572-591); Raleigh, excerpts from *The Discovery of ... Guiana* (pp. 1239-1250); Hariot, excerpts from *A Brief and True Report of the Newfound Land of Virginia* (pp. 1256-1259)

Essay #1 Due (Close Reading Essay)

February 19 More, *Utopia* (pp. 714-764)

February 21 More, *Utopia* (pp. 764-785)

February 26 Renaissance Poetry, including sonnets by Sidney, Spenser, and Shakespeare

February 28 Renaissance Poetry, including poems by Elizabeth I, Raleigh, and Marlowe

March 4 Marlowe, *The Tragical History of Dr. Faustus* (pp. 1117-1207)

March 6 Marlowe, *The Tragical History of Dr. Faustus* (pp. 1207-1227)

March 11 17th-century Poetry by Donne and Herbert

March 13 Milton, excerpts from *Paradise Lost*, Books 1 and 2 (Book 1, pp. 1823- 1833, line 350; Book 2, pp. 1845-1869)

March 18 Milton, excerpts from Paradise Lost, Books 3 and 4 (Book 3 pp. 1869-1880, line 417; Book 4, pp. 1888-1911)

Essay #2 Due (Comparison/Contrast Essay)

March 20 Class Cancelled

March 25-27 Spring Break

April 1 Milton, Paradise Lost, Book 9 (pp. 1983-2010)

April 3 17th-century Poetry by Lovelace, Marvell, and Phillips

April 8 Behn, Oroonoko (pp. 2278-2308)

April 10 Behn, Oroonoko (pp. 2308-2321)

April 15 Swift, "A Modest Proposal" (pp. 2591-2598)

April 17 Dryden, "MacFlecknoe" (pp. 2239-2245); Pope, "To a Lady" (pp. 2685-2692);

Rochester, poems (pp. 2345-2351)

April 22 Sheridan, The School for Scandal (pp. 3001-3034)

April 24 Sheridan, The School for Scandal (pp. 3034-3063)

April 29 Gray, "Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College," "Ode on the Death of a Favorite Cat," "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard" (pp. 2850-2857); Smart, from "Jubilate Agno" (pp. 2817-2821)

May 1 Conclusion

Essay #3 Due (Inductive Essay)

Textbooks: *The Longman Anthology of British Literature*, Third Edition, and the Seamus Heaney translation of *Beowulf* are available at the WVU Bookstore.

Course Page: <http://www.as.wvu.edu/~britlit/britlit.html>

English 261 fulfills the General Education Curriculum (GEC) requirements for Objective 3 (The Past and Its Traditions: Apply knowledge, methods and principles of inquiry to understanding the past) and Objective 5 (Artistic Expression: Apply methods and principles of critical inquiry to the analysis of literary or artistic expression). English 261 is required for English majors, and can be used to fulfill the requirements for the English minor.

Course Objectives: - To introduce students to the genres and modes of early and early modern British literature. - To study early and early modern British literature in the context of its history and culture. - To introduce a series of critical methodologies to guide students through literary and cultural texts. - To provide practice in critical thinking and writing about literature.

Expected Learning Outcomes: At the end of this course, students should be able to: - Identify and analyze the primary modes of comedy, tragedy, satire, and romance. - Identify and analyze a variety of literary genres, including epic, drama, sonnet, and novel. - Develop a thesis about a literary text, and support that thesis with textual evidence. - Analyze literary evidence in detail, paying attention to rhetoric, tone, characterization, and theme. - Recognize and develop multiple analyses for a single literary text.

Course Requirements: Three short essays (4-5 pages each), and ten quizzes. You will be expected to keep up with the course readings, attend and participate in class, bring the required text to class, and to check your MIX e-mail account at least twice a week.

- For the first essay, you will be given a selection of passages from the texts that we've read in class. You will be asked to choose one passage, develop a thesis about the passage, and write a detailed argument that supports your thesis. *In the second essay, you will be given a selection of textual pairs, based on the texts that we have read in class. You will be asked to choose one pair, develop a thesis that supports a comparison/contrast analysis about the texts, and write a detailed argument that supports your thesis.* For the third essay, you will be given a selection of topics, and you will be asked to choose one topic, and three course texts that provide evidence relevant to the topic. You will then develop a thesis about the topic based on the texts that you have chosen, and write a detailed analysis that supports your thesis. * Quizzes will be given at the beginning of the class period, and will not be announced in advance. Quizzes will not be given on the days that essays are due, or during the last week of class. (Since there are ten quizzes over the semester, you should anticipate one quiz per week). The quizzes generally provide a passage from a course text, and a series of questions for you to answer in light of the passage. The quizzes are intended to focus your thinking on the text at the beginning of class.

Submission of Assignments:

- Your papers should be typed (11 or 12 point font), with sufficient space in the margins for comments. (One-inch margins will do). Papers should be double-spaced.
- Your papers (and your quizzes) should reflect careful reading and thinking about your subject. Do not summarize the plot of a work or rephrase your class notes in your course assignments.
- It is highly recommended that you keep a photocopy or a back-up disk of every assignment that you hand in.
- Hand in papers on time. Late submissions will receive a lower grade unless the student has a viable reason (such as illness, familial emergency) for his/her lateness. Your grade will be lowered a fraction for every day your work is late (ex. B to B- for one day late).
- Use the Editing Guidelines and Stylesheet—they will help you hone your critical thinking and writing skills, and strengthen your essays. Please keep in mind that there are additional resources at the University to help with your writing, including the Writing Center in Colson Hall, and the Term Paper Clinic in Wise Library.

Grading:

- Each essay will count for 25% of your final grade, and the top seven quizzes will be averaged for 25% of your grade. Class participation will be taken into consideration for students with borderline grades.
- There are no make-ups for missed quizzes.
- You have the option to submit rewrites of your first two papers. If you choose this option, come and see me about strategies for the rewrite. A rewrite is not a matter of making corrections in grammar and punctuation; it is a rethinking of the issues in your essay. If your grade on the rewrite is higher than your original grade, you will receive the rewrite grade. If your grade on the rewrite is lower than your original grade, you will keep your original grade.

Grading Criteria:

A (90-100) – Excellent work; the assignments for this course have been completed in a professional and timely manner. The written assignments and exam responses are clearly organized, choose compelling evidence to substantiate the analysis, and engage with the subject at hand in a thoughtful and thought-provoking manner. Written work requires no substantive or stylistic revisions, whether it appears on an exam, a quiz, or in an essay.

B (80-89) – Good work; the assignments for the course have been completed in a professional and timely manner. The written assignments and exam responses show substantial engagement with the subject at hand, but the analysis is either partially incomplete, involving weak evidence, or manifests some difficulty with organization. Written work requires substantive revisions, but few or no stylistic ones.

C (70-79) – Average work; the assignments for the course have been completed, but not necessarily in a professional or timely manner. The written assignments and exam responses show effort by the student, but the analysis is incomplete, includes inappropriate evidence (or a lack of evidence), or shows significant difficulties with organization. Written work, whether on a test, an essay, or a quiz, requires significant substantive or stylistic revisions.

D (60-69) - Less than average work; the assignments for the course have not been completed in a professional or timely manner. The written assignments and exam responses show a lack of effort on the part of the student, and a lack of engagement with the assignment (exam, quiz, or essay). Written assignments lack analysis, evidence, and organization; extensive substantive and stylistic revisions are necessary.

F (<59) – Inadequate work; the assignments for the course have not been completed. Written assignments and exam responses, when submitted, show a significant lack of effort on the part of the student, and a lack of engagement with the assignment and the subject matter of the course. Such work is marked by the absence of analysis, evidence, and organization; engagement with the course materials is necessary before extensive revisions are even possible.

Professional Responsibility:

1. At West Virginia University, class attendance contributes significantly to academic success. Students who attend classes regularly tend to earn higher grades and have higher passing rates in courses. Excessive absences will jeopardize students' grades or their ability to continue in their courses.
2. Accordingly, attendance will be taken at the beginning of every class. You are granted a maximum of three absences during the course of the semester before absenteeism affects your grade. If you accumulate six absences (excused and unexcused), i.e., an absence rate of 20%, you will not be able to earn more than a "B" for this course. If you accumulate nine absences (excused and unexcused), i.e., an absence rate of 33%, you will not be able to earn more than a "C" for this course.
3. It is your responsibility to contact me regarding your absences. If you disappear—that is, if you miss class for three, four, five sessions in a row, or more--it is not my responsibility to find you.
4. If you send me an e-mail, I will respond within 24 or 48 hours. If I have not responded to you in that time, it means that I have not received your posting. Please e-mail me again.
5. Do not leave in the middle of class; it is distracting and disrespectful. Do not schedule appointments (medical, advising, etc) during class time.
6. Come to class on time.

Social Justice Policy:

West Virginia University is committed to social justice. I concur with that commitment and expect to foster a nurturing learning environment based upon open communication, mutual respect, and non-discrimination. Our University does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, age, disability, veteran status, religion, sexual orientation, color or national origin. Any suggestions as to how to further such a positive and open environment in this class will be appreciated and given serious consideration.

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 Disability Services (293-6700).

Plagiarism:

The following definitions of Academic Dishonesty are taken from the West Virginia University Academic Integrity/Dishonesty Policy (available online at <http://www.arc.wvu.edu/admissions/integrity.html>):

Plagiarism: Plagiarism is defined in terms of proscribed acts. Students are expected to understand that such practices constitute academic dishonesty regardless of motive. Those who deny deceitful intent, claim not to have known that the act constituted plagiarism, or maintain that what they did was inadvertent are nevertheless subject to penalties when plagiarism has been confirmed. Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to: submitting, without appropriate acknowledgement, a report, notebook, speech, outline, theme, thesis, dissertation, or other written, visual, or oral material that has been copied in whole or in part from the work of others, whether such source is published or not, including (but not limited to) another individual's academic composition, compilation, or other product, or commercially prepared paper.

Cheating and dishonest practices in connection with examinations, papers, and projects, including but not limited to:

1. Obtaining help from another student during examinations.
2. Knowingly giving help to another student during examinations, taking an examination or doing academic work for another student, or providing one's own work for another student to copy and submit as his/her own.
3. The unauthorized use of notes, books, or other sources of information during examinations.
4. Obtaining without authorization an examination or any part thereof. Forgery, misrepresentation, or fraud:
 1. Forging or altering, or causing to be altered, the record of any grade in a grade book or other educational record.
 2. Use of University documents or instruments of identification with intent to defraud.
 1. Presenting false data or intentionally misrepresenting one's records for admission, registration, or withdrawal from the University or from a University course.
 2. Knowingly presenting false data or intentionally misrepresenting one's records for personal gain.
 3. Knowingly furnishing the results of research projects or experiments for the inclusion in another's work without proper citation.
 3. Knowingly furnishing false statements in any University academic proceeding.

Cases of academic dishonesty will result in a grade of "F" for the course and appropriate academic discipline. If you have any questions about academic dishonesty, and how to avoid it, please contact me.

Editing Checklist

1. Evaluate your thesis.
 - is your thesis clearly stated at the beginning of your essay?
 - is your thesis appropriate for the writing assignment?
 - does your thesis "make sense"?
2. Evaluate your argumentative strategy.
 - are you using logical and rhetorical strategies that build the most convincing case for your thesis? (and remember, you may use more than one in an essay; if you choose multiple strategies, make sure that they work together)
 - do you have the appropriate data to support your argument? (and if not, can you justify its absence?)
 - is the data cited properly? (check the content and the form of your notes)
3. Evaluate your essay structure.
 - does your essay structure lead the reader through your argument clearly?
 - does your essay structure work with/reinforce your argumentative strategy?
 - does your introduction suggest the structure of your argument? If so, does the

body of your essay follow through on the structure suggested by the introduction?
- are the transitions between the parts of your argument clear?
- does the conclusion pull your argument together? (try to avoid repetitive, summary conclusions)

4. Evaluate your paragraph structure.

- does each paragraph function as a unit of your argument? (i.e. is each paragraph unified in its purpose?)
- is the topic sentence clear?
- does the body of the paragraph follow through on the subject of the topic sentence?
- are the transitions from paragraph to paragraph clear?

5. Evaluate your sentence structure.

- is each sentence an independent unit of thought? (i.e. avoid repeating yourself in successive sentences)
- does one sentence lead to the next? Are the transitions between sentences clear?
- check the grammar of our sentences
- make sure that every sentence has a subject and a verb (avoid fragments!)
- check for subject-verb agreement
- check for tense consistency
- check that you are varying the grammar of your sentences (so that not every sentence begins with a prepositional phrase, for instance)

6. Check your spelling and punctuation.

- and remember the distinctions between their/their/they're; it's/its; are/our; etc.

Some General Comments on Writing Style and Grammar

1. Please note that "it's" is a contraction for "it is" or "it has." "Its" is a possessive, which makes life confusing, but it is important to learn this distinction.
2. Please learn the distinctions between possessive, plural, and plural possessive. "Knight's" is singular possessive; "knights" is plural; "Knights'" is plural possessive.
3. Try to avoid wordiness. Phrases like "The point the speaker is making is" or "What this means is that" are generally unnecessary. Such phrases are like long wind-ups before the pitch, and they often clog your prose.
4. Try to avoid "talking" writing. What "sounds" right to a readerly ear does not necessarily read properly or grammatically to the eye. People do not speak grammatically (and sometimes without even punctuation). Therefore, writers should avoid writing as they speak (unless they are writing dialogue in fiction). Talking writing also frequently leads to tone drops and diction that generally is not appropriate for academic prose. (Ex. " she doesn't stick up for herself").
5. Please avoid freestanding quotations. Every quotation should be integrated into a text, preferably with a lead-in phrase, rather than placed alone in the middle of a paragraph without any connection to anything around it.

6. Try to avoid “we” and “you” in your essays. Both terms tend to include the reader in the essay’s argument without convincing the reader. (In other words, these terms usually signal strategies of collusion on the part of the writer).
7. When referring to words as words, please use quotation marks. (I.e. if you are discussing the use of the word “man” in a particular passage, then “man” should be placed in quotation marks).
8. “It” and “This” are weak sentence starters. Any noun in the previous sentence can serve as a referent for “it” – and if the previous sentence has a number of nouns in it, havoc results. “This” has a similar effect as the first word in a sentence, but if a noun is added after “This,” the problem of reference is usually solved.
9. “Thing” is a very vague word. Try to find a specific noun whenever possible.
10. “He himself” is an unnecessary and ungrammatical doubling. “He” will generally do.
11. Try to avoid using “is” (or “was”) as a main verb. Choose a stronger, more precise word.