

English 261: British Literature 1

Spring 2020

TTh 11:30-12:45 □ Clark Hall 320

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Office Hours: TR 10:45-11:15 and (or by appointment)

Course Description:

English 261 will explore the significance of travel and place in English literature from Medieval times through the end of the 18th century. We will focus our study on pilgrimage, but we'll also look at other modes of travel (expeditions, excursions, and quests, as well as metaphorical travel through words and thought) and consider how they compare in terms of purpose, form, and meaning. How does the journey of Chaucer's pilgrims, for instance, relate to that undertaken by Gulliver on his travels through Lilliput and Brobdingnag? In what various ways can we discover or create meaning in the simple act of moving from one place to another? Underlying these considerations will be the matter of place itself. (I use "matter" here in its most literal sense.) We will examine the ways in which the material world □ and our place *in* the material world □ influences our beliefs and actions.

By the end of the semester, I expect that you'll have discovered some new favorite writers, that you'll have gained a number of useful tools for unpacking texts (literary or otherwise), and that your ideas about nature, science, art, *etc.* will be productively complicated.

Required Texts:

- *The Broadview Anthology of British Literature* (concise), vol. A, 3rd ed. (2017)
ISBN: 9781554813124
- *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, by William Shakespeare, Oxford (2008)
ISBN: 9780199535866
- *The Expedition of Humphry Clinker*, by Tobias Smollet, Oxford (2009)
ISBN: 9780199538980

Please be sure to acquire the specific editions listed above, as texts can vary greatly from one edition to the next. These texts are available at the WVU bookstore. Please buy/order your books right away to make sure you get them in time.

You are responsible for procuring hardcopies of the texts and bringing them with you to class. ***E-texts are not permitted (please see my policy on electronic devices, below).***

Other Required Materials:

- A dedicated notebook for note-taking. Bring this with you to every class. In addition to note-taking, you will use this notebook to record your answers to the daily discussion questions. I will not take these up, but your written assignments will call on you to draw from ideas that arise during our class discussions.
- Computer and printer access. You will be required to type and print your written assignments. I will share any last-minute announcements (such as class cancellations) *via* email, so I expect that you have access to your WVU MIX account and will check it at least daily.

Assignments:

3 unit exams - 15% each

There will be three short exams during the semester (these are in *lieu* of a single, comprehensive final). Exams will be given during class time. Missed exams cannot be made up. Please check the schedule below; if you know ahead of time that you will not be able to make it to class on an exam day, please drop the course and take it at another time.

Short essay (2-3 pages) - 15%

This assignment will ask you to analyze a course text using the tools you gain through class discussions.

Final essay (4-6 pages) - 25%

The final essay will be an expansion of the short essay.

Misc. - 15%

I will occasionally assign work for you to complete between classes in addition to the reading assignments listed below. There will also be in-class activities, which I will collect at the end of class. Completion of this work will make up 20% of your total grade. The grade will be determined more by the thought you put into it than by correctness.

Rather than assign points for each individual assignment, I will consider your overall effort and assign a single grade at midterm and at the end of the semester.

Grading:

I will assign letter grades only. Grades will be reported at midterm and at the end of the semester.

Class Structure and Participation:

Discussion questions: At the beginning of each class, I will ask a series of questions based on the reading for that day and ask you to reflect on them independently. These questions will form the basis of our discussions. I will call on students to share their responses. Your readiness to respond will factor largely into your overall grade for the course. As these responses will be the starting point (rather than end point) for our discussion, credit will be determined based on the thoughtfulness of your response □not on whether or not your answer is “correct.”

Preparedness and participation: Simply showing up and occupying space in the room does not constitute participation. I expect students to arrive to each class prepared and to be fully engaged in classroom activities □this means bringing a copy of the text, staying on task, and actively contributing to our discussions.

Participation doesn't make up one portion of your course grade; it forms the very basis of your work here. If you are (a) sleeping (b) on your phone (c) unprepared, or (d) acting in a way that is distracting to your fellow students, I will deduct 5 points from your total grade for each incident.

Attendance

Since ENGL 261 is a discussion-based course, much of the content will be covered during our class meetings. Attending class is, therefore, necessary in order to achieve the objectives of the course. If you miss a class, you should ask a classmate for discussion notes. I will not repeat material covered in class for those who were not present.

You are allowed to miss the equivalent of one full week of class to cover you in the case of unavoidable circumstances preventing you from being here, such as car trouble, PRT delays, bad weather, illness, doctor's appointments, and job interviews. *Please use them wisely.* If you miss class for frivolous reasons, you risk running out of allowances to cover you should an emergency arise. If you know ahead of time that you will miss multiple classes due to prior engagements, you should drop the course and take it at a later time.

Policies: Each absence beyond two will result in a 5-point deduction to your final grade, regardless of the reason.

Missing more than four classes will result in a failing grade for the course.

You do not need to provide documentation for your absences; if you are absent, I'll assume you have a good reason for being so.

Late Work Policy:

Late work will receive a deduction of one letter grade per *day* (not class meeting) that it is late. If you are unable to make it to class on the day an assignment is due, you may email your assignment to serve as a placeholder, but you will need to bring a hard copy to the following class in order to receive a grade. The exams cannot be made up; if you have a conflict with the exam dates, please drop the course and take it at another time. The due date for the final

essay is firm.

Electronic Devices:

ENGL 261 is a discussion-based course that draws heavily on the insights and original contributions of course participants. **Electronic devices of any kind (including phones, laptops, and tablets) should be *silenced and put away* during class.**

Having your device out during class will result in a 5-point deduction to your final grade for each offense. For urgent communications, please leave the room. Only hard copies of the assigned readings are permitted in class (see "Required Texts," above).

Inclement Weather Policy:

In the case of adverse weather, please use your judgment as to whether you can safely make it to campus or not. Note that absences due to weather factor into your overall allowance for the course.

If I am unable to make it to campus, I will email the class, and we will hold our discussion *via* eCampus for that day.

The Eberly Writing Studio:

If you are serious about your success in this class (or in any humanities course), *I highly encourage you to schedule a visit with the Eberly Writing Studio.* The writing studio is not just for people who are struggling with a project (though the writing consultants can help in those cases, too); it is a resource that can support you in all stages of the writing process. The studio is located in G02 Colson Hall. For more information about the Eberly Writing Studio or to schedule an appointment, visit speakwrite.wvu.edu/writing-studio.

Social Justice Statement:

The West Virginia University community 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 at <http://accessibilityservices.wvu.edu> or (304) 293-6700. For more information on West Virginia University's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion initiatives, please see <http://diversity.wvu.edu>. And of course, feel free to talk with me about how we can work together most effectively.

Academic Integrity Policy:

The following definitions are from the *West Virginia University Undergraduate Catalog*. Please see the section on Academic Integrity/Dishonesty for the full definition and discussion of procedures.

Plagiarism: "Submitting, without appropriate acknowledgment . . . material that has been knowingly obtained or 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: "Doing academic work for another student, or providing one's own work for another student to copy and submit as his/her own."

Plagiarizing or otherwise cheating will result in a 0 for the assignment, or, depending on the seriousness of the offense, an F for the course. These cases are reported both to the department and to the college and go on the student's permanent record. *Please don't risk it.* If you are struggling with an assignment, come by my office, and we can work through it. No single assignment in this course is worth risking a negative report on your student record.

General Tips for Succeeding in ENGL 261 (and far beyond)

- Ask for help. If you are having trouble keeping up or do not understand an assignment, ask for help. Ask your classmates. Ask your instructor. Ask a librarian or a writing tutor. There are numerous (free!) resources available to you as a student, and you will do yourself a favor by taking advantage of them.
- Be proactive. Do outside research, if necessary. If you're having trouble understanding a reading or concept, put in the extra effort to make sure you are staying on track. Sometimes, it's helpful to read a brief summary of a challenging text before taking on the text itself. (It should go without saying that the summary should not *cannot* stand in for reading the text first-hand; it can, however, clear up some details and enrich your understanding.)
- Take pride in your work. If you were submitting work in a professional setting, you wouldn't hand someone a thrown-together report on creased, coffee-stained paper. Take a few minutes to read back over your work. Pay attention to the fine details—formatting, grammar, punctuation. Staple your pages together (this shows fore-planning on your part). These things reflect on you and your commitment to doing your best work.

Tentative Schedule:

	Date	Assignment
Week 1	1/14	Introduction
	1/16	"The Wanderer," "The Seafarer," and "The Wife's Lament" (<i>Bv</i> , p. 66-71)
Week 2	1/21	<i>Beowulf</i> , §1-26 (<i>Bv</i> , p. 85-109)
	1/23	Julian of Norwich, <i>A Vision Showed to a Devout Woman</i> (<i>Bv</i> , p. 388-400)
Week 3	1/28	<i>Sir Gawain and the Green Knight</i> , Fitts 1 and 2 (<i>Bv</i> , p. 226-55) Syllabus quiz
	1/30	<i>Sir Gawain and the Green Knight</i> , Fitts 3 and 4 (<i>Bv</i> , p. 255-90)
Week 4	2/4	Chaucer, "General Prologue" (<i>Bv</i> , p. 300-15)
	2/6	Chaucer, The Pardoner's Prologue and Tale (<i>Bv</i> , p. 353-63)
Week 5	2/11	<i>The York Crucifixion</i> (<i>Bv</i> , p. 447-52) and watch recorded performance (linked on eCampus)
	2/13	Exam 1
Week 6	2/18	Spenser, <i>The Faerie Queene</i> , Book 1: Cantos 1 and 2 (<i>Bv</i> , p. 670-84)
	2/20	Marlowe, "Hero and Leander" and "The Passionate Shepherd to His Love" (<i>Bv</i> , p. 834-45)
Week 7	2/25	Shakespeare, <i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i> , Acts 1 and 2
	2/27	Shakespeare, <i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i> , Act 3
Week 8	3/3	Shakespeare, <i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i> , Acts 4 and 5
	3/5	Donne, "Song ('Go, and catch a falling star')," "Song ('Sweetest love, I do not go')," "A Valediction: of Weeping," and "A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning" (<i>Bv</i> , p. 915, 917, 919, and 922)
Week 9	3/10	Wroth, <i>A Crown of Sonnets Dedicated to Love</i> (<i>Bv</i> , p. 945-8) Herrick, "Corinna's Going A-Maying" and "To the Virgins, to Make Much of Time" (<i>Bv</i> , p. 958-9)

	3/12	Exam 2
	3/17-19	Spring Recess - no class
Week 10	3/24	Milton, <i>Paradise Lost</i> , Book 2 (<i>Bv</i> , p. 1030-44)
	3/26	Pepys, from <i>The Diary</i> , Jun. 1665 - May 1669 (<i>Bv</i> , p. 1212-24) Discussion board
Week 11	3/31	Cavendish, "A Dialogue betwixt Peace, and War" (<i>Bv</i> , p. 1154) and "The Hunting of the Hare" (<i>Bv</i> , p. 1155-6) Dryden, "MacFlecknoe" (<i>Bv</i> , p. 1183-6)
	4/2	Johnson, "The Vanity of Human Wishes" (<i>Bv</i> , p. 1631-6) and <i>The Rambler</i> #4 (<i>Bv</i> , p. 1636-9) Short essay due
Week 12	4/7	Smollet, <i>The Expedition of Humphry Clinker</i> (p. 5-117)
	4/9	Smollet, <i>The Expedition of Humphry Clinker</i> (p. 118-73) Discussion board
Week 13	4/14	Smollet, <i>The Expedition of Humphry Clinker</i> (p. 173-297)
	4/16	Smollet, <i>The Expedition of Humphry Clinker</i> (p. 297-353)
Week 14	4/21	Swift, <i>Gulliver's Travels</i> , Part 1 (<i>Bv</i> , p. 1407-36)
	4/23	Swift, <i>Gulliver's Travels</i> , Part 2 (<i>Bv</i> , p. 1436-68)
Week 15	4/27	Wollstonecraft, <i>Letters from Sweden, Norway, and Denmark</i> (download and print from eCampus)
	4/29	Exam 3
Final Exam	5/7	Final essay due (upload to eCampus by 10am)