

# English 261

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Byron Nelson, ENGL 261, Spring 2003, British Literature Survey I

English261 Byron Nelson

Spring 2003 341 Stansbury

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11:30-12:20 MWF [bnelson2@wvu.edu](mailto:bnelson2@wvu.edu)

48 Stansbury (office or library) 9:30-11:20

## BRITISH LITERATURE SURVEY, I

### REQUIRED TEXTS:

Abrams, et al, ed., **NORTON ANTHOLOGY OF ENGLISH LITERATURE**, 7<sup>th</sup> ed., Vol. I

(Norton)

Chaucer, **CANTERBURY TALES**, ed. Hieatt and Hieatt (Bantam)

More, **UTOPIA** (Dover Thrift Edition)

Donne, **SELECTED POEMS** (Dover Thrift Edition)

Marvell, **TO HIS COY MISTRESS AND OTHER POEMS** (Dover Thrift Edition)

### READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS:

1/13 Introduction

1/15 The Wanderer 99-100; Cowper, The Castaway 2880-81

1/17 The Dream of the Rood 26-28; Wyatt, They Flee From Me 529-30; QUIZ

1/20 Martin Luther King holiday

1/22 Beowulf 29-32, 42-49

1/24 Beowulf63-68; QUIZ

1/27 \*Chaucer, CANTERBURY TALES, General Prologue (Bantam ed.) 3-41 (right-hand page is the modern English translation)

1/29 Canterbury Tales, General Prologue continued

1/31 Canterbury Tales, Miller's Tale 147-81

2/3 Canterbury Tales, Miller's Tale continued

2/5 Canterbury Tales, Merchant's Tale 241-95

2/7 Canterbury Tales, Merchant's Tale continued; Close of Canterbury Tales and Retraction 310-13 (in Norton); SHORT PAPER ON CHAUCER DUE

2/10 Bede, Story of Caedmon and Caedmon's Hymn 24-26; Ancrene Riwe 153-54

2/12 Kempe, Book of Margery Kempe 366-79

2/14 FIRST EXAM (Anglo-Saxon poems through Chaucer and Kempe)

2/17 Chester Play of Noah's Flood 380-91

2/19 Wyatt 525-37 (esp. Mine Own John Pains 535-37)

2/21 Surrey 569-77 (esp. So Cruel Prison 572-73, Wyatt Resteth Here 574-75)

2/24 \*More, UTOPIA (Dover), Book I, 1-27

2/26 Utopia, Book II, 28-57

2/28 Utopia, Book II, 57-85; QUIZ

3/3 Sidney, Defense of Poesy 933-54 (in Norton)

3/5 Spenser 614-16, Faerie Queene 622-27, I i 628-41

3/7 Faerie Queene II xii 773-83

3/10 Jonson 1292-94, To Penshurst 1399-1401

3/12 Lanyer 1281-82, Description of Cooke-ham 1287-92; PAPER DUE

3/14 Herbert, Love (III) 1614-15; Marvell, The Garden 1698-1700

SPRING VACATION, March 15-23

3/24 \*Donne, SELECTED POEMS: The Good Morrow 1; The Sun Rising 4; The  
Canonization 5-6; The Flea 16-17; The Funeral 26-27; The Relic 28-29

3/26 Donne: The Ecstasy 23-25; Elegy XIX: To His Mistress Going to Bed 37-39

3/28 Donne: Good Friday 1613 66-67; Hymn to Christ 68; Hymn to God My God 69;  
Hymn to God 70

3/31 SECOND EXAM (Middle English poems and ballads through Donne)

4/2 Milton 1771-74; On the Morning of Christ's Nativity 1774-81; Me thought I Saw  
My Late Espoused Saint 1815 (in Norton)

4/4 Milton, Lycidas 1790-96

4/7 Milton, Paradise Lost 1815-17, Book I, 1817-36 (esp. pp. 1818, 1820, 1825-26)

4/9 Paradise Lost, Book IV, 1874-95 (esp. pp. 1875-76, 1880-81, 1889-90)

4/11 Paradise Lost, Book IX, 1961-86 (esp. temptation of Eve, 1972-78); PAPER DUE

4/14 \*Marvell, TO HIS COY MISTRESS AND OTHER POEMS: Mower poems, 3-8

4/16 Marvell: Nymph Complaining 14-17; Picture of Little T.C. 23-24; To His Coy  
Mistress 1-2; TOPIC FOR LONG PAPER DUE

4/18 Easter holiday

4/21 Marvell, The Garden 24-26; Bermudas 26-27; Upon Appleton House 47-49 (from  
"And now to the abyss I pass" to bottom p. 49)

4/23 Pope 2505-08, Rape of the Lock 2525-44 (in Norton)

4/25 Swift 2298-99, Modest Proposal 2473-79; LONG PAPER DUE

4/28 Addison and Steele 2479-81; Spectator essays, 2488-92

4/30 Gray, Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard 2830-33

5/2 Boswell, Death of Samuel Johnson 2779-83; Cowper, Castaway 2880-81

FINAL EXAM: Monday, May 5, 8-10 am

#### RATIONALE:

The course offers a rapid survey of the major authors and persistent themes of English literature, from the Anglo-Saxon period through the late Eighteenth Century, or from the anonymous epic Beowulf through Boswell's *Life of Samuel Johnson*. Although the concept of a "canon" of great works of literature has come under fierce attack, the goal of the course is to make you aware of the themes, types, genres and varieties of prose, poetry and drama written in Old, Middle and modern English, from the 5<sup>th</sup> Century AD to the late 18<sup>th</sup> Century. The readings are usually placed in chronological order, but some texts have been moved out of order for purposes of comparison. To keep the readings manageable, there is a greater emphasis on poetry than on prose, and I regret having to neglect English drama. Themes receiving special emphasis this semester include heroism and hard work, temptation and pastoral delights, and erotic love and companionate marriage. Because you will find it easier to read Chaucer in modern translation, we will read the General Prologue, The Miller's Tale and The Merchant's Tale in a good modern translation. I will be using three of the Dover Thrift Editions; I recommend that you read the Norton introductions to Thomas More, John Donne and Andrew Marvell, since the Dover editions unfortunately contain no notes.

#### POLICIES:

Regular attendance is expected (and, as on the job, attendance is recorded). Your grade will drop after THREE ABSENCES, and SIX ABSENCES can result in failure. I take attendance at the beginning of class, so make it a point to be on time. Always bring the assigned texts for the dates given above, and ALWAYS bring the appropriate text to class. It is usually the bulky Norton, but note the dates marked with asterisks, which indicate the first day of the use of one of the alternate books. Purchase the correct editions of the text, and do so NOW. I like to call on students to read aloud, so always be prepared to read a portion of the text or to make a comment. There will be a mixture of quizzes, short papers, two exams, a long paper and a final exam, in addition to unannounced in-class writing exercises. Papers and exams are due on the dates listed above; late papers must be turned in but can suffer from a drop in grade. Do NOT send papers as e-mail attachments, but I will be happy to respond to e-mail questions.

### CHAUCER ASSIGNMENT

For Friday, Feb. 7, 2003, write a short paper (3-4 pp.) in which you compare the narrative techniques in "The Miller's Tale" and "The Merchant's Tale" from *The Canterbury Tales*. (Use the translation of Hieatt and Hieatt in the Bantam edition.)

Both the Miller and the Merchant tell *fabliaux* (earthy stories about money, sex and deception), in which their choices as story-tellers reveal, perhaps inadvertently, aspects of their own characters. What does their choice of stories reveal about the story-tellers themselves?

You could focus on some of the following aspects:

- characterization
- style
- tone
- attitude toward the characters
- settings and props
- gender attitudes
- use of dialogue and description
- imagery

When you have read both of the tales, read again the portraits of the Miller and Merchant in the General Prologue and then the prologues to the two tales.

Use the modern-English translation of the stories in the Bantam edition and cite any quotations by page numbers. You may, of course, use the original Middle English (on the left hand pages) or to the notes and introduction to Chaucer in the *Norton Anthology*. Provide an original title which hints at or spells out your thesis.