

I. CATALOG DESCRIPTION

A. Department Information:

Division: Humanities
Department: English
Course ID: ENGL 270
Course Title: English Literature to the 18th Century
Units: 3
Lecture: 3 Hours
Prerequisite: English 101

B. Catalog and Schedule Description:

Analysis of masterpieces of every literary type significant in the development of English literature from the Middle Ages to the early 18th Century, supplemented by a study of the historical and social background of the literature and lives of representative and important writers.

II. NUMBER OF TIMES COURSE MAY BE TAKEN FOR CREDIT: One

III. EXPECTED OUTCOMES FOR STUDENTS:

Upon completion of the course, the student will be able to:

- A. Read, discuss, and respond to a range of literature from the beginning of English literature through the early 18th Century;
- B. Identify and discuss significant passages of English literature to the early 18th Century;
- C. Compare and contrast English literature of various time periods up to the 18th Century in light of historical and social forces;
- D. Research criticism of a piece of English literature;
- E. Analyze and discuss the characteristics of some works which have been designated "masterpieces";
- F. Write essays with sources and essay exams that reflect the ability to consider pieces of English literature within their historical and social contexts and their contribution to the development of English literature.

IV. CONTENT:

- A. Medieval Literature: Old English
 1. The infinitely varied origins of English
 2. The influence of the church on literacy and literature
 3. Representative masterpieces such as "Beowulf"
- B. Medieval Literature: Middle English
 1. The significance of the Battle of Hastings for English literature
 2. Representative masterpieces such as "Canterbury Tales"
 3. The role of women: Julian of Norwich, Margery Kempe
- C. The Sixteenth Century
 1. Representative poets such as Spenser, Wyatt
 2. Shakespeare: at least one play, such as "King Lear," and a sampling of sonnets
 3. Elizabethan England and the influence of the Renaissance
- D. 17th Century
 1. Historical struggles over the monarchy
 2. Representative poets such as Donne, Milton
 3. Representative philosophers such as Bacon, Locke
- E. The Restoration and the Eighteenth Century
 1. Historical, social setting
 2. Representative writers such as Swift and Pope

V. METHODS OF INSTRUCTION

- A. Typical kinds of reading and writing tasks assigned
 - 1. Reading: Students will read poetry, prose, and drama from various time periods in English Literature; to a lesser extent, they will also read relevant historical background information and criticism.
 - 2. Writing: For both exams and assignments, students will write primarily academic essays, often with reference to outside sources. Exams might also include some short answers for purposes of identifying quotations and briefly discussing their significance. To encourage close reading and personal engagement with the literary works, the teacher might also assign reading journals.
- B. Pedagogical Techniques
- C. Lecture (e.g. historical, political, sociological forces surrounding the Elizabethan era)
- D. Discussion (e.g. analyzing the differences in religious literature of the Medieval period and the Elizabethan era and how writers reflect historical considerations of their times)
- E. Small group discussion (e.g. assigning each group of students a different Shakespearean sonnet to discuss and present to the class, noting how analysis helps one understand why the poems have survived)
- F. Peer response groups for essays so that students will have the opportunity to compare their analyses of literary works and offer feedback to one another for revision.
- G. Audio-visual: movie versions, readings of literary works (this will enable students to compare various interpretations of important works such as "King Lear" and analyze the appeal of different versions in terms of historical context. Using Kurosawa's "Ran" after a viewing of Lawrence Olivier's 1985 "King Lear" helps students to see Shakespearean themes in a different historical, political, cultural setting. Seeing how the story can resonate in a different culture helps students understand one way in which works can be assessed as "masterpieces").

VI. TYPICAL ASSIGNMENTS:

- A. Select one of the assigned pieces of Medieval Literature for which you can find at least two library sources (your text will count as a third source). Write an essay in which, using your sources, notes from class, and reading journals, you explore the significance of that work. Why do you think that work has survived? Why has it been selected for an anthology? What important human issues does it address? How does it reflect its time and culture? What is its role in the development of English literature?
- B. Write an essay in which you compare and contrast two pieces of literature with religious themes from two different historical periods (e.g. a vision by Julian of Norwich and one of the Holy sonnets by John Donne). Using library sources, discuss how each piece reflects its historical and social context and how they differ.

VII. EVALUATION(S):

- A. Methods of Evaluation
 - 1. Weekly Assignments: Typical weekly assignments: Write a personal response to each assigned piece in your reading journal
 - 2. Class Participation in discussion and peer response groups to strengthen students' engagement in and ability to do analysis.
 - 3. Three Out-of-Class Essays: See "VI. Typical Assignments" above for examples
 - 4. Term Paper: Select one of the works discussed during the semester for which you can find at least two pieces of criticism and two sources related to the historical and social context of the work. Write a term paper in which you analyze how the theme of that work reflects its society and discuss how critics have responded to that piece.
 - 5. Examinations: Short Answer and Essay Format
 - a) Short Answer: For identifying and discussing the significance of important, representative quotations.
 - b) Essay Questions: These may ask students to compare and contrast the literature of different eras in terms of form and content. An effective and freeing way of having

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them accomplish this is by having them write an essay in which they give a dinner party and select one writer from each era and describe a discussion those writers might have on a subject such as love, education, women's rights, etc.

B. Frequency of Evaluation:

1. Weekly Assignments
2. Three out-of-class essays (about one every five weeks)
3. One midterm examination
4. One final examination
5. One term paper

VIII. TYPICAL TEXT(S):

The Norton Anthology of English Literature, Sixth edition, Vol. I Eds. M. H. Abrams et al. New York: W. W. Norton, 1996.

IX. OTHER SUPPLIES REQUIRED OF STUDENTS: None