

English 223: The Tradition of English Literature I

Fall 2007

Ms. Dobbs

Office: Mears 213, ext. 3108

Office hours: TWTh 4-5 or by appointment, if you have class during these times

Description: This challenging course in literary history is foundational for the study of English literature. It surveys the literature from the Middle Ages through the early seventeenth century, emphasizes developing traditions and innovations, and attends to the larger historical contexts. Class sessions generally focus on discussions of explications presented by you and your colleagues; I occasionally lecture.

Texts: *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, 8th edition (**Do not use earlier editions.**)
The Middle Ages, Volume A
The Sixteenth Century and Early Seventeenth Century, Volume B
Corbett and Finkle, *The Little English Handbook*, 8th edition (or any good grammar)

Reading assignments: Read **all introductory material** to each major section, author, and selection by the first class we discuss each. Please note that the introduction to the Middle Ages divides into three. For class 1b, read the Old English material; for 2c, the Anglo-Norman section; and for 3a, the rest. I encourage you to read as many of the selections for an author as you can; classes will focus, however, on works I've listed below.

Explications and discussions: For class sessions beginning at the end of the third week, you will prepare a detailed explication of a single work (marked by an asterisk) from among those listed on the syllabus. (See the description of explication on pages 6-7.) For some days, I've marked several works; choose one and prepare an explication of it. Finally for some days, I'll assign the work in the previous class. Our discussion will begin with one of you presenting your explication. As part of your preparation, put each new work in relation to at least one other we already know. At the beginning of the semester, I've made suggestions of works for comparison, but **for the rest of the semester**, come up with comparisons on your own. Those comparisons are an important way to see **developing traditions and innovations**.

WEEK

READING ASSIGNMENTS

8/31

Introduction to course; Announced Quiz

1

a) Review, in the form of an oral quiz, of terminology for literary analysis and for scanning

Seventh Through Fifteenth Centuries

A. Anglo-Saxon England and Old English Literature

b) Introduction, 1-7 & 19-20
Characteristics of Old English Poetry
Example of Explication
Bede: from *An Ecclesiastical History of the English People* with *Caedmon's Hymn* (25-26) For those of you who've read the *Iliad*, what similarities do you see in the use of language in comparing the two poems?

c) *Dream of the Rood* (27-29) Do a trial explication.

2

a) *The Wanderer* (112) Do a trial explication.

b) from *Beowulf* (34-47; lines 1-661) For those who've read the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, compare the beginning of this epic to the beginnings of those epics.

c) *Judith* (100-108); **The Wife's Lament* (114) Do a trial explication.

B. Post-Conquest England

- 3 a) **Anglo-Norman England (7-10)**
Geoffrey of Monmouth, from *The History of the Kings of Britain* (119-20)
Wace, from *Le Roman de Brut* (121-25)*
Layamon, from *Brut* (125-27)
Deadline for letting me know which dates you've chosen for your two arguments.
- b) *Exile of the Sons of Uisliu* (129-36)
- c) Marie de France: *Lanval* (142-55) First "real" explication. Compare to *Dream of the Rood* and *Judith*.
- 4 a) **Middle English History and Literature in the 14th and 15th centuries (10-14)**
In the section on Middle English **as a language** in the introductory material to the Middle Ages, you need only read through "Sounds" (15-17) for the general sense; you don't have to master the information.
"What is he, this lordling, that cometh from the fight" (368); "Ye That Pasen" (369); "The Cuckoo Song" (436); "My Lief Is Faren in Londe" (437); "Western Wind" (437). What differences do you notice compared to Old English poetry? Choose one lyric to explicate.
- b) "Alison" (436)*
Chaucer: "Complaint to His Purse" (318)
- c) : "Truth" (317)*; "To His Scribe Adam" (318) Langland: *Piers Plowman*, from *The Prologue* (333-36)
- 5 a) : *The Canterbury Tales*, from *The General Prologue* (218): lines 1-162, 39716-860. Compare lines 1-18* to "Alison"; describe the ways Chaucer sets up his "portraits" of the pilgrims and compare his practice to that of Langland.
- b) : *The Nun's Priest's Tale* (299).
Assignment of poem for Argument 1a
- c) Julian of Norwich: from *A Book of Showings* (372-79 [to "From Chapter 59"])
Kempe: from *The Book of Margery Kempe* (384-94 [to "Margery Nurses Her Husband"])
Read both of the selections; choose a passage from one of these two authors and analyze the use of language, i.e. explicate.
- 6 a) Malory: from *Morte Darthur* (439-53 [to "The Deaths of Lancelot and Guinevere"])
- b) "Sunset on Calvary" (369); "I Sing of a Maiden" (369); "Adam Lay Bound" (370); "The Corpus Christi Carol" (370)
Argument 1a due

Sixteenth Century

- c) Sixteenth Century History and New Forms in Literature
Wyatt: "The long love" (594)*; "I find no peace" (596); "My lute, awake!" (600); "Mine own John Pains" (604); "They flee from me" (599 and 600, i.e. both versions)
"The English Bible" (618)
Hoby: *The Courtier*, from *Book 1* (646) and from *Book 4* (647, from "But among these commodities . . ."). Think about a comparison with the *Symposium*.
Queen Elizabeth: "Speech to the Troops at Tilbury" (699)
Hariot, from *A brief and true report of the new-found land of Virginia* (938)

Assignment of poem for Argument 1b

- 7 a) Wyatt: "My galley" (597)*; "Farewell, Love" (596); "Divers doth use" (598) (614)
- b) Spenser: *The Faerie Queene*: "A Letter of the Authors" (716) and *The Firste Booke, Canto 1* (719)* For your explication, do a close analysis of language in a couple of consecutive stanzas. What **literally** happens in the canto?
- c) Spenser : *Amoretti* (903), numbers 1, 34, 37, 39, 68, 75, 79
- Argument 1b due**

Fall Break

- 8 a) Sidney: *Astrophil and Stella* (975), numbers 1, 5*, 6, 9, 15*, 28*, 31
- b) : from *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia* (948). Focus either on one of the two lyrics in this selection or on narrative features of the prose.
M. (Sidney) Herbert (The Countess of Pembroke): Psalm 52 (994); Psalm 139 (995)
- c) **First examination**
- 9 a) Shakespeare: Sonnets (1062), numbers 1, 12*, 15*, 30*, 55, 60
- b) : Sonnets (1066), numbers 65*, 73, 87*, 94, 106*, 116.

Seventeenth Century

- c) Seventeenth Century History and Literature
Hutchinson: from *Memoirs of . . . Colonel Hutchinson* (1759)
Halkett: from *The Memoirs* (1764)
Donne: from *An Anatomy of the World* (1289)
Assignment of poem for Argument 2a
- 10 a) Donne: "A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning" (1275); "The Ecstasy" (1276); "Elegy 19: To His Mistress Going to Bed" (1283)
- b) : *Holy Sonnets* (1295), numbers 1, 5, 7, 10, 14
Assignment of poem for Argument 2b
- c) : "The Flea" (1263); "The Sun Rising" (1266); "The Canonization" (1267); "A Lecture upon the Shadow" (1281)
Argument 2a due
- 11 a) Wroth: from *The Countess of Montgomery's Urania* (1453); *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*: numbers 1 and 16 (1457); *A Crown of Sonnets Dedicated to Love*: number 77 (1460)
- b) Lanyer: from *Salve Deus Rex Judeorum* (1314); "The Description of Cooke-ham" (1319)
Argument 2b due

Thanksgiving

- 12 a) Jonson: "To John Donne" (1429); "To Lucy, Countess of Bedford, with Mr. Donne's Satires" (1431); "Inviting a Friend to Supper" (1431); "Song: To Celia" (1436); "A Sonnet to . . . Lady Mary Wroth" (1438); "Still to Be Neat" (1444); "To the Memory of . . . Mr.

William Shakespeare" (1444)

- b) : "To Penshurst" (1434)
- c) Herbert: "The Altar" (1607); "Redemption" (1607); "Easter Wings" (1609); "Jordan (1)" (1611); "Church Monuments" (1612); "The Pulley" (1620)
- 13 a) Herrick: "Delight in Disorder" (1656); "Corinna's Going A-Maying" (1658); "To the Virgins" (1659); "His Prayer to Ben Jonson" (1662); "Upon Julia's Clothes" (1664)
- b) Marvell: "Bermudas" (1698); "A Dialogue Between the Soul and Body" (1699); "To His Coy Mistress" (1703)
- c) : "The Mower Against Gardens" (1706); "The Garden" (1710); "An Horatian Ode" (1712)
- 14 a) Milton: *Lycidas* (1805)
- b) : "How Soon Hath Time" (1826); "When I Consider" (1828)
- c) : *Paradise Lost*, Book 1 (1831); Book 12 (2053-55, lines 552-649)

Final exam at assigned time.

Requirements include

- careful preparation of assignments (You may find much of the literature we study difficult because it's of an unfamiliar kind. You really need, therefore, to schedule **two to three focused hours** to prepare for each class.)
- on-time and regular class attendance (Being on time is important to you and a common courtesy to others in the class. Being present is essential for your learning and that of the rest of us. Because participation in class discussions is so central to our work, more than three absences from class—or lack of punctuality—will begin to affect your final grade.) (5% of final)
- presentation of at least one oral explication (10%)
- thoughtful participation in discussion following an explication (30%)
- announced and unannounced quizzes (Your lowest score will be dropped.) (10%)
- two written arguments (10%; 15%)
- two examinations, one in the 8th week and a final (20%)