

Syllabus: ENG 342

Renaissance Literature



THE TEMPTATION OF EVE
*So saying, her rash hand in evil hour
Forth-reaching to the fruit, she plucked, she eat*

William Blake, *The Temptation of Eve, Paradise Lost*

Immaculata University
SUMMER 2005
Monday, Wednesday 7:15-9:45 PM
Good Counsel, Room 1

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Web Visit our course “blog”
<http://renaissancelit.blogspot.com>

“...[T]he Renaissance is the name of a many-sided but yet united movement, in which the love of the things of the intellect and the imagination for their own sake, the desire for a more liberal and comely way of conceiving life, make themselves felt, urging those who experience this desire to search out first one and then another means of intellectual or imaginative enjoyment, and directing them not only to the discovery of old and forgotten sources of this enjoyment, but to the divination of fresh sources thereof—new experiences, new subjects of poetry, new forms of art.”

Walter Pater, *The Renaissance*

Course Description

The era we'll be studying, spanning roughly 1485 – 1660, is undoubtedly one of the richest periods in English literature, especially in poetry and drama. This is the great age of Spenser, Sidney, Shakespeare, Marlowe, Jonson, Donne, Herbert, Marvell, and Milton, among many others. Sometimes referred to as the "Early Modern Era," it's a period that sees the emergence of a newly invigorated humanism, and a flowering of the arts and sciences greatly inspired by the rediscovery, through new translations, of many influential classical texts in literature, history, and philosophy. However, the Renaissance is not an era of books alone—it's an era of voyages, of exploration, a time when newly discovered continents inspired adventurous romance and futuristic visions of utopia. And most vividly, it's an age of transcendent love sonnets and transcendent religious lyrics, of classically inspired pastorals and epics, infused with equal measures of eroticism and piety. As we study the works of several key writers from this amazing period, we'll hopefully gain insight into their achievement in their own time, as well as what makes them great artists in any age.

Required Text

Logan, George M. and Barbara K. Lewalski, eds. The Norton Anthology of English Literature: The Sixteenth Century/The Early Seventeenth Century. 7th ed. Vol. 1B. New York: Norton, 2000.

Course Components: Reading, Discussing, Writing

The readings are the heart, mind, and soul of our course. You are requested to carefully read each assignment prior to class, even if you personally find it difficult or confusing—stay with the task and note your difficulties, discussion of which are welcomed in class. Along with the literature that excites or intrigues you, or the works you find easy but which leave you indifferent, these challenging texts or passages often become excellent springboards for class discussion. Our readings will be somewhat diverse in range, style, and genre. We'll read much lyric poetry, some epic poetry, and one or two plays, as well as several prose pieces. With some effort we'll discover the threads that tie these readings together into the coherent whole that will shape the course.

Discussion is a term that refers to several different class activities to extend or enhance your thinking about the readings: class-wide, large group discussions; collaborative, small group discussions; and individual response papers, which are meant to be shared with the instructor and potentially with your classmates. Students are expected to attend each class prepared to engage in any of these discussion activities when materials are assigned. Lecture will be interspersed with discussion activities throughout the course. (See below: On Preparation and Participation)

The formal writing assignments (3) for this course will be varied—they will be analytical and response-oriented, and in some cases creative (we'll see). You will be required to develop your own topics based on your own critical interests or the instructor's suggestions. You will be expected to use MLA style documentation when necessary for any formal documentations your papers may require.

The reading, discussion, informal writing, and oral presentation you do throughout the semester will combine to form your **PARTICIPATION** grade at the end of the semester. Absence (aside from the attendance policy) and lack of preparation for any of the assigned classwork affects this portion of your grade. Please be aware that the formal writing assignments are a large part of your semester grade. More than one missing paper is grounds for failure of the course. Your final course grade is calculated as follows:

20%	PAPER #1 (Week 3)
20%	PAPER #2 (Week 5)
25%	INDEPENDENT PROJECT (PAPER #3) (Week 7)
20%	PREPARATION AND ORAL PARTICIPATION IN DISCUSSION
15%	ORAL PRESENTATION (INDEPENDENT PROJECT) (Week 7)

Further Course Information

Attendance Especially because we only meet a total of six sessions, attendance at every session is vital. Students should not miss class unless there is truly an emergency. If you must be absent because of an emergency, contact the instructor as soon as possible and make every effort to avoid being

unprepared for the coming class. Absence does not excuse you from the course requirements and may have a severe impact on your final grade.

On Preparation and Participation Class discussions are more enriching when students have made every effort to engage with the readings before coming to class. It's not always necessary to feel like you have a complete grasp of everything to be "prepared." Preparation means you've made an effort to read with attention and understanding, and you're ready to actively participate in the work of the class by sharing your response, whether in the form of commentary, analysis, or questioning. You may not immediately think so, but from the instructor's point of view, a carefully formulated question—or even an expression of honest bewilderment—can show as much attention and thought and sensitivity as a nuanced analysis; and both are equally valued. The more voices that contribute to our discussions, the richer they'll be.

On Keeping a Reading Journal Before each class period write a minimum of one page of response to the assigned readings. You can focus on an in-depth response to one reading in particular or record your response to several of the works you read. Your response can be personal or critical/analytical—whatever is most meaningful to you. Use the reading journal to reflect on the readings, to record your thoughts, opinions, feelings, and ideas about the material we read. Use it to stay individually active in your engagement with the assigned material. When I read it at the end of the semester, it will help me to gauge your level of involvement beyond what you express orally in class. Although journal writing is considered informal, extremely sloppy writing habits can lead to lazy thinking. If you really want your journal to help you engage the material (and provide a document of that engagement), I'd suggest putting more than cursory effort into your work on it. For evaluation purposes, what matters is how well you kept up with the assignments for each class period (though remember, you don't have to write about *everything* you are reading—you can be selective). Mechanical correctness will count less than clarity, depth, and/or sincerity of expression.

On the Formal Explication Papers The explication papers are due in weeks 3 and 5, though we can maintain flexibility on the exact due dates. The explication papers are opportunities for you to demonstrate your understanding of the work that we cover. A poetry explication is a relatively short analysis which describes the possible meanings and relationships of the words, images, and other small units that make up a literary work. The term "explication" comes from the Latin "explicare," which means "to unfold." When readers explicate a text, they try to unfold or unravel the author's basic meaning, allowing a work to "speak for itself." The process is an excellent analytical exercise as it allows you to move slowly through the poem, paying close attention to individual words, phrases, images, figures of speech, sounds, etc., until you've arrived at an overall understanding of the poem's internal structure, meaning, and/or achievement. Explication provides the close observations that lay the foundation for a strong interpretation, and often the two tasks become intertwined (and if you find yourself moving in that direction, fine).

Synthesis Project The synthesis project asks you to reflect back over the works you've studied in the previous weeks and find an interesting thread (image, theme, motif, style, form, etc.) to tie together three or more works by at least two different authors you studied. The paper should have an introduction which presents your thesis. Development must include citations from the literary works and can optionally contain secondary sources. If you do refer to secondary sources, please remember to cite these sources properly using MLA style documentation.

The Oral Presentation The Oral Presentation is an opportunity for each student to lead the class in a lesson on one of the assigned works in our textbook. You have complete freedom to structure your lesson in any way you see fit. Computer projection will be available in the classroom for students who want to make use of presentation software or any other audio/visual aids, but this is not required. If you are unsure how to structure your presentation, one acceptable plan might be to explicate/interpret the work in much the same way you have structured your explication papers. You need not feel confined to this aim, but it is acceptable. The length of your presentation should be approximately 10 minutes, but you can make your presentation or our general discussion longer if necessary.

Course Outline

This schedule may be subject to change as the course progresses. Also, it may not reflect specific homework assignments announced in class. Changes, if they do occur, will be announced in class and followed by an email, provided you've given me your address. Students who miss class are still responsible for staying abreast of changes or assignments that may have been announced in their absence. Please refer to the Thematic Outline of Readings for specific page assignments for each author listed in the schedule below. A Chronological Outline of Readings is available [online](#).

July 6	<p>Introduction to the course</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Historical background, influences, characteristic features of Renaissance literature (pp. 469-498). • An overview of the major renaissance writers with a brief peek at representative works. • A few words about major works we'll probably have to skip (The Faery Queene, Volpone, Dr. Faustus, etc.)
July 11, 13	<p>Themes: UTOPIA / LOVE: Classical Models and Influences</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excerpts (handout), More, Golding, Drayton, Jonson, Carew, Lovelace, Marvell • Epithalamion: Spenser (868 ff), Suckling (1666) <p>Due: Reading journal / Explication exercise (in class)</p>
July 18, 20	<p>Theme: LOVE: Classical Forms and Influences</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pastoral/Carpe Diem poems: Wyatt, Surrey, Marlowe, Raleigh, Campion, Nashe, Donne, Herrick, Marvell • Narrative Epic: The Faery Queen, Canto I, Book I <p>Due: Reading journal / Explication paper #1 (July 20) / Oral Presentation</p>
July 25, 27	<p>Themes: LOVE: Classical Forms and Influences / The Sonnet and Sonnet Sequences</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drama: Jonson's <i>Volpone</i> (971 ff); Marlowe's <i>Dr. Faustus</i> (990 ff) • The Sonnet and Sonnet Sequences: Petrarchan, Spenserian, Elizabethan, and Religious sonnets <p>Due: Reading journal / Oral Presentation</p>
August 1, 3	<p>Themes: LOVE: The Sonnet and Sonnet Sequences / Further Lyrical Developments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sonnets, cont. Read also Fulke-Greville, Son. 100 (955); Daniel, Son. 46 (965) • Metaphysical Poets: Donne • Cavalier Poets: Herrick, Carew, Suckling, Lovelace, Marvell, Campion, Phillips, Cavendish <p>Due: Reading journal / Explication paper #2 (August 3) / Oral Presentation</p>
August 8, 10	<p>Theme: SPIRITUAL LOVE and religious fervor</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jonson, Donne, Herbert, Vaughn • Fulke Greville ("Chorus Sacerdotum") <p>Due: Reading journal / Explication paper #2 / Oral Presentation</p>
August 15	<p>Theme: Course WRAP-UP (Shakespeare's <i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i> or <i>Merchant of Venice</i>)</p> <p>Due: Portfolio (Reading journal / Explication Papers / Synthesis Paper) and Oral Presentation</p>

<http://renaissancelit.blogspot.com>

The screenshot shows a Mozilla Firefox browser window displaying the homepage of the 'Renaissance English Literature' blog. The browser's address bar shows the URL 'http://renaissancelit.blogspot.com'. The page features a prominent orange header with the title 'Renaissance English Literature'. On the left side, there is a sidebar with sections for 'About Me' (Stacy Esch, United States), 'Course Materials' (ENG342 Syllabus), 'Links' (various academic resources), and 'archives' (June 2005). The main content area displays a series of blog posts:

- Wednesday, June 29, 2005**
Paradise Lost Illustrated
Illustrations by William Blake, Gustave Doré, John Martin, John B. Medina, Edward Burney, Richard Westall, Francis Hayman, and Terrence Lindall.
posted by Stacy Esch @ 12:13 PM 0 comments
- Tuesday, June 28, 2005**
Milton: Paradise Regain'd (full text with notes)
An online reading room for [Paradise Regain'd](#).
posted by Stacy Esch @ 1:15 PM 0 comments
- Milton: Study Guide for Paradise Lost**
An official online [Paradise Lost Study Guide](#).
posted by Stacy Esch @ 1:09 PM 0 comments
- Wednesday, June 22, 2005**
Squashed Philosophers: Thomas Hobbes' LEVIATHAN
Even this amazing [abridged and condensed version of Leviathan](#) is hefty (11,700 words).
posted by Stacy Esch @ 9:09 PM 0 comments
- Ben Jonson (& His Followers)**
A broad overview that serves as a nice introduction to Ben Jonson (it his followers, known as the "Sons of Ben") by [Professor Jennifer Mooney](#), who writes, "Ben Jonson and John Donne, each in his own way, represented in some degree a revolt against or at least a turning away from the Spenserian tradition. The result was decisive for the future of English poetry...."
posted by Stacy Esch @ 7:37 PM 0 comments
- Friday, June 10, 2005**
Shakespeare Online - the Sonnets
A cleanly presented, useful index to the Bard's [Sonnets](#). Much else here for Shakespeare enthusiasts as well.
posted by Stacy Esch @ 10:28 PM 0 comments
- Shakespeare's Sonnets and Then Some**
The [amazing web site of Shakespeare's Sonnets](#) contains riches beyond description. The site design may pose some difficulty, but bear with it. You'll find interesting and helpful commentary provided with each of Shakespeare's sonnets. You can also find other texts of the period presented, including sonnets by Wyatt and Drayton (*idea* is presented in full), as well numerous paintings and sketches of Elizabethan London and its many major players.
posted by Stacy Esch @ 10:11 PM 0 comments
- Sunday, June 05, 2005**
Francesco Petrarch and Laura DeNoves
Here's a site devoted to Francesco [Petrarch](#), the influential Italian poet whose sonnets greatly inspired many of the English poets we're studying. Wyatt, Surrey, Sidney, Spenser, Shakespeare, Drayton . . . (who am I forgetting?) They were all influenced one way or another by this Italian master of the *canzoniere*.
posted by Stacy Esch @ 3:54 PM 0 comments

The bottom of the page features a Blogger logo and the text 'Powered by Blogger'.