

ENGL 3430.002 British Literature to 1780: Performance and Spectatorship in Early British Literature and Culture

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Office hours: Thursdays 3:45-5:45 PM or by appointment

Classroom: LANG 212

Class times: T, Th 9:30-10:50 AM

Course Description: ENGL 3430 is a reading-intensive undergraduate survey designed to familiarize students with authors, texts, themes, and concepts central to medieval, early modern, Restoration, and eighteenth-century British literature. This course will approach early British literature through the lens of performance and spectatorship. Throughout the semester, students will reflect on the scope of performance, the role of spectatorship, and the many ways in which these inform each other in early British poetry, prose, and drama. Students will develop close reading and analytical writing skills while engaging with representative texts of the aforementioned periods (c. 8th-18th centuries).

Required Text: The required text for this course is the *Norton Anthology of English Literature, 10th ed.*, 3 vols, Stephen Greenblatt, gen. editor. All supplementary materials will be made available via Canvas. **Bring your materials to each class period** to receive credit for attendance.

Course Objectives: In this course, we will

- ❖ Learn to understand, interpret, discuss, and write about early British literature ranging from Anglo-Saxon to 18th-century poetry, prose, and drama
- ❖ Develop strong close reading skills that allow us to analyze poetry, prose, and drama in a manner that connects the ideas to the literary and rhetorical devices that convey those ideas
- ❖ Learn to recognize and analyze elements of diction, tone, grammar, figurative language, and allusions and generate arguments about their effect(s) on the texts
- ❖ Gain an understanding of the social, political, economic, historical, aesthetic, and artistic contexts that shape and are shaped by the texts we are reading.

Course Policies:

Attendance and Participation: Regular attendance and active participation are mandatory and comprise a significant portion of your grade. **Students who miss six or more class periods will not be able to pass the course.** Any student who arrives later than 15 minutes into the class, leaves more than 15 minutes early, fails to bring the relevant course materials, uses technology for something other than coursework, or sleeps during class will be marked absent. As per [university policy 06.039](#), absences may be excused (**when students notify instructors in advance**) for the following reasons: a. religious holy day, including travel for that purpose; b. required military service, including travel for that purpose; c. participation in an official university function; d. illness or other extenuating circumstances; e. pregnancy and parenting under Title IX; and f. when the university is officially closed.

You are responsible for all assignments and assigned materials, whether you are in class or not. In the event you miss a class, **contact a classmate** for notes and be sure to check Canvas for any announcements, changes, and updates. I am happy to discuss missed material with you during office hours, but I cannot provide private tutoring via email. Please do not email me to ask if you “missed anything important.” You did. Contact a classmate for notes and/or attend my office hours. This course will be challenging due to both the amount of reading and the difficulty much of that reading presents to a modern reader. Give yourself plenty of time to not only read and take notes on the texts we are covering but to reflect on and analyze them in preparation for

class.

AI Writing Tools: The use of generative AI writing tools (such as ChatGPT, GrammarlyGO, GPT-3, GPT-4, GPT-5, BERT, Quil, and others) is **prohibited** in this class. Assignments for the course have been designed to help you develop as a writer without the use of these technologies. You will generate ideas, read, write, and revise on your own and/or in consultation with peers, me, or Writing Center tutors, and **you will not use AI at any stage of your writing process (i.e., brainstorming, planning, outlining, researching, writing, editing, revising, etc.)**. You are the author of your work for the course, and authorship means you take responsibility for your words and claims. Any use of AI technologies in your work will be considered a violation of UNT's academic integrity policy and addressed accordingly. *This statement has been adapted from Annette Vee, under CC-BY-NC (Creative Commons By-Noncommercial license).

Literature Notes and “Analysis” Websites: Do not consult websites such as SparkNotes, LitCharts, etc. that claim to provide summaries and analysis of literary texts. They are often incorrect, and drawing from them defeats the purpose of assignments that have been designed to help you practice your own literary analysis. **The observations, interpretations, and analysis in your work should be your own.** Students found guilty of plagiarism, consulting literary analysis websites, and/or AI use will receive a zero on the assignment in question and will be reported to the Academic Integrity Office. Consulting ready-made online interpretations or analyses of a text and passing them off as your own observations will be considered cheating and reported accordingly. Focus on **your own** interpretation and analysis.

Assignments: In addition to regular attendance and active participation, students are responsible for reading quizzes, a midterm exam, and two papers. There are three scheduled quizzes in this course, but **more may be added**, particularly if it is clear that students are not completing the assigned reading. Please check our Canvas site for announcements and the most updated course calendar. If you miss a quiz, you will be unable to make it up (**unless you notify me in advance of the class in which the quiz is being taken and I excuse your absence for one of the reasons listed under “Attendance and Participation”**). The midterm exam will feature a combination of multiple choice, passage identification, and short answer questions. The close reading paper will require you to perform a close reading of a poem or passage. The final paper will require you to compose an argumentative essay in response to a given prompt (or to address a prompt of your own design, pending instructor approval). You will receive detailed instructions for each major assignment. The grading breakdown is as follows:

Attendance and Participation	15%
Reading Quizzes (9/16, 10/23, 11/18)	20%
Close Reading Paper (750-1000 words, due 9/23)	15%
Midterm Exam (10/9)	20%
Final Paper (1250-2000 words, due 12/5)	30%

Late work: Assignments must be submitted via Canvas **by 9:30 AM** on the dates specified in the course calendar, with the exception of the Final Paper, which is due by 11:59 PM on 12/5. This is designed to encourage you not to miss class even when you have an assignment due. Any work submitted after its specified deadline will incur a penalty of 5 points per day (including weekends). I cannot promise written feedback on work that is submitted after a deadline.

University Policies:

Disability Accommodations: UNT makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Access (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide a student with an accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding one's specific course needs. Students may request accommodations at any time; however, ODA notices of accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. For additional information see the ODA website at disability.unt.edu.

Academic Integrity and Plagiarism: According to [UNT Policy 06.003, Student Academic Integrity](#), academic dishonesty occurs when students engage in behaviors including but not limited to cheating, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, forgery, plagiarism, and sabotage. Academic integrity violations can include copying a passage from a source verbatim, but they can also include improper or misleading citations, presenting others' ideas as your own, cheating, manipulating a word count, unauthorized use of generative AI writing programs, and more. Please note that all source material must be acknowledged, even if the material is paraphrased. Be careful to always acknowledge the work of other writers, and take the time to work out your thoughts and arguments without copying the work of others. Any student found guilty of an academic integrity violation will receive a zero on the assignment in question for a first offense and an F in the course for a subsequent offense. All work submitted must be written specifically for this class; no submissions from other classes or semesters will be accepted.

Emergency Notification & Procedures: UNT uses a system called Eagle Alert to quickly notify students with critical information in the event of an emergency (i.e., severe weather, campus closing, and health and public safety emergencies like chemical spills, fires, or violence). In the event of a university closure, please refer to Canvas for contingency plans for covering course materials.

Retention of Student Records: Student records pertaining to this course are maintained in a secure location by the instructor of record. All records such as exams, answer sheets (with keys), and written papers submitted during the duration of the course are kept for at least one calendar year after course completion. Course work completed via the Canvas online system, including grading information and comments, is also stored in a safe electronic environment for one year. Students have the right to view their individual record; however, information about students' records will not be divulged to other individuals without proper written consent. Students are encouraged to review the Public Information Policy and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) laws and the University's policy. See UNT Policy 10.10, Records Management and Retention for additional information.

Acceptable Student Behavior: Student behavior that interferes with an instructor's ability to conduct a class or other students' opportunity to learn is unacceptable and disruptive and will not be tolerated in any instructional forum at UNT. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior will be directed to leave the classroom and the instructor may refer the student to the Dean of Students to consider whether the student's conduct violated the Code of Student Conduct. The university's expectations for student conduct apply to all instructional forums, including university and electronic classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. Visit UNT's Code of Student Conduct (<https://policy.unt.edu/policy/07-012>) to learn more.

Course Calendar¹

Anglo-Saxon Literature: Vol. A

Week 1: Introduction

Tuesday 8/19: Course introduction

Thursday 8/21: *Norton, vol. A: The Middle Ages*. "Introduction", p. 3-26; "The Dream of the Rood"

Week 2: Heroes and Onlookers

Tuesday 8/26: *Beowulf*, lines 1-1250

Thursday 8/28: *Beowulf*, lines 1250-2199

Middle English Literature

Week 3: Heroes and Onlookers Contd.

Tuesday 9/2: *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* Fitts 1 and 2

Thursday 9/4: *Sir Gawain* Fitts 3 and 4

Week 4: Spectators as Performers

Tuesday 9/9: "Chaucer" and "Canterbury Tales", p. 256-261; General Prologue

Thursday 9/11: *Canterbury Tales*, The Miller's Prologue and Tale

Week 5: Spectators as Performers, Contd.

Tuesday 9/16: **Reading Quiz 1**; *Canterbury Tales*, The Wife of Bath's Prologue and Tale

Thursday 9/18: **Manuscript Workshop: Meet in Willis Library, Room 443 (on the 4th floor)**

Week 6: Performance, Ritual, and Religion

Tuesday 9/23: **Close Reading Paper due via Canvas**; "Julian of Norwich", p. 430-431; all selections from *A Book of Showings*

Thursday 9/25: "Margery Kempe", p. 442-443; all selections from *The Book of Margery Kempe*

Week 7: Mystery Plays

Tuesday 9/30: "Mystery Plays", p. 465-466; *The Second Shepherds' Play*, p.467-494

Thursday 10/2: *York Play of the Crucifixion*, p. 457-465

Early Modern/Renaissance Literature: Vol. B

Week 8: Structured Spectatorship

Tuesday 10/7: "The Sixteenth Century", p. 3-33; Wyatt, "Whoso List to Hunt" (121), "They Flee from Me" (125); Marlowe, "The Passionate Shepherd to His Love" (678); Raleigh, "The Nymph's Reply to the Shepherd" (527); Sidney, *Astrophil and Stella* (starting p. 586) sonnets 1, 7, 28, 71; Spenser, *Amoretti* (starting p. 486) sonnets 1, 34, 54, 75

Thursday 10/9: **Midterm in class**

Week 9: Structured Spectatorship, Contd.

Tuesday 10/14: "The Early Seventeenth Century" (891-917); Shakespeare (starting p. 722) sonnets 18, 20, 130, 138

Thursday 10/16: Donne (starting p. 920) "The Flea", Holy Sonnets (starting p. 960) 1, 10, 14

¹ This schedule is subject to change according to the pace at which we move through these texts. Always check Canvas for announcements about and updates to this course calendar.

Week 10: Performing Power and Authority

Tuesday 10/21: Wroth (starting p. 1110) sonnets from *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus* 1, 16, 25, 39; Herrick, "To the Virgins, to Make Much of Time" (1312); Marvell, "To His Coy Mistress" (1346)

Thursday 10/23 **Reading Quiz 2**; "Mary Tudor" (194-195) and "The Oration of Queen Mary in the Guildhall, on the First of February, 1554" (198-199); "Elizabeth I" (221-222), "Speech to the House of Commons, January 28, 1563" (225-226), "Speech to the Troops at Tilbury" (234-235), "The 'Golden Speech'" (235-238)

Week 11: Performing Power and Authority, Contd.

Tuesday 10/28: Shakespeare, *Othello* Acts 1 and 2

Thursday 10/30: Shakespeare, *Othello* Act 3

Week 12: Performing Loss and Grief

Tuesday 11/4: Shakespeare, *Othello* Acts 4 and 5

Thursday 11/6: Jonson, "On My First Son" (1092); Herrick, "Upon the Loss of His Mistresses" (1307); Philips, "On the Death of My First and Dearest Child, Hector Phillips" (1338-1339); Milton, "Lycidas" (1467-1473)

Please note: **Friday, 11/7** is the deadline to drop a course with a W.

Restoration and Eighteenth-Century Literature: Vol. C

Week 13: Performing Loss and Grief, Contd. and Performing Criticism

Tuesday 11/11: "The Restoration and the Eighteenth Century" (3-31); Gray, "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard" (994-997); Goldsmith "The Deserted Village" (1008-1018)

Thursday 11/13: Rochester, "The Disabled Debauchee" (123-124), "The Imperfect Enjoyment" (124-126); Behn, "The Disappointment" (136-139); Astell, from *Some Reflections on Marriage* (249-252 and 965-969)

Week 14: Performing Criticism, Contd.

Tuesday 11/18: **Reading Quiz 3**; Dryden, "Mac Flecknoe" (62-68), "A Discourse Concerning the Original and Progress of Satire" (83-85); Swift, "A Description of a City Shower" (256-258), "A Modest Proposal" (454-460)

Thursday 11/20: Pope, "Epistle to a Lady" (643-649); Ingram, "An Epistle to Mr. Pope" (650-653)

Week 15: Thanksgiving Break - No class meetings

Tuesday 11/25: No class meeting

Thursday 11/27: No class meeting

Week 16: Performing Criticism, Contd.

Tuesday 12/2: Pope, "The Rape of the Lock" (504-525)

Thursday 12/4: Course summary

Final paper: due via Canvas by 11:59 PM on Friday 12/5/24

If you would like me to feature a photo of your pet in a PowerPoint this semester, send pictures to Lauren.Rogener@unt.edu. No insects, please.

Cornelius



This syllabus is subject to change throughout the semester at the instructor's discretion. It is your responsibility to check Canvas and your UNT email account for announcements and updates. Don't let Cornelius down.