BRITISH AND IRISH LITERATURE FROM 1780

# English 3440.001, Fall 2025

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Office Hours: T/TR, 1:00-2:00; also by appointment.

COURSE DESCRIPTION: Are you interested in the pursuit of truth, self-knowledge, and beauty in a world fractured by contending voices? What about the promotion of social justice and democracy in a diverse society? Or weighing the consequences of empire? How about achieving a healthy work/life balance? Would you like to know how writers living in Britain and Ireland wrestled with such questions during the last 250 years? If your answers are yes, this course is for you. Featured writers include: William Blake; Mary Wollstonecraft; Elizabeth Barrett Browning; Charles Dickens; Bernard Shaw; Virginia Woolf; Hanif Kureishi; Zadie Smith; and more.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Class Participation and Attendance

2 Essays, 1000 words minimum: 9/23 and 10/23

3 Unit Exams: 9/11, 10/19, 11/6

Final (consisting of a 4th Unit Exam, plus a comprehensive component), 12/11, 8:00 am

GRADING: Class participation and attendance will be worth 10 points, with 5 of these points based on your performance during Units 1 and 2 and the other 5 based on Units 3 and 4. The essays will be worth 15 points apiece (30 points total). Unit exams 1-3 will be worth 14 points each, and the final exam (including Unit Exam 4) will be worth 18 points. At the end of the term, those students with 90 or more points will receive As, those with 80 or more Bs, etc. Students who cheat on their exams or who plagiarize or rely on AI when writing their essays will fail the course. Late essays will be penalized as I think appropriate.

ATTENDANCE POLICY: Students may miss 2 classes without explanation or reduction of their grade. Additional unexcused absences will result in the loss of 1 point per class day missed, deducted from the class participation and attendance grade. A documented medical excuse will be required from anyone who wishes to make up a missed exam. You may erase up to 2 absences by having 15-minute conversations with me during office hours on a topic or topics of your choice.

ELECTRONIC DEVICES: Use of phones, tablets, laptops, headphones, etc., is not permitted. Class time is for concentrating our attention on the texts we are reading *and on each other*.

BASIC TEXTS:

*The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, 10th edition, volumes D, E, and F (the 9th edition is also perfectly acceptable)

Charles Dickens, *Hard Times* (Norton, 2016)

**Important Note:** you will need physical copies of these books, and you will need to bring the relevant book to each class session.

COURSE CALENDAR:

**Enlightenment, Revolution, Romanticism**

8/19: Overview

William Blake, “All Religions Are One” and “There is No Natural Religion” (both

versions)

8/21: Blake, *Songs of Innocence and Experience*

8/26: Blake, *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, Plates 3-11, pp. 160-63 (pp. 150-53 in the 9th

edition)

8/28: William Wordsworth, “Goody Blake and Harry Gill,” “Simon Lee,” “We Are Seven,”

“Lines Written in Early Spring,” and “The Thorn.” Also, excerpts from “Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*,” pp. 304-10 (pp. 293-99 in the 9th edition)

9/2: Wordsworth, “Lines Composed a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey”

9/4: Mary Wollstonecraft, excerpt from *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, pp. 221-42

(pp. 213-32 in the 9th edition)

Anna Letitia Barbauld, “The Rights of Woman”

9/9: John Keats, “La Belle Dame sans Merci”

Letitia Elizabeth Landon, “The Fairy of the Fountains”

9/11: **Unit 1 Exam**

**Science, Empire, Labor, Marriage: Victorian Literature**

9/16: Overview

Elizabeth Barrett Browning, selections, pp. 114-16 and 124-38 (pp. 1128-30 and 1138-

1152 in the 9th edition)

9/18: Alfred, Lord Tennyson, selections from *In Memoriam A. H. H.*, especially introduction,

and poems 7, 55, 56, 78, and epilogue

Charles Darwin, excerpt from *The Descent of Man*

9/23: Tennyson, *In Memoriam*, continued, plus “Ulysses” and “The Charge of the Light

Brigade”

Rudyard Kipling, “The White Man’s Burden” and “If”

**Essay 1 due**

9/25: Charles Dickens, *Hard Times*

9/30: Dickens, *Hard Times*, continued

Friedrich Engels, excerpt from *The Great Towns*

10/2: Bernard Shaw, *Mrs. Warren's Profession*

10/7: Shaw, *Mrs. Warren's Profession*, continued

10/9: **Unit 2 Exam**

**“Things Fall Apart”:** **The Modern Era**

10/14: Overview

Thomas Hardy, “Neutral Tones,” “Drummer Hodge,” and “Channel Firing”

Wilfred Owen, “Dulce Et Decorum Est”

10/16: W. B. Yeats, “The Lake Isle of Innisfree,” “Adam’s Curse,” and “A Coat” “The Second Coming,” and “Easter, 1916”

10/21: Yeats, “The Second Coming” and “Easter, 1916”

10/23: James Joyce, “The Dead”

**Essay 2 due**

10/28: Virginia Woolf, *Mrs. Dalloway*

10/30: Woolf, *Mrs. Dalloway*, continued

11/4: Woolf, *Mrs. Dalloway*, continued

11/6: **Unit 3 Exam**

**Post-War and Contemporary Writing**

11/11: Overview

W. H. Auden, “Musée des Beaux Arts” and “In Memory of W. B. Yeats”

11/13: Samuel Beckett, *Waiting for Godot*

11/18: Beckett, *Waiting for Godot,* continued

11/20: Philip Larkin, “High Windows,” “Sad Steps,” and “This Be the Verse”

Carol Ann Duffy, “Warming Her Pearls”

11/25: **Thanksgiving Break: No Class**

11/27: **Thanksgiving Break: No Class**

12/2: Claude McKay, “Old England”

Louise Bennett, “Jamaica Language,” “Dry-Foot Bwoy,” and “Colonization in Reverse”

Grace Nichols, “Epilogue,” “The Fat Black Woman Goes Shopping,” and “Wherever I Hang”

Linton Kwesi Johnson, “Inglan Is a Bitch”

12/4: Hanif Kureishi, “My Son the Fanatic”

Zadie Smith, “The Waiter’s Wife”

12/11: **Final Exam**, 8:00 to 10:00 am