2019 – 2020

ENGLISH LITERATURE

THIRD YEAR CORE PERIOD COURSES

(These courses are elective and each is worth 20 credits)

(Note: Only Single Honours English Literature or Scottish Literature or Joint English and Scottish Literature students are eligible to take these courses)
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### SEMESTER TWO

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* Courses with an asterisk have a Scottish emphasis.
Tragedy engages with some of the most urgent, as well as enduring, problems that societies and individuals face. The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were one of the great periods of tragic composition and this course will explore some of its most significant examples. The course will stress the variety of tragic modes--including revenge drama, historical tragedy, closet theatre, tragi-comedy and domestic tragedy—as well as the range of theatrical contexts and staging practices that developed across the Elizabethan and Jacobean period. In tragic drama, early modern dramatists explored how different societies experienced crisis and the political and ethical problems this exposed: questions of power and sovereignty, justice and injustice, mortality and loss, sexual hierarchy and social inequality, political conformity and resistance, liberty and oppression. The course will consider how dramatists responded to these key concerns and it will also examine different critical and conceptual understandings of tragedy.

Seminar Schedule

Week 1: What is tragedy?
Reading: extract from Terry Eagleton, *Sweet Violence: The Idea of the Tragic* (on Learn)

Forms of revenge

Week 2: Thomas Kyd, *The Spanish Tragedy*
Week 3: Shakespeare, *Hamlet*
Week 4: Thomas Middleton (?), *The Revenger’s Tragedy*

Transgressive subjects

Week 5: Christopher Marlowe, *Edward II*
Week 6: Anonymous, *Arden of Faversham*
Week 7: Elizabeth Cary, *The Tragedy of Mariam*

Week 8: Essay Completion Week

Power and sexuality

Week 9: John Webster, *The Duchess of Malfi*
Week 10: Middleton, *Women Beware Women*
Week 11: John Ford, ‘*Tis Pity She’s a Whore*
Primary Texts


Secondary Reading


Saints and Sinners: Voicing Belief, Doubt, and Dissent in Medieval English Literature

This course introduces students to a range of medieval literary texts that explore questions of religious faith and spirituality, and that challenge preconceived and simplistic notions of the relationship between Church, community, and culture in the period. While the medieval Church sought to impose a certain degree of dogmatic uniformity, the chosen texts suggest that it did not always function in a monolithic or rigidly coercive way. Instead, literature opened up a space in which doubts about doctrine were voiced, and assumptions about authority and hierarchy were open to question.

The course primarily focuses on fourteenth- and fifteenth-century Middle English literature, and encompasses a wide range of literary forms, each of which explores different aspects of contemporary faith and spirituality. For instance, amongst the issues raised by the texts is the centrality of the Virgin Mary in medieval Catholic belief, and the significance of her perpetual virginity. In their treatment of Mary’s sexuality, medieval texts are alive to the human – even comic – implications of her virginal state while still revering its theological import and emotional power. Another area of belief opened up by the texts, and one that may also seem remote to a modern readership, is the centrality of saints in medieval religion, and the reciprocal, even companionable relationship between the living and the dead that a belief in saints necessarily implies. Belief in saints enabled medieval Catholicism to provide its adherents with a source of comfort and consolation for the anxieties raised by loss, bereavement, and death. But literature also offered a forum in which writers could criticise and dissent from received ideas and sources of authority. Ecclesiastical figures found themselves subject to satirical attack in texts which sought to expose the corruption and hypocrisy of the Church, and which in some instances even questioned its claims to power and authority.

Learning Outcomes
Students who have successfully completed this course should have acquired a knowledge of a number of key Middle English texts, and an understanding of how these works engage with contemporary religious debates and ideas. By the end of the course, students should also be familiar with the ways in which both religious scepticism and religious fervour come to be expressed through literary texts, and how doubts and ideals tend to be articulated in terms of contemporary social, political and economic models.

Primary Texts

Seminar Schedule

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<th>Introduction: The Wilton Diptych and The Dream of Innocent III</th>
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<td>Week 2</td>
<td>The Sacred and the Secular: Chaucer, The General Prologue to The Canterbury Tales</td>
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<td>Week 3</td>
<td>Saints’ Lives: Chaucer, The Second Nun’s Tale and The Prioress’ Tale</td>
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<td>Week 4</td>
<td>Hagio graphical Romance: Chaucer, The Man of Law’s Tale and The Clerk’s Tale</td>
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<td>Week 5</td>
<td>Dissenting Women: Chaucer, Wife of Bath’s Prologue</td>
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<td>Week 6</td>
<td>The Damned and the Saved: Mankind and Everyman</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 7</td>
<td>Anti-Clerical Satire I: Chaucer, The Pardoner’s Tale</td>
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<td>Week 8</td>
<td>Essay Completion Week</td>
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<td>Week 9</td>
<td>Anti-Clerical Satire II: Chaucer, The Friar’s Tale and The Summoner’s Tale</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 10</td>
<td>Female Mysticism: The Book of Margery Kempe</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 11</td>
<td>Mercy and Justice: (Reading for this week will be in the form of photocopies of a shorter work – St Erkenwald – and short extracts from Nicholas Love’s Mirror of the Blessed Life of Jesus Christ and Jacobus of Voragine’s Golden Legend)</td>
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Secondary Reading

Further reading will be suggested at the seminars. But in preparation for the course, as well as reading as many of the primary texts as possible, you may find the following critical reading useful.

- Patrick Geary, *Living with the Dead in the Middle Ages* (Cornell University Press, 1994)
- Thomas J. Heffernan, *Sacred Biography: Saints and Their Biographers in the Middle Ages* (Oxford University Press, 1988)
- R. P. Miller, *Chaucer: Sources and Backgrounds* (Oxford University Press, 1977)
- Jaroslav Pelikan, *Mary through the Centuries: Her Place in the History of Culture* (Yale University Press, 1996)
The Canterbury Tales

"whoso list [this story] not yheere,
Turne over the leef and chese another tale;
For he shal fynde ynowe, grete and smale,
Of storial thyng."

The Canterbury Tales is both one of the most accessible and also one of the most challenging works of medieval literature. It offers a rich and varied story collection, within the framework of a social and spiritual pilgrimage. The individual stories spread across a wide spectrum of tone, and of genre, woven by parallel and contrast, theme and narration, into an intricate and complex whole.

The aim of the course is to explore a range of different individual tales, within the context of the work as a whole. So it will look at the different narrative kinds and modes used by the pilgrim storytellers: romances, parodies, farcical fabliaux, comic fables, and moral and religious tales. Among the themes that will be explored are the recurrent and insistent focus of the tales on gender relations, as well as on courtly love and romantic desire, and the strikingly different responses of men and women to the institution of marriage.

But in addition to the tales’ engagement with the social and cultural life of the time, they also draw attention to themselves as narratives, and in so doing both reflect upon and question the nature of storytelling itself. This literary self-consciousness – which is both playful and sophisticated is central to The Canterbury Tales, and will be one of the central concerns of the course. Moreover, in the collection overall, the social and cultural significance of fourteenth-century pilgrimage interacts with the literary notion of the quest, and the ultimate spiritual significance of pilgrimage itself. And throughout the duration of the course we will examine the different ways in which literary and religious models and idea overlap and intersect.

Seminar Schedule

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<th>Week 1</th>
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<td>Week 2</td>
<td><em>The General Prologue</em></td>
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<td>Week 3</td>
<td>Government, Philosophy, Love: <em>The Knight’s Tale I</em></td>
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<td>Week 4</td>
<td>The Gods, Death and Destiny: <em>The Knight’s Tale II</em></td>
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<td>Week 5</td>
<td>Farce, Parody and Story-Twinning: <em>The Miller’s Tale, The Reeve’s Tale</em></td>
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<td>Week 6</td>
<td>Romance, Love, Marriage: <em>The Franklin’s Tale</em></td>
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<td>Week 7</td>
<td>Feminism and Antifeminism I: <em>The Wife of Bath’s Prologue and Tale</em></td>
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Reading

The best possible preparation will be to read a selection of The Canterbury Tales so that you begin to get a sense of their range and the pleasures and challenges they offer. The edition to use is The Riverside Chaucer, ed LD Benson (1988). It would be a good idea to read the General Prologue to the tales, and then any or all of the following:


If you have read any Chaucer before you will know that it is not really as difficult as it may at first look: the spelling is more unfamiliar than the language itself. If you feel you need help then a good approachable book would be David Burnley, A Guide to Chaucer's Language (1983) (there is also a section on language in the Riverside Chaucer).

Reading tales is more important than reading critics at this stage, but if you would like to begin engaging with various critical ideas and issues try Helen Cooper, The Canterbury Tales (Oxford Guides to Chaucer) 1996; The Cambridge Chaucer Companion, edited by Piero Boitani and Jill Mann, 1986; or Steven Rigby, Chaucer in Context.

Texts:

The dreamer in Langland’s long 14th century allegorical poem of spiritual pilgrimage, *Piers Plowman* opens the poem with a vision of the world. He sees the earth poised between the Tower of Truth in the East and the Valley of Death in the West:

A fair feeld ful of folk fond I ther bitwene  
Of alle manere of men, the meene and the riche,  
Werchynge and wandrynge as the world asketh.

As this image shows, medieval conceptions of the world and of humanity’s operation in that world, rest on imaginative assumptions which are often very different from those of today. This course will introduce a varied range of fourteenth and fifteenth century English and Scottish literary texts: allegory, romance, dream vision, meditation, lyric and drama. Through these texts it will begin to explore the medieval imaginative models of the physical and metaphysical world, considering issues such as society, the body, gender, God, love and death. Visual images and other kinds of writing and commentary will be considered alongside the literary texts, to develop an understanding of the imaginative world which the literature both emerged from and helped to shape.

Sample Seminar schedule

1. **Introduction:** Image, Sign and Allegory: the World as Book
   
2. **The Body:** Chaucer, *The Miller’s Prologue and Tale*;  
   Henryson, *The Paddock and the Mouse*.

3. **Society:** *The Canterbury Tales*, General Prologue;  
   Lyndsay *Ane Satyre of the Thrie Estaitis* (extracts).

4. **God:** (Devotion) Julian of Norwich, *Revelations*;  
   Scottish Passion lyrics; York *Crucifixion* play

5. **God:** (Mystery) *Cloud of Unknowing*;  
   Henryson, *The Preiching of the Swallow*

6. **Love:** Chaucer, *Parliament of Fowls*;  
   Dunbar, *The Goldyn Targe*; lyrics.

7. **Woman:** *Wife of Bath’s Prologue and Tale*;  
   Dunbar, *Tretis of the Tua Marriit Wemen and the Wedo*;  
   Henryson, *Garmont of Good Ladies*; lyrics

8. **Essay completion week**

9. **Ideas of Reading:** Extracts supplied

10. **Animals:** *Sir Isumbras*;  
    Henryson *Fables*; Aberdeen Bestiary
11. Death: *The Pardoner’s Prologue and Tale*

*Everyman*; Dunbar, ‘Lament for the Makaris’;

Henryson, ‘Ressonyng betuix Dethe and Man’

**Course text**


**Recommended:**


**Reading ahead**

Full reading suggestions will be made during the course, but in preparation, apart from reading ahead of any of the primary texts, any of the following critical texts may be useful:


# THIRD YEAR CORE PERIOD COURSES

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Early Modern Comedy

This course focuses on comic writing for the English stage during one of its most exuberantly creative periods. Beginning with the romantic comedy of Shakespeare and concluding with some of the most daringly sceptical drama of the Restoration period, the course explores the varieties of comic theatre developed over the seventeenth century, including festive comedy, the carnivalesque, fable, city comedy, and different modes of satire. In doing so, it examines the comic engagement with a range of moral, social and political debates and conflicts. It also reads the plays in the light of theories and critical accounts of the purposes and workings of comedy, as well as in the context of the very different social and staging conditions obtaining at either end of the century.

**Syllabus**

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<td>Lyly, <em>Endymion</em></td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Shakespeare, <em>A Midsummer Night’s Dream</em></td>
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<td>Dekker, <em>The Shoemaker’s Holiday</em></td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Jonson, <em>Epicene</em></td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>FESTIVAL OF CREATIVE LEARNING (no classes)</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Middleton and Dekker, <em>The Roaring Girl</em></td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Middleton, <em>A Chaste Maid in Cheapside</em></td>
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<td>ESSAY COMPLETION WEEK</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Restoration Comedy</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>Wycherley, <em>The Country Wife</em></td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>Etheredge, <em>The Man of Mode</em></td>
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<td>Behn, <em>The Rover</em></td>
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Reading List

Compulsory

- William Shakespeare, As You Like It (Oxford)
- Aphra Behn, The Rover (New Mermaids)
- Gamini Salgado, ed. Three Restoration Comedies (Penguin)

Recommended

- Matthew Bevis, Comedy (OUP)
- Simon Critchley, On Humour (Routledge)
- Dustin Griffin, Satire: a Critical Reintroduction (UP Kentucky)
- Penny Gay, The Cambridge Introduction to Shakespeare's Comedies (CUP)
- Alexander Leggatt, The Cambridge Companion to Shakespearean Comedy (CUP)
- R. W. Maslen, Shakespeare and Comedy (Thomson)
- Alexander Leggatt, Introduction to English Renaissance Comedy (MUP)
- Rick Bowers, Radical Comedy in Early Modern England (Ashgate)
- Adam Zucker, The Places of Wit in Early Modern English Comedy (CUP)
- C. L. Barber, Shakespeare's Festive Comedy (Princeton)
- Richard Bevis, English Drama: Restoration and Eighteenth Century, 1660-1789 (Longman)
- Deborah Payne Fisk, The Cambridge Companion to English Restoration Theatre (CUP)
- Elizabeth Howe, The First English Actresses: Women and Drama 1660-1700 (CUP)
- Steven Zwicker, The Cambridge Companion to English Literature 1650-1740 (CUP)
Romanticism: Themes, Genres and Contexts *

This course provides students with a broad, varied and yet detailed exploration of British Romantic literature by examining a number of its distinctive genres addressed through related themes and contexts.

Week 1. **Introduction to Romanticism**
William Wordsworth, from ‘Preface’ to *Lyrical Ballads* (1800)
Samuel Taylor Coleridge, from *Biographia Literaria* (1817)
John Keats, from *Letters*

Week 2. **Apocalypse and the Sublime**
Edmund Burke, from *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1759);
Anna Barbauld, ‘Epistle to Wilberforce’ (1792);
William Blake, from *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* (1790); *Visions of the Daughters of Albion* (1794).

Week 3. **Blank-verse autobiography**
Charlotte Smith, *The Emigrants* (1793);
William Wordsworth, from *The Prelude* (1805).

Week 4. **The Domestic Novel**
Jane Austen, *Sense and Sensibility* (1811)

Week 5. **The Modern Ballad**
Walter Scott, from *The Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border* (1802–3).

Week 6. NO CLASSES - FESTIVAL OF CREATIVE LEARNING

Week 7. **The Ode I**

Week 8. **The Historical Novel**
Walter Scott, *The Heart of Midlothian* (1818)

Week 9. ESSAY COMPLETION WEEK

Week 10: **The Ode II**
P.B. Shelley, ‘Mont Blanc’ (1817), John Keats, ‘To Autumn’ (1819).

Week 11: **The Orient**
Charles Lamb, ‘Old China’ (1823)
Samuel Taylor Coleridge, ‘Kubla Khan’ (1816)
Byron, *The Giaour* (1813)
Week 12: **Variations on the Gothic**


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**Reading List**

**Compulsory Primary Texts**


Duncan Wu, ed. *Romanticism: An Anthology*. 4th edition. Oxford: Blackwell, 2012. This is the set text for the poetry on the course. Any other texts (from Scott’s *Minstrelsy*, for example) will be supplied on LEARN.

**Recommended Reading:**


-----, *Poetic Form and British Romanticism* (1990)


Ian Duncan, Scott’s Shadow: The Novel in Romantic Edinburgh (2007)


Mary Favret and Nicola Watson, eds., *At the Limits of Romanticism: Essays in Cultural, Feminist, and Materialist Criticism* (1994)


------, Wordsworth's Poetry 1787-1814 (1964)


Uttara Natarajan, 'The Veil of Familiarity: Romantic Philosophy and the Familiar Essay,'

Studies in Romanticism 42.1 (2003): 27-44


Andrew Stauffer, Anger, Revolution, and Romanticism (2005)

Raymond Williams, Culture and Society 1780-1950 (1963)
English Literature Third Year
Semester Two Core Period Course

Subjectivity, Modernity and the Novel 1660-1800

This course is designed to explore the issues surrounding the emergence of ‘the novel’ as a distinct form in Britain in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. We will trace the emergence of the oppositions between the fictive and the historical as two realms with their own distinct claims to ‘truth’, and between ‘realism’ and ‘romance’ as two different types of fiction, as the grounding conditions for the emergence of the novel. We will also be considering the political and religious values at stake in these oppositions, by relating prose fiction to the political and economic developments of the period.

Syllabus:

Week 1. Introduction
Week 2. Anon., *The Life of Lazarillo de Tormes and of His Fortunes and Adversities* (1554) and Francisco de Quevedo, *The Swindler* (1626)
Week 3. John Bunyan, *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners* (1666)
Week 6. NO CLASSES - FESTIVAL OF CREATIVE LEARNING
Week 7. Samuel Richardson, *Pamela* (1740)
Week 9. ESSAY COMPLETION WEEK
Week 12. Frances Burney, *Evelina* (1776)

Reading List

Compulsory:

Recommended: