English 221.500: British Literature to 1800

Semester: Spring 2019  
Instructor: Rhanda McGee  
Section: 500  
Office: 257 Liberal Arts North  
Format: online; no face-to-face meetings  
Office Hours: MWF 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.  
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Course Description
According to the SFA General Bulletin, English 221 is a “survey of major authors and literary movements/paradigms in British literature from the Anglo-Saxon period through the eighteenth-century. Prerequisites: 6 semester hours of freshman English.” As a broad historical survey, this class focuses on the evolution of literary genres, a variety of exemplary texts, and the interrelatedness of literature and culture. Due to the scope of this survey, our readings represent highlights of various periods rather than a thorough examination of any one era or genre.

We will consider three major periods:

1. The Medieval Period (or Middle Ages), from about 700 to 1485
2. The Renaissance and Early Seventeenth Century (or the Early Modern Period), from 1485-1660.
3. The Restoration and the “Long” Eighteenth Century, from 1660-1800

A major theme that we will consider across all readings is that of Identity. How does the literature we read represent the individual within the context of his or her culture? Identity involves not only gender but age, nationality, race, and social class; occupation, political allegiance, and religious affiliation; spirituality, family, and personality traits. A second theme we will consider is that of Disguise, the masking of identity.
In terms of workload, this course will involve a substantial amount of reading and writing. You will have reading assignments every week. Be sure that you budget plenty of time for reading on a regular basis outside of class. I will monitor the accomplishment of reading assignments through quizzes and discussion boards, plus you will write a formal capstone essay at the end of the semester.

**Required Texts**


**Assignments**
Course assignments will be weighted in this way:
- Discussion Boards - 35%
- Replies - 10%
- Quizzes - 35%
- Capstone Essay - 20%

**Discussions**
You are required to participate in weekly discussions on D2L. The Discussion area is our “classroom” where we talk about the readings. In your discussions, you are required to articulate detailed responses. Each discussion will include multiple questions and will contain other instructions, such as requirements for including quotes, meeting a particular length of paragraphs, and sometimes including visual images. The writing style for the discussions is less formal, more conversational, than an essay, but discussion posts should be written in complete sentences without spelling errors. Strive for clarity, detail, and insightfulness. Note that you can edit a discussion post even after you have posted it.

For each discussion, you will start your own thread in which you compose and post a response directly to the discussion topic. If the discussion topic contains multiple questions, you should number your answers within your post. In addition to your own post, you are required to write at least one reply to a post from one of your peers. Both your threads and your replies should demonstrate that you have read the text closely and thoughtfully.

You will receive two grades for each discussion: one for your main thread and one for your reply. You only have to post one reply, but it must engage with your peer’s comments in a thoughtful manner. Of course, you can reply to more than one person’s post if you like.

**Quizzes**
Quizzes are designed to monitor your reading progress and attentiveness to online materials, handouts, and lectures. Quizzes may address any material covered in the primary texts and course materials. Quizzes include questions pertaining to the posted Content of each module, as well as to
the Primary texts that are assigned, so read carefully and be sure to review the D2L Content for each module.

**Capstone Essay**
You will write a 5-page capstone essay, which includes literary analysis and personal response. A detailed assignment sheet is provided in the Capstone Unit.

**Course Schedule**
See Course Timeline (next topic in D2L)

**Learning Outcomes**
Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:
- Identify important authors, works, and genres of the three major periods of early British literature.
- Describe the cultural contexts of the three major periods of early British literature.
- Describe the characteristics of the epic genre and demonstrate detailed understanding of several early British epics.
- Recognize and analyze the elements of lyric poetry and demonstrate familiarity with specific sonnets and other lyric verse forms from the three major periods.
- Describe several genres of early British drama and demonstrate detailed understanding of several important early British plays.
- Describe the characteristics of selected early British prose fiction forms and demonstrate detailed understanding of several tales and early novels.

**Grading**
The final grade for this course is based on your overall percentage average. For discussions and papers, I calculate grades on a 100 point scale. For quizzes, I use a 10 point scale. According to university policy, your final grade for the course will consist of a letter grade only (no plus or minus). All of your writing for this course should adhere to the rules of standard English grammar, punctuation, and spelling (American). Here is a general description of my letter grades:

**A – 90-100%.** On discussions and quizzes, this grade denotes correct, complete, clear, thorough, insightful, and thought-provoking responses. On formal essays, this grade denotes superior composition, content, style, and mechanics; thoughtfulness, originality, and excellence in topic development, including vividly concrete details, insightful examples, and sophisticated analysis and synthesis of subject matter. Writing is mechanically pristine with only the smallest grammatical defects present (such as a missing comma or a single typo).

**B – 80-89%.** On discussions and quizzes, this grade denotes correct, complete, and thorough responses. On formal essays, this grade denotes very good composition, content, style and mechanics; thoughtful and adequate topic development; clear and complete details and examples; and consistency in style. Slight problems may be present in one or two areas, but the paper shows strength in others. The paper is not heavily impacted by mechanical errors.

**C – 70-79%.** On discussions and quizzes, this grade denotes correct and fairly coherent responses, which answer the prompt but may be lacking in completeness. On formal essays, this grade
denotes acceptable content, but style, organization, and/or mechanics are uneven and need revision, AND/OR the composition does not sufficiently consider the subject matter as evidenced by inadequate topic development and lack of concrete details, AND/OR the ethos of the writer is damaged by mechanical errors.

D - 60-69%. This grade denotes below average work, but acknowledges that a full attempt was made. On discussions and quizzes, this grade denotes partially correct but inadequate responses. On formal essays, the paper (whether through lack of effort, revision, editing, or some other reason) is not clear or focused. The paper is lacking in content, is poorly organized, and/or incoherent due to grammatical and mechanical issues.

F - Below 60%. This grade denotes below average, unsatisfactory work that is incomplete or does not answer the assignment.

Participation and Punctuality
Regular class participation is required. I adhere to the Course Timeline, so pay attention to the opening and closing dates for each unit. I suggest you print out the course timeline and keep it visible. Discussions and Quizzes are available for the duration of the unit. I will not reopen Units, quizzes, or discussions for you unless you provide me a very good reason. If you are unable to complete an assignment on time, you must make arrangements with me in advance of when the assignment is due. If I agree with you that you have a compelling reason for missing a deadline, I will grant you a short extension. In the case of unforeseen lateness, contact me as soon as possible. For unexcused late work, I will deduct 5 points for every day of work-week in which it is late.

Other Course Policies
The number one rule in my course is to treat others respectfully. I welcome lively discussion, but please be mindful about your statements. We will sometimes need to discuss subjects that some may find sensitive, such as religion, politics, sexuality, and violence. Feel free to articulate in your discussion posts, but please be sensitive to readers who potentially hold opposing viewpoints. I reserve the right to delete anything that I deem inappropriate from the course page.

Academic Integrity (A-9.1)
Academic integrity is a responsibility of all university faculty and students. Faculty members promote academic integrity in multiple ways including instruction on the components of academic honesty, as well as abiding by university policy on penalties for cheating and plagiarism.

Definition of Academic Dishonesty
Academic dishonesty includes both cheating and plagiarism. Cheating includes but is not limited to (1) using or attempting to use unauthorized materials to aid in achieving a better grade on a component of a class; (2) the falsification or invention of any information, including citations, on an assigned exercise; and/or (3) helping or attempting to help another in an act of cheating or plagiarism. Plagiarism is presenting the words or ideas of another person as if they were your own. Examples of plagiarism are (1) submitting an assignment as if it were one’s own work when, in fact, it is at least partly the work of another; (2) submitting a work that has been purchased or otherwise obtained from an Internet source or another source; and (3) incorporating the words or ideas of an author into one’s paper without giving the author due credit.
Please read the complete policy at http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic_integrity.asp

ALSO NOTE THAT YOU MAY NOT USE PAPERS THAT YOU YOURSELF HAVE WRITTEN FOR OTHER COURSES.

**Withheld Grades Semester Grades Policy (A-54)**
Ordinarily, at the discretion of the instructor of record and with the approval of the academic chair/director, a grade of WH will be assigned only if the student cannot complete the course work because of unavoidable circumstances. Students must complete the work within one calendar year from the end of the semester in which they receive a WH, or the grade automatically becomes an F. If students register for the same course in future terms, the WH will automatically become an F and will be counted as a repeated course for the purpose of computing grade point average.

**Students with Disabilities**
To obtain disability related accommodations, alternate formats, and/or auxiliary aids, students with disabilities must contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS), Human Services Building, and Room 325, 468-3004 / 468-1004 (TDD) as early as possible in the semester. Once verified, ODS will notify the course instructor and outline the accommodation and/or auxiliary aids to be provided. Failure to request services in a timely manner may delay your accommodations. For additional information, go to http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/.

**AARC**
Writing tutors are available in the SFA Academic Assistance and Research Center on the first floor of the library and through the AARC web page. See the SFA AARC web page for more information: http://library.sfasu.edu/aarc