



ENL2012: Survey of English Literature: Medieval to 1750

From the Epic Poem to the Early Novel

Fall 2025 | 3.00 credits

I. General Information

Meeting days and times: Tuesdays Periods 5 - 6 (11:45 AM - 1:40 PM), Thursdays Period 6 (12:50 PM - 1:40 PM)

Class location: Online via Zoom

Instructor: Thomas De Groff

Office Building/Number: Turlington 4309

Email: tdegroff@ufl.edu

Office Hours: Thursdays 11:45–12:50 or by appointment

Course Description

This course fulfills three hours of the general education requirement in humanities and the writing and math requirement while introducing students to some of the major writers, issues and forms found in the history of the period, including selections from the Western canon. The breadth and focus of this survey will be determined by the instructor.

This course covers a thousand years of English literary history, from *Beowulf* to *Robinson Crusoe*. From the oral poetic tradition to the arrival of the popular printed novel, literary forms have changed and evolved over the centuries. In order to understand these changes and better appreciate a range of different texts, we will be studying them in their historical contexts: the Norman conquest, the Black Death, the advent of the printing press, the Reformation, the English Civil War, the Restoration, and the rise of British Empire as a colonial power. As we read, we will keep the following questions in mind: How do the heroes of these texts reflect their cultural contexts? How do these authors use multiple modes to tell their stories? How have these texts left their mark on the world of today?

Prerequisites

Prereq: ENC 1101 or test score equivalent.

General Education Designation: Humanities (H)

Humanities courses afford students the ability to think critically through the mastering of subjects concerned with human culture, especially literature, history, art, music, and philosophy, and must include selections from the Western canon. Humanities courses provide instruction in the history, key themes, principles, terminology, and theory or methodologies used within a humanities discipline or the humanities in general. Students will learn to identify and to analyze the key elements, biases and influences that shape thought. These courses emphasize clear and effective analysis and approach issues and problems from multiple perspectives.

The Writing Requirement (WR) ensures students both maintain their fluency in writing and use writing as a tool to facilitate learning.

Course grades have two components. To receive writing requirement credit, a student must receive a grade of C or higher and a satisfactory completion of the writing component of the course.

All General Education area objectives can be found [here](#).

Course Materials

- *Beowulf: A New Verse Translation* by Seamus Heaney (Bilingual Edition) hard copy | bookstores, online booksellers
- *The Lais of Marie de France* (Penguin Classics) hard copy | bookstores, online booksellers
- *The Canterbury Tales* by Geoffrey Chaucer (Penguin Classics) hard copy | bookstores, online booksellers
- *King Lear* (Arden Shakespeare: Third Series) 3rd Edition, hard copy | bookstores, online booksellers
- *Robinson Crusoe* by Daniel Dafoe (Penguin Classics) hard copy | bookstores, online booksellers
- Other readings will be made available digitally via Canvas and Early English Books Online (EEBO)

\$18 online course fee

II. Course Goals

Course Objectives

In this course we will conduct a survey of English literature from the early medieval period to the eighteenth century.

Student Learning Outcomes

A student who successfully completes this course will be able to:

- analyze and explicate historical texts through careful close reading (Close Reading assignments, Historical / Contemporary Comparative Analysis).
- produce a source-based argumentative work of in-depth literary analysis (Academic Argument Analysis, Research Paper, Multimodal Project)
- identify major authors and works in their historical contexts (Quiz).

III. Graded Work

Class Participation (20%): In an online format, active participation is essential for this class to work properly. On assigned days, students will lead class discussions by preparing three discussion questions based on a close reading of the assigned text. Preparing these questions on assigned days and actively engaging with peer questions will result in a full participation grade.

Close Readings (24%): Students will choose a small portion of their weekly reading (no longer than a page) and conduct a close reading—constructing an argument founded only on the content of their chosen text. Close readings will be due on Thursdays before class. 200 words each (2400 words total).

Historical / Contemporary Comparative Analysis (6%): Students will compare one of the assigned historical texts and a contemporary text (a novel, comic book, film, etc.) of their choice. They will 1) trace similarities between the two texts, and 2) critically analyze the changes to form and genre across historical contexts. 500 words.

Academic Argument Analysis (7%): Students will dissect and analyze a work of scholarly literary criticism to prepare for their research paper. After finding and reading a peer-reviewed article on their chosen text, they will 1) locate its thesis, 2) identify and categorize background, exhibit, argument, and method sources (both primary and secondary), and 3) assess the author's argument. 600 words.

Research Paper (30%): Students will write a source-based argumentative analysis centered on one of the assigned readings. They are encouraged to explore their own interests and perspectives while building on the topics and themes discussed in class. They should include at least 5 critical sources (e.g. peer-reviewed journal articles, book chapters, etc.), one of which should be an academic monograph. Successful research papers will show a clear understanding of the sources in conversation and include a strong, nuanced thesis supported by close examination of the historical text. It is expected that one of the weekly close reading assignments will serve as the basis for the research paper. 2000 words.

Multimodal Project (6%): Students will explicate one of the assigned readings using writing and at least one other mode of communication (music, video, painting, calligraphy, performance, etc.). This assignment serves as an opportunity to reflect on the history of English literature as an evolving set of multi-modal texts and explore the development of genre.

Quiz (7%): Students will complete a short multiple-choice quiz at the end of the semester. Content for the quiz will be taken from the assigned readings.

IV. Calendar

Schedule is tentative and subject to change.

Date	Topic	Readings/Preparation	Work Due
8/21	Course Introduction		
8/26	Bede & Geoffery of Monmouth	<p><i>*Ecclesiastical History of England</i> Chapters I, XIV, XV, XXIV (pp. 35–39, 61–66, 444–482)</p> <p><i>*History of the Kings of Britain</i> All of Book I (pp. 3–28), part of Book II (pp. 36–41), part of Book IX (pp. 183–185), & part of Book X, (pp. 231–236).</p>	Close Reading #0
8/28	Old English Epic Poetry	<i>Beowulf</i> pp. 3–123	Close Reading #1
9/2		<i>Beowulf</i> pp. 123–213	
9/4	Marie de France	<i>Lais of Marie de France</i> pp. 43–85	Close Reading #2
9/9		<i>Lais of Marie de France</i> pp. 85–126	Historical / Contemporary Comparative Analysis
9/11	Chaucer	<i>Canterbury Tales</i> pp. 3–122	Close Reading #3
9/16		<i>Canterbury Tales</i> pp. 122–132	
9/18		<i>Canterbury Tales</i> pp. 232–356	Close Reading #4

Date	Topic	Readings/Preparation	Work Due
9/23		<i>Canterbury Tales</i> pp. 356–489	Academic Argument Analysis
9/25	Irish Poetry	* <i>The Kildare Poems</i> 1–17	Close Reading #5
9/30	Mystery Plays, Margery Kempe	* <i>The York Play of the Crucifixion</i> , * <i>The Book of Margery Kempe</i> (pp. 1–33, 53–59, 235–263)	
10/2	Sir Philip Sidney	* <i>The Defence of Poesy</i>	Close Reading #6
10/7	The Sonnet	*Sir Thomas Wyatt, Sonnets 10 and 31 *William Shakespeare, Sonnets 19, 29, 65, 130, and one more of your choosing	
10/9	Shakespeare	<i>King Lear</i> acts I and II (pp. 157–258)	Close Reading #7
10/14		<i>King Lear</i> acts III–V (pp. 259–392) *Watch <i>King Lear</i>	
10/16	Ben Jonson & John Donne	*Ben Jonson, “To the Memory of My Beloved the Author, Mr. William Shakespeare” *John Donne, “To Sir Edward Herbert, at Juliers” “The Sun Rising,” “To His Mistress Going to Bed,” “The Relic” “Good Friday, 1613. Riding Westward,” “A Hymn to God the Father”	Close Reading #8
10/21	Aemilia Lanyer	* <i>Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum</i> pp. 1–44	Research Paper - Rough Draft
10/23		* <i>Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum</i> pp. 45–110	Close Reading #9

Date	Topic	Readings/Preparation	Work Due
10/28	Margaret Cavendish	*Margaret Cavendish “The Poetess’s Hasty Resolution,” “An Excuse for so Much Writ Upon My Verses,” “A World Made by Atoms,” “A World in an Earring,” “Of the Theme of Love”	Research Paper - Final Draft
10/30	Katherine Philips	*Katherine Philips, “The Preface,” “To the Excellent Orinda,” “On the Welch Language,” “Upon the Double Murther of K. Charles I,” “To my Excellent Lucasia, on our Friendship,” “To my Lady M. Cavendish, chosing the name of Policrite” “Death”	Close Reading #10
11/4	Pepys & Pope	*The Diary of Samuel Pepys, entries for Nov. 1–7, 1667 and three entries of your choosing. *Alexander Pope “The Rape of the Lock”	
11/6		*Jonathan Swift, <i>A Modest Proposal</i> , “A Description of the Morning,” “A Description of a City Shower,”	Close Reading #11
11/13	Daniel Dafoe, The Novel	<i>Robinson Crusoe</i> pp. 1–56	Close Reading #12
11/18		<i>Robinson Crusoe</i> pp. 57–163	
11/20		<i>Robinson Crusoe</i> pp. 163–196	Close Reading #13
12/2		<i>Robinson Crusoe</i> pp. 196–241	Multimodal Project and Quiz

Readings marked “*” will be made available via Canvas.

V. Course Policies

1. You are allowed three absences for emergencies and illness. Fourth and fifth absences deduct half a letter grade from your final grade. You will fail the course at six absences. Joining class late (more than fifteen minutes) counts as a tardy, and two tardies result in one absence. Consult with a classmate for missed material. See link below for more information on university policy for excused absences, and please email in the case of any extenuating circumstances.
2. Students should join class prepared and ready to discuss, having completed the assigned reading. Disrespectful behavior will not be permitted and will result in an absence.
3. Active participation in an online class requires focused attention. You are expected to keep your camera on. Students are permitted to use computers/tablets for notes but should not use any form of social media (texting, Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, etc.) during class. Distracted or inconsiderate behavior will negatively impact your participation grade.
4. All assignments except close readings must be in MLA format (9th Edition).
5. Late submissions will not be accepted for close readings. All other assignments will be marked down by a letter grade for each day late.
6. Keep duplicate copies of all submitted work. Save all returned, graded work until the semester is over.
7. Students are prohibited from using any generative AI in the process of their written assignments. Students are also prohibited from using AI to summarize course readings.
8. A Student must not represent as the student's own work all or any portion of the work of another. Plagiarism includes but is not limited to:
 - a. Stealing, misquoting, insufficiently paraphrasing, or patch-writing.
 - b. Self-plagiarism, which is the reuse of the student's own submitted work, or the simultaneous submission of the student's own work, without the full and clear acknowledgment and permission of the faculty to whom it is submitted.
 - c. Submitting materials from any source without proper attribution.
 - d. Submitting a document, assignment, or material that, in whole or in part, is identical or substantially identical to a document or assignment the student did not author.

(UF Student Honor Code)

VI. Grading Rubric

The instructor will evaluate and provide feedback on the student's written assignments with respect to content, organization and coherence, argument and support, style, clarity, grammar, punctuation, and mechanics. Specific rubrics and guidelines applicable to individual assignments will be provided on Canvas for each assignment during the semester. Each assignment will be graded according to the rubric below.

A	Insightful: Writing shows adroitness and originality. “A” work is neatly organized around an excellent and well-developed thesis. Writing is carefully proofread and free from errors. An “A” paper explicitly demonstrates a thorough understanding of the topic at hand and integrates the student’s authentic insight.
B	Proficient: Writing is competent and thoughtful but needs revision. Work in the “B” range fulfills all the aspects of the given assignment and is well organized, with a complete thesis that is supported by the body. “B” writing contains few grammatical errors and typos.
C	Satisfactory: Writing fulfils the most essential criteria of the assignment but needs significant revision. Writing in the “C” range is sometimes imprecise or unclear. Errors and typos disrupt clarity of thought. A “C” paper is straightforward but unremarkable.
D	Poor: Writing fails to meet certain essential aspects of the assignment as outlined. “D” writing contains mechanical, factual, and logical errors that are significantly detrimental to readability and show a misunderstanding of the material.
E	Failing: Writing is plagiarized or does not fulfil the basic criteria of the assignment.

Grading Scale

Letter Grade	Number Grade
A	100-92.5
A-	92.4-89.5
B+	89.4-86.5
B	86.4-82.5
B-	82.4-79.5
C+	79.4-76.5
C	76.4-72.5
C-	72.4-69.5
D+	69.4-66.5
D	66.4-62.5
D-	62.4-59.5
E	59.4-0

See the UF Catalog's "[Grades and Grading Policies](#)" for information on how UF assigns grade points.

Note: A minimum grade of C is required to earn General Education credit.

VII. University Policies and Resources

Attendance policy

Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found at: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>.

Students requiring accommodation

Students who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the disability Resource Center by visiting <https://disability.ufl.edu/students/get-started/>. It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs, as early as possible in the semester.

UF course evaluation process

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online. Students can complete evaluations in three ways:

1. The email they receive from GatorEvals
2. Their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals
3. The central portal at <https://my-ufl.bluera.com>

Guidance on how to provide constructive feedback is available at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/>. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>.

University Honesty Policy

University of Florida students are bound by the Honor Pledge. On all work submitted for credit by a student, the following pledge is required or implied: "On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment." The Student Honor Code and Conduct Code (Regulation 4.040) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code, as well as the process for reported allegations and sanctions that may be implemented. All potential violations of the code will be reported to Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution. If a student is found responsible for an Honor Code violation in this course, the instructor will enter a Grade Adjustment sanction which may be up to or including failure of the course. For additional information, see <https://>

sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-code-student-conduct-code/.

In-class recording

Students are allowed to record video or audio of class lectures. However, the purposes for which these recordings may be used are strictly controlled. The only allowable purposes are (1) for personal educational use, (2) in connection with a complaint to the university, or (3) as evidence in, or in preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding. All other purposes are prohibited. Specifically, students may not publish recorded lectures without the written consent of the instructor.

A "class lecture" is an educational presentation intended to inform or teach enrolled students about a particular subject, including any instructor-led discussions that form part of the presentation, and delivered by any instructor hired or appointed by the University, or by a guest instructor, as part of a University of Florida course. A class lecture does not include lab sessions, student presentations, clinical presentations such as patient history, academic exercises involving solely student participation, assessments (quizzes, tests, exams), field trips, private conversations between students in the class or between a student and the faculty or guest lecturer during a class session.

Publication without permission of the instructor is prohibited. To "publish" means to share, transmit, circulate, distribute, or provide access to a recording, regardless of format or medium, to another person (or persons), including but not limited to another student within the same class section. Additionally, a recording, or transcript of a recording, is considered published if it is posted on or uploaded to, in whole or in part, any media platform, including but not limited to social media, book, magazine, newspaper, leaflet, or third-party-note/tutoring services. A student who publishes a recording without written consent may be subject to a civil cause of action instituted by a person injured by the publication and/or discipline under UF Regulation 4.040 Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code.

Procedure for conflict resolution

Any classroom issues, disagreements or grade disputes should be discussed first between the instructor and the student. If the problem cannot be resolved, please contact Carla Blount (cblount@ufl.edu, 352-294-2872). Be prepared to provide documentation of the problem, as well as all graded materials for the semester. Issues that cannot be resolved departmentally will be referred to the University Ombuds Office (<http://www.ombuds.ufl.edu>; 352-392-1308) or the Dean of Students Office (<http://www.dso.ufl.edu>; 352-392-1261).

Resources available to students

Health and Wellness

- U Matter, We Care: If you or someone you know is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu, [352-392-1575](tel:352-392-1575), or visit [U Matter, We Care website](#) to refer or report a concern and a team member will reach out to the student in distress.
- Counseling and Wellness Center: [Visit the Counseling and Wellness Center website](#) or call [352-392-1575](tel:352-392-1575) for information on crisis services as well as non-crisis services.
- Student Health Care Center: Call [352-392-1161](tel:352-392-1161) for 24/7 information to help you find the care you need, or [visit the Student Health Care Center website](#).
- University Police Department: Visit [UF Police Department website](#) or call [352-392-1111](tel:352-392-1111) (or 9-1-1 for emergencies).
- UF Health Shands Emergency Room / Trauma Center: For immediate medical care call [352-733-0111](tel:352-733-0111) or go to the emergency room at 1515 SW Archer Road, Gainesville, FL 32608; Visit the [UF Health Emergency Room and Trauma Center website](#).
- GatorWell Health Promotion Services: For prevention services focused on optimal wellbeing, including Wellness Coaching for Academic Success, visit the [GatorWell website](#) or call [352-273-4450](tel:352-273-4450).

Academic Resources

- E-learning technical support: Contact the [UF Computing Help Desk](#) at [352-392-4357](tel:352-392-4357) or via e-mail at helpdesk@ufl.edu.
- [Career Connections Center](#): Reitz Union Suite 1300, [352-392-1601](tel:352-392-1601). Career assistance and counseling services.
- [Library Support](#): Various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources. Call [866-281-6309](tel:866-281-6309) or email ask@ufl.libanswers.com for more information.
- [Teaching Center](#): 1317 Turlington Hall, Call [352-392-2010](tel:352-392-2010), or to make a private appointment: [352-392-6420](tel:352-392-6420). Email contact: teaching-center@ufl.edu. General study skills and tutoring.
- [Writing Studio](#): Daytime (9:30am-3:30pm): 2215 Turlington Hall, [352-846-1138](tel:352-846-1138) | Evening (5:00pm-7:00pm): 1545 W University Avenue (Library West, Rm. 339). Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers.
- Academic Complaints: Office of the Ombuds; [Visit the Complaint Portal webpage for more information](#).
- Enrollment Management Complaints (Registrar, Financial Aid, Admissions): [View the Student Complaint Procedure webpage for more information](#).