

The University of Jordan

Department of English

Postgraduate Program: PHD in Literature & Criticism

Course Code: 2201942

Course Title: Renaissance Literature

Credits: 3 Credit Hours

Prerequisite: None

Course Description: This course is an in-depth exploration of the literature of the Renaissance period (1500-1660) with the aim of enabling students to gain insights into the works of the major writers of the period. The course traces the rise and decline of the Renaissance, highlighting its philosophical outlook and world view as impacted by the Greco-Roman tradition. Focusing on new techniques in drama and poetry as well as in prose, the course includes the study of major writers such as Wyatt, Surrey, Sidney, Spenser, Marlowe, Jonson, Shakespeare, Middleton, Webster, and a host of other writers. In other words, the course begins with Thomas More and ends with John Milton.

Course Objectives:

The course will cover Renaissance literary writings that best represent the traits and ideas of the period. Therefore, the course materials will include prose writings, lyric poetry (the sonnet), epic poetry, metaphysical poetry and drama. The syllabus features the literary luminaries of this period of English literature and explores their impact on the intellectual life and culture of the time. The selections should demonstrate the vibrant spirit of the Renaissance and expose the different topics and issues that have occupied the minds of Renaissance authors, covering a period extending from 1485-1660. Students will look into issues such as: love, marriage and sexuality in Renaissance literature; women and gender; idealism and courtly love poetry; representations of Islam, and the Other (Moors, Jews, Turks, etc.), discovery, sports and leisure and many other related cultural issues. Additionally, students will understand the characteristics of the Renaissance as manifested in the readings assigned for the course. Moreover, students should be able to gear their scholarly investigations into important research topics and issues relating to course materials as well as to other Renaissance literary subjects. By the end of the course students should be able to produce a scholarly piece of research relating to Renaissance literature and culture.

TEXTS:

M. H. Abrams, et al. eds. The Norton Anthology of English Literature, Vol. 1 (7th edition), Norton, 2000

William Shakespeare. The Oxford Shakespeare, (The Complete Works), ed. Stanley Wells, Oxford University Press, 1999

David Bevington, English Renaissance Drama, Norton, 2002

Thomas More, Utopia, trans. Robert M. Adams, Norton Critical edition, 1989

Sir Philip Sidney, The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia, Forgotten Books, 2011

Edmund Spenser, The Faerie Queene, Book I, Tredition Classics, 2011

John Milton, Paradise Lost, Penguin Classics, Reissue Edition, 2003

Thomas Hobbes, Leviathan, Pacific Publishing Studio, 2001

Supplementary Readings

Niccolo Machiavelli, The Prince, trans. Robert M. Adams, Norton Critical Edition, Norton, 1992

Desiderius Erasmus, The Praise of Folly, trans. Robert M. Adams, Norton Critical Edition, Norton, 1989

Baldesar Castiglione, The Book of the Courtier, Dover Publications, 2003

Weekly Course Assignments (Tentative)

Week One: Introduction: background : Renaissance vs. Medieval; Survey of European and English Renaissance; Characteristics of the Renaissance.

Week Two: Thomas More, Utopia; Roger Ascham (The Norton, pp. 563-567; Elizabeth I (The Norton, pp. 594-598)

Week Three: The Petrarchan Sonnet: Wyatt; Surrey; Sonnet Sequences: Sidney, Astrophil and Stella; Renaissance Literary Theory: Sidney, The Defense of Poesie (The Norton, pp. 933-953 :

Week Four: Shakespeare Sonnets

Week Five: The Pastoral Mode: Edmund Spenser, The Sheperdes Calender; Epic and Allegory: Spenser, The Faerie Queene, Book I

Week Six: Marlowe: Christopher Marlowe, Hero and Leander; Shakespeare, Venus and Adonis

Week Seven: Medieval Morality/Renaissance Man: Doctor Faustus; Robert Greene, Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay

Week Eight: Representations of Islam in Renaissance Drama: Marlowe's Tamburlaine, the Great Parts, I&II; Massinger, The Renegado

Week Nine: Women and Theater: Elizabeth Cary, The Tragedy of Mariam

Week Ten: Shakespeare's Reimagined Mediterranean: Othello, The Merchant of Venice,

Week Eleven: Ben Jonson, Volpone; Webster, The Duchess of Malfi

Week Twelve: Metaphysical Poetry: Donne, Herbert, Herrick, Marvell (all poetry selections from The Norton)

Week Thirteen: Early Seventeenth-Century Prose Writings: Francis Bacon, Essays, The Advancement of Learning (The Norton, pp. 1529-1544); Thomas Hobbes, Leviathan

Week Fourteen: Milton, Paradise Lost

Week Fifteen: Milton, Paradise Lost

Week Sixteen: Conclusions, review, and final examinations

Requirements:

Coursework: Required work for the course includes careful reading of all assigned materials and active participation in class discussions. Please come to class with questions and comments about the assigned reading for each day—the success of the course depends on your involvement.

The Final Paper: The paper should be 15-20 pages long, conform to MLA for formatting, and use endnotes rather than footnotes. This critical essay develops ideas prompted by our study and discussion of the assigned materials and related scholarship, informed by your perspectives and interests regarding the texts we have considered this semester.

Important Notice:

-The final paper must be submitted at least one week before the final exam. **I will not accept late papers.**

-Make-up exams will not be given except in rare circumstances when the student has documentation to prove a serious illness or accident.

-You may not make your class participation late.

Attendance: Regular attendance and participation are requirements to pass the course. Absences of two or more will lower your semester total grade. You are responsible for all work covered during your absence.

Plagiarism: Students are expected to observe the University's guidelines dealing with problems of plagiarism, cheating, etc. **Plagiarism is a fraud; it will result in failing the entire course.** Feel free to ask me about the mechanics of research documentation.

Grading:

Your final grade will be determined according to these percentages:

-30%--Coursework (presentations, participation and the term essay)

-30%--Midterm exam

-40%--Final exam

References:

- Andy Mousley, Renaissance Drama and Contemporary Literary Theory, Palgrave Macmillan, 2000
- Anthony G. Barthelemy. Black Face Maligned Race: The Representations of Blacks in English Drama from Shakespeare to Southerne, Louisiana State university Press, 1987
- Benedict S. Robinson, Islam and Early Modern English Literature: The Politics of Romance from Spenser to Milton, Palgrave Macmillan, 2007
- Dorothee Metlitzki, The Matter of Araby in Medieval England, Yale University Press, 1977
- Dympna Callaghan, Women and Gender in Renaissance Tragedy: A Study of King Lear, Othello, The Duchess of Malfi and The White Devil, Prentice-Hall, 1991
- Grace Windsor, Female Identity in Renaissance Literature: Queen Elizabeth I and Literary Representations of Women in Sixteenth and Seventeenth-Century Literature, VDM Verlag, 2009
- Karen Newman, Fashioning Femininity and English Renaissance Drama, University of Chicago Press, 1991
- Kate Chedgzoy, Voicing Women: Gender and Sexuality in Early Modern Writing, Keele University Press, 1996
- Matthew Birchwood. Staging Islam in England: Drama and Culture, 1640-1685, D. Brewer, 2007
- Michael O'Neill, ed. The Cambridge History of Early English Poetry, Cambridge University Press, 2010
- Mohja Kahf, Western Representations of the Muslim Woman from Termagant to Odalisque, The University of Texas Press, 1999
- Patrick Cheney, Andrew Hadfield and Garrett Sullivan, eds. Early Modern English Poetry: A Critical Companion, Oxford University Press, 2006
- Nabil Matar, Islam in England, 1558-1685, Cambridge University Press, 2008
- Raymond Williams, The Country and the City, Chatto and Windus, 1973
- Richmond Barbour, Before Orientalism: London's Theatre of the East, 1576-1626, Cambridge University Press, 2009
- Samuel Chew, The Crescent and the Rose and England During the Renaissance, Oxford University Press, 1937
- Stephen Greenblatt, Renaissance Self-fashioning: From More to Shakespeare, University of Chicago Press, 1984
- Stephen Greenblatt, ed. Representing the English Renaissance, University of California Press, 1988
- Stephen Greenblatt, ed. New World Encounters, University of California Press, 1993