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Office TBA
Section D NAC 7/231 12:30 pm

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Office hours TBA
Fall 2017

English 251: Historical Survey of British Literature, Part I

This course is a basic introduction to the literary tradition in England, surveying its beginnings in Anglo-Saxon verse and ending with John Milton's reconstruction of the epic in *Paradise Lost*. Along the way, we will read widely and deeply, looking for recurring themes—the fall of kings, the desire for intimacy, the changing role of the community—but also considering what happens when literacy becomes more common, and printed texts start circulating widely. In addition to our reading of well-known and canonical works like *Beowulf* and Shakespeare's sonnets and *The Faerie Queene*, we will also consider writings by lesser-known authors like Margery Kempe, Marie de France, and Lady Mary Wroth, aiming to grasp a lively, noisy world where men (and women) transformed their lives by writing about them and reshaped history by wrestling with language.

Our learning goals involve developing:

- the ability to read and write about older texts with precision, delight, insight, imagination
- the ability to find lines of continuity between earlier and later works and see how literary history continues to shape contemporary stories and storytellers
- the ability to place literary texts within their larger historical, social, political, religious and aesthetic contexts

Texts (available at the bookstore or more cheaply? online):

The Norton Anthology of English Literature, Vol. I A and B (9th ed)
ISBN# 978-0-393-91247-0 and 978-0-393-91250-0

Pls. note: books must be brought to class each day; no electronic versions will be permitted.

Grading

Participation (in-class assignments, ungraded tasks)	20%
Three essays (each 500-750 words)	40%
Longer essay (1500-2000 words)	30%
Creative interpretation	10%

Format and Policies: This will be a discussion class, with student contributions a crucial component. For this reason, students need to be in class on time, with readings for the day completed and at hand, ready to share and contribute as fully as possible: participating means more than attendance, after all, and asking questions inevitably helps everyone (especially your instructor) see things in a new way. If you fail to bring the book to class you will be marked absent, and if you are late repeatedly, absent more than *four* times, or regularly unprepared for discussion, you will be dropped from the roster. More than twenty minutes' lateness counts as an absence, so please plan accordingly. You are still responsible for class materials if you are late or absent, so be in touch with a classmate.

Other details:

- **Students should check their email daily for late-breaking bulletins, changes and additions to our schedule. Just get in the habit of checking your email account.**

SCHEDULE OF ASSIGNMENTS: (Please note that this schedule is subject to change.)

<u>Date</u>	<u>Reading / Writing Due</u>	<u>Themes / Topics</u>
Mon, Aug 28	Introduction <i>Caedmon's Hymn</i> (Norton 29-32)	Oral poetry, tribal music, warrior values. What's Trump got to do with it?
Wed, Aug 30	<i>The Wanderer</i> (Norton 117-20; 137-40)	Solitude and exile as religious experiences
Mon, Sept 4	LABOR DAY - NO CLASS	
Wed, Sept 6	<i>The Dream of the Rood</i> (Norton 32-6)	
Mon, Sept 11	<i>Beowulf</i> (Norton 41-69)	The hero among other heroes
Wed, Sept 13	<i>Beowulf</i> (Norton 69-88)	The hero among other monsters
Mon, Sept 18	<i>Beowulf</i> (Norton 89-108)	What different shapes can Christianity assume in medieval texts?
Wed, Sept 20	NO CLASS	
Mon, Sept 25	The <i>lais</i> of Marie de France (Norton 140-69) Essay #1 due in class (on OE themes)	Romance's antidotes to epics: literacy and female agency
Wed, Sept 27	Chaucer, The "General Prologue" to <i>The Canterbury Tales</i> (Norton 238-63) Email me about where you are these days	
Mon, Oct 2	Chaucer, GP continued	pilgrim profiles
Wed, Oct 4	Wife of Bath's <i>Prologue</i> (Norton 282- 301)	Women and scripture, illiteracy and promiscuity
Mon, Oct 9	NO CLASS	
Wed, Oct 11	The Wife of Bath's <i>Tale</i> (Norton 301-10)	WoB sequel (B)
Mon, Oct 16	<i>Everyman</i> . (Norton 507-29)	Medieval literacy as accounting tool, ticket to heaven, private record
Wed, Oct 18	<i>The Book of Margery Kempe</i> . (Norton 424-38) Essay #2 due in class (on literacy)	The persistence of orality, the rewards of literacy, and women's places outside the home
Mon, Oct 23	<i>The Second Shepherd's Play</i> (#####)	
Wed, Oct 25	<i>The Second Shepherd's Play</i> , continued	(Performance)
Mon, Oct 30	The lyrics of Wyatt and Petrarch (*****Norton Vol. B 646-61)	The birth of the self and the exclusion of others
Wed, Nov 1	Shakespeare's revisions of Petrarch and Wyatt (read sonnets #1, 3, 18, 20, 130, 135, 138 in Norton 1166-86)	

Mon, Nov 6	Works by Elizabeth Tudor, Aemilia Lanyer, Mary Wroth (Norton 758-59; 1430-36; 1560-71)	Shakespeare's Dark Lady and what her sisters say
Wed, Nov 8	Lyrics by women, continued	the gender of the speaker
Mon, Nov 13	Spenser's <i>Faerie Queene</i> , Book 1 canto 1 (Norton 775-80; 781-95)	
Wed, Nov 15	<i>FQ</i> , continued	
Mon, Nov 20	Spenser <i>FQ</i> continued Essay #3 due in class (on female lovers)	
Wed, Nov 22	Donne, "The Flea," "Death, be not proud," "Batter my heart"	
Mon, Nov 27	<i>Twelfth Night</i> Acts 1-3	Sonnet (B)
Wed, Nov 29	<i>Twelfth Night</i> Acts 4-5	
Mon, Dec 4	Milton <i>Paradise Lost</i> (pages TBA)	Epic origins, epic ambitions, epic falls
Wed, Dec 6	Milton, PL (pages TBA)	
Mon, Dec 11	Longer essay due in class	