

**RAMAPO COLLEGE OF NEW JERSEY**  
School of American & International Studies  
LITR 240-01: Survey of British Literature I

*Figurative Explorations in British Literature:  
The Middle Ages to the Enlightenment*

**Professor: Dr. Todd Landon Barnes**  
**Assistant Professor of Literature**  
**E-mail:** [toddbarnes@ramapo.edu](mailto:toddbarnes@ramapo.edu)  
**Office:** B-141  
**Office Hours:** MR 3:30-5:00

**Term:** Spring 2011  
**Class Hours:** MR 2-3:30pm  
**Location:** B-124  
**Mailbox:** AIS Office  
**Phone:** 201.684.7500x7241

**Catalog Course Description:**

This course consists of a chronological study of some of the poetry, fiction, drama, and non-fiction of the English speaking peoples of the British Isles. The course will survey a representative sample of texts and writers from the Anglo-Saxon period to about 1780. The course seeks to provide students with an overview of the historical epochs in which writers worked and the variety of traditions and genres that shaped their artistry. This course is recommended for students with liberal arts interest in the humanities and for students planning further study in language and literature.

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In particular, in this course we will be looking at this period as an age of exploration and change during which the very idea of “British literature” continuously adapts alongside a changing world. Particular emphasis will be placed on how the literary forms and themes of this period reflect and react to encounters with alternate worlds (both real or imaginary). We will also be tracking social aspects of reading and writing, from the oral tradition of the Middle Ages, through the rise of the printing press and theatrical rituals in the Early Modern Period, to the rise of scientific rationalism and the sentimental novel in the eighteenth century.

**Required Texts:**

- *The Norton Anthology of British Literature*. Eighth Edition. Volumes A/B/C.
- *The Tempest* by William Shakespeare; I prefer that you purchase the Norton Critical Edition.
- Students are required to read, **print**, annotate, and bring to class, all articles uploaded to Moodle.

**Course Goals:** Students should be able to:

- Read and analyze a representative sample of texts and writers of the English speaking peoples of the British Isles from the Anglo-Saxon period to about 1780.
- Demonstrate a familiarity with the major authors and genres, important texts, and main themes of this literature.
- Demonstrate and articulate an understanding of the cultural and historical ideas and contexts of this literature, as well as the connections to our present culture.
- Write clear, logical, well-organized, well-developed, and well-supported literary analyses of the literature of this period.
- Identify and define key stylistic and generic devices and tropes used by the major writers of this period.

**Measurable Student Learning Outcomes:** Students will learn a series of 30 literary terms and figures (e.g. kenning, metaphysical conceit, soliloquy, epistolary novel, etc.). Students will learn historical background information about the middle ages through the late eighteenth century (e.g. theatrical conventions, religious conventions, social conventions, aesthetic conventions). Students will be exposed to and become familiar with various methodological approaches to the study of literature (e.g. character criticism, new historical criticism, performance criticism, postcolonial criticism, feminist criticism, Marxist criticism and poststructuralist criticism). Students will illustrate mastery of readings, concepts and terms through regular quizzes. Students will also demonstrate their familiarity with key concepts through their performance on a midterm and a final exam. Students will illustrate their ability to synthesize these ideas with research of appropriate materials (*i.e.* information literacy) through regular essay writing (both online and on paper).

**Participation/Attendance:** This class will not be possible without your participation. Unlike some courses, the success of this course depends on your contributions, your labor, and your perspective. Each class meeting will cover a wide range of material. The lessons of this course build cumulatively, so any absence threatens to quickly push you far behind. Students should come to class having printed out and read all required reading. Students should take notes while actively and courteously listening to and engaging with the professor and their peers. Any student discovered to be off-task (as determined by the professor) will be *marked absent*. Using technology to virtually exit the class will always constitute an *absence*. Coming to class after I've taken role or leaving before the class is over will constitute an *absence*. Students can miss two classes with no questions asked. A third absence lowers the student's grade (by 1/2 a grade, 5%). A student absent four times in one semester cannot earn higher than a C+ (79%). If a student is absent five times, s/he automatically fails the course. **Please** do not e-mail me about your attendance. There are **no excused absences** in college (you are **already excused for two absences**), so do not offer "notes" from doctors, lawyers or parents. College policy states that students must notify faculty within the first three weeks of the semester if they anticipate missing any classes due to religious observance.

**Papers:** No late papers will be accepted. Your essays need not be perfect, but I do expect them to be on time. All papers are to be typed and formatted according to the most recent MLA guidelines. Refer to Diana Hacker's *Rules for Writers* for help with these guidelines. For additional help in writing papers, I encourage you to visit our Center for Academic Success. Their helpful website can be found here: <http://ww2.ramapo.edu/academics/cas/>. **Caitlyn Vogel**, a tutor at the writing center, has taken my course and done very well. I recommend that you see her if you can.

**Plagiarism:** Plagiarism, etymologically, means *kidnapping*. Do not steal the brainchildren of others. Students who engage in plagiarism will suffer the consequences set forth by the college. If you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism, see one of your instructors, a tutor, or go visit this training module offered by our library:

[http://library.ramapo.edu/captivate\\_tutorials/citation/citation.htm](http://library.ramapo.edu/captivate_tutorials/citation/citation.htm)

This course will be powered by **TurnItIn.com**'s plagiarism detection technology.

**Note:** This course follows standard Ramapo College policy for Electronic Forms of Communication, Academic Integrity and Students with Disabilities. For details, please refer to the Academic Review Committee Website at <http://ww2.ramapo.edu/arc/>.

**Experiential Component:** This course will include a minimum of five (5) hours of unmonitored appropriate experience outside of the classroom. Students are to look for examples of the “literary” outside of class. Students should construe the term “literary” broadly, as Eagleton does in his essay. Students will log and comment on how these moments of everyday life engage with issues and styles surveyed in class. These reflections will be posted regularly and publicly on Moodle. Examples of appropriate topics will be given throughout the semester. Students earn points by posting *and* replying to others. By the end of the semester, you should have contributed roughly 10 pages (e.g. 10 one-page posts, 5 one page posts and 5 pages of replies, 10 half-page posts and 10 half-page replies, etc.). I will not be doing a word count. The page limit is a general guideline.

**Disabilities/Accommodations:** If you feel you might need any accommodations in order to succeed in this course, please let me know privately as soon as possible. Also, you should contact the Office of Specialized Services at 201.684.7514 (voice), 201.684.7092 (TTY), or [oss@ramapo.edu](mailto:oss@ramapo.edu) (email).

**Requirements/Grades:** Your performance in this course (and your experience of this course) will be assessed through class discussion, regular quizzes, exams (a midterm and a final), projects and compositions. Your weighted grade in the course will be determined according to the following schema:

Participation	10%	Essay 1 ( <i>BW</i> )	15%
Quizzes	15%	Essay 2 ( <i>Tempest</i> )	15%
Midterm	15%	Experiential Project (outside lit.)	10%
Final	20%		

**Satisfactions:** GE-TOPICS ARTS AND HUMANITIES, MJ-INTL-Area Studies-Europe, MJ-INTL-Intl Comparative 'West, WRITING INTENSIVE

**Writing Intensive (WI) Course:** Writing will be integrated into the life of this course. You will receive comments, direction, and support as you work on strengthening your writing skills. Your writing will be evaluated and returned in a timely fashion, allowing you to incorporate my comments into your future work. You will be able to draft, revise, and resubmit a minimum of two papers. For help outside the classroom, please see me during my office hours and/or work with a writing tutor in the Center for Academic Success (CAS), Room: E-230 and Alcove, x7557.

**Course Blog:** The virtual component of this course is substantial. This semester, we will be utilizing the **Moodle** as our digital community. You can logon to Moodle here:

<https://moodle.ramapo.edu/>

Students will be required to regularly post comments and feedback through this site’s forum. I will also use this site to post readings, make announcements and give student feedback

**PROSPECTIVE SCHEDULE:** (subject to change at the professor's discretion)

**Week Zero: Course Introduction**

1/20 M: Introduction to Course

**Week One: What is "Literature"? How Do We Survey It?**

Barthes, R. "Death of the Author"  
Eagleton, T. "What is Literature?"  
Lakoff, G./Johnson, H. Metaphors We Live By (excerpt)

1/24 M: Barthes, Lakoff and Johnson  
1/27 R: Eagleton and the "Literary"

**Week Two: The Middle Ages and Anglo-Saxon Literature**

Norton "The Middle Ages": Introduction, Timeline (1-24)  
Norton "Anglo-Saxon Literature" (24-27)  
Bede From Ecclesiastical History of the English People (24-27)  
Anonymous "The Wanderer" (111-113)  
Anonymous "The Wife's Lament"  
Norton Introduction to *Beowulf*  
Anonymous *Beowulf*: lines 1-1250 (29-61)

1/31 M: The Middle Ages; Bede  
2/3 R: Anglo-Saxon Literature; "The Wanderer"; "The Wife's Lament"

**Week Three: *Beowulf***

Anon., trans. Seamus Heaney *Beowulf*

2/7 M: *Beowulf*, Epic Poetry, and Oral Culture; lines 1251-2199 (61-80)  
2/10 R: *Beowulf* and the Folkloric; lines 2200-3182 (80-100)

**Week Four: Chaucer's Canterbury Tales**

Chaucer, G. *The Canterbury Tales* (General Prologue, Miller's Tale)

2/14 M: Chaucer; General Prologue (pp. 213-238); **Paper 1 Due**  
2/17 R: The Miller's Prologue/Tale (pp. 239-255)

**Week Five: From Morality Plays to Renaissance Humanism**

Norton "The Sixteenth Century"  
Anonymous *Everyman* (excerpt)

2/21 M: "The Sixteenth Century" (pp. 485-513 )  
2/24 R: *Everyman*

**Week Six: Social Problems: More's *Utopia***

More, T. *Utopia*

2/28 M: Sir Thomas More & *Utopia* (pp. 518-545)

3/3 R: *Utopia* (pp. 545-569)

**Week Seven: Imagining Alternate Worlds: More's *Utopia* (cont.)**

More, T. *Utopia*

3/7 M: *Utopia* (pp. 569-590)

3/10 R: **Midterm**

**Week Eight: Spring Break**

**Week Nine: Early Modern Poetry and Its Opponents**

Sidney, P. The Defense of Poetry (excerpt)

Shakespeare, W. Sonnets

3/21 M: The Defense of Poesy (pp. 953-974)

3/24 R: On Shakespeare (pp. 1058-1061); Sonnets 23, 29, 55, 94, 116, 127, 129, 135

**Week Ten: *The Tempest***

Shakespeare, W. *The Tempest*

3/28 M: *Tempest* Act I

3/31 R: *Tempest* Act II-III

**Week Eleven: *The Tempest***

Shakespeare, W. *The Tempest*

4/4 M: *Tempest* Act IV-V

4/7 R: *Tempest*; Film Screening(s)

**Week Twelve: The Early Seventeenth Century**

Norton "The Early Seventeenth Century"

Norton "Forms of Inquiry"

Bacon, F. Essays, "Novum Organum" and "New Atlantis"

Donne, J. Selected Poems

Milton, J. "L' Allegro" and "Il Penseroso"

4/11 M: The Early Seventeenth Century (pp. 1235-1259)/Forms of Inquiry (p. 1550)

4/14 R: Bacon's Essays (pp. 1550-1573); Donne & Milton

**Week Thirteen: Restoration, Colonialism and Representation: Oroonoko**

Norton "The Restoration and the Eighteenth Century"  
Behn, Aphra *Oroonoko*

4/18 M: "The Restoration and the Eighteenth Century" (pp. 2057-2082)  
4/21 R: *Oroonoko* (pp. 2178-2226) and the novel

**Week Fourteen: Liberty**

Locke, J. "Two Treatises of Government"  
Astell, M. "A Preface, in Answer to Some Objections to Reflections upon Marriage"  
Cooper, A. Sensus Communis: An Essay on the Freedom of Wit and Humor"  
Thomson, J. "Ode: Rule, Britannia"  
Hume, D. "Of the Liberty of the Press"  
Burke, E. "Speech on the Conciliation with the American Colonies"  
Johnson, S. "[A Brief to Free a Slave]"  
Equiano, O. from "The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African, Written by Himself."

4/25 M: Locke, Astell, Cooper, Thomson  
4/28 R: Hume, Burke, Johnson, Equiano

**Week Fifteen: Final Review**

5/2 M: Final Exam Review

**Week Sixteen: Final Exam**

5/5 R: **Final Exam** (5-7pm)