

Rhodes College
Department of English

English 322 – Renaissance Poetry and Prose

Class meets: Monday, Wednesday, Friday, 11:30 a.m.– 12:30 p.m., Palmer 206

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Fall 2001
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Office Hours: Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays, 10:30-11:30 p.m.; and by appointment.

My administrative role as Dean of *British Studies At Oxford* means that I sometimes have to be out of my office unexpectedly. I shall try to keep my Office Hours, but for your own convenience I recommend that you phone ahead before climbing all those stairs - usually, Mrs. Mary Allie Baldwin, my assistant, will be there and will be able to confirm whether or not I am.

Texts

Emrys Jones, ed., *The New Oxford Book of Sixteenth-Century Verse*
Alastair Fowler, ed., *The New Oxford Book of Seventeenth-century Verse*
Materials supplied by tutor

Grading

The final grade recognizes the quality of your work over the whole course. It is awarded for a course of study successfully pursued, not simply for a few pieces of written work, and you are expected to be intellectually engaged at all times. Provided that I am confident that that is the case, the exact final grade is normally determined according to the scheme set out below. However, there are two thresholds you must cross successfully before I will award a grade above “D”.

First, this is a 300-level English course, and I expect any formal piece of work to be written with correct grammar and spellings. All students now have access to word processing programs with a spelling checker, so there is little excuse for handing in misspelled work. Grammar is fundamental to communication, and degree-level written work in English has to communicate accurately. Many WP programs also have a grammar checker, though these are of limited usefulness. If you have any doubts about the accuracy of your English usage, you should use the Writing Center to gain advice. Above all, I expect you to proof-read your work and spot errors before I do – if you present work to me that you could not be bothered to read over, you must expect me to feel that you are treating the task with contempt and grade accordingly.

Second, this course requires that you master some facts concerning the literary, cultural, and political history of the time during which these texts were being written. If I become concerned that you are not mastering the material or preparing adequately for class, I shall issue a series of unannounced tests, each based on factual material found in the headnotes and introductions in our anthology, in any study-guides I have made available to you, and in our set readings. You must achieve at least a 60% average on these tests to get above “D”.

Once across these thresholds, the grade is determined as follows:

First paper	15%
Second paper	15%
Midterm exam	15%
Final paper	20%
Final exam	15%
Participation	20%

Everybody wants a top grade for all their courses, and – as Garrison Keillor says of society in Lake Wobegon – we think that we are all above average. But life isn't really like that. Before you complain of harsh grading, bear in mind that satisfactory performance in this College is rewarded with a grade of C. A grade of B recognizes performance well beyond the simply satisfactory. Grades of A for the course will be given to work that is genuinely and consistently outstanding, and that grade is rarely given. For your information, the median grade I gave for my courses in Fall 1999 (I was on sabbatical leave last year) was between B and B-.

Requirements

Participation

Your assessment for this course includes a substantial component for participation and you should be in no doubt that I use the full range of grades. Participation is important because learning is a not a passive activity and one person's failure to be actively engaged in a class adversely affects the experience of others. Participation can take many forms; speaking-up is only one of them. A student who is comparatively silent, but who is also obviously attentive and committed to the class is making a contribution to the overall atmosphere. Conversely, students who attend, but don't bring the text, are visibly bored, wear hats or caps, fall asleep, talk among themselves, or who are repeatedly late ... such students can't expect to be rewarded for participation even if they make the occasional contribution to discussion.

Attendance

You are expected to attend all the sessions of the course and any unjustified absence will affect your grade. With the fifth such absence, I shall assume you have withdrawn from the course, with an automatic F if your name continues to appear on the class roll. You are also expected to be on time, to remain in the classroom throughout the class, and not bring food or drink into it.

Papers

Completion of all written work is required to pass the course; failure to do so is an automatic F. All papers must be submitted by the agreed date. If you encounter difficulties, you must contact me before the agreed deadline. I shall deduct 10% per day for late papers up to one week after the due date; thereafter, although the paper is still necessary for the completion of the course, I shall record a zero as the grade.

Rewrites

I encourage rewrites, but these must be substantive: merely changing a few words I've queried or deleting things I've found challengeable will not do. Indeed, if I find that I have wasted my time reading a rewrite that is not substantive, expect my frustration to be made manifest in the overall grade for the course. Bear in mind that the difference between, for instance, a paper that receives a B and one that receives an A is not the occasional error or infelicity but quality of thought. If you decide to

rewrite a paper, you should expect to start almost from scratch, using your first version as the foundation for a complete rethinking of the topic and your approach. If you approach rewriting in this spirit, it can be one of the most powerful tools for your intellectual development.

For each of the first two papers (but not the final paper, for obvious reasons) one rewrite is permitted, and it should be presented within two weeks of the return of the paper. The recorded grade will be the average of the first and second grades.

What are the characteristics of the different grades of performance?

Full description of what will lead to various grades is both impossible and unwise. Again, bear in mind that the satisfactory student should receive a C grade; a B recognizes performance well above satisfactory. A grade of A or A- is for outstanding work and is received rarely. Here are some of the characteristics of the excellent and the poor student:

Excellent students attend the class without fail; they have always prepared for the class well; they are self-motivated learners, using the library and other resources to discover additional materials for the subject; they are curious and enquiring; and they constantly reflect on the relationship between subjects under immediate discussion and earlier discussions in the class. Their writing is ambitious: they seek to grapple with substantial subjects, which they pursue with clarity, accuracy, determination, and rigor, and they reread and rewrite their work before submitting it. They are perceptive and make sophisticated, educated, and independent-minded enquiries concerning issues to do with literature, language, and culture more generally. They seek to present their work with professionalism and proof-read it carefully before handing it in.

Poor students have poor attendance records. They have put little into preparation for class and they are visibly disengaged. In their written work they are more concerned with “set length” than with intellectual substance, and they fail to observe obvious professional standards (spelling, grammar, getting simple things like authors’ names and quotations right). They produce only one draft of papers and fail to read their work through to ensure its quality and accuracy. They seek simple answers to complex questions and do the bare minimum, rarely bringing to bear any reading or thinking not explicitly required by the professor.

PROVISIONAL SCHEDULE

All schedules are the product of hope and ambition, so we shall probably have to adjust this in the light of experience as the semester goes on.

- 1 **Wed., Aug. 22** Introduction to course
- 2 **Fri., Aug. 24** John Skelton, from *The Bowge of Court* [Jones, p. 4] and from “Philip Sparrow” [Jones, p. 9]
- 3 **Mon., Aug. 27** Sir Thomas Wyatt, “Whoso list to hunt” [Jones, p. 76]; “The pillar perished is” [Jones, p.86]; “They flee from me” [Jones, p. 34] + supplement supplied; and “Mine own John Poyns” [Jones, p. 89]
- 4 **Wed., Aug. 29** Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, “The soote season” [Jones, p. 102]; “Alas, so all things now do hold their peace” [Jones, p. 103]; and “An excellent epitaph of Sir Thomas Wyatt” [Jones, p. 111]; “Epitaph for Thomas Clere” [Jones, p. 113]; “Dido in Love” from *Certain Books of Virgil’s “Æneis”* [Jones, p. 108]
- 5 **Fri., Aug. 31** George Gascoigne, “Gascoigne’s Lullaby” [Jones, p. 202] and “Gascoigne’s Woodmanship” [Jones, p. 196]
- 6 **Mon., Sept. 3** **LABOR DAY RECESS - NO CLASS**
- 7 **Wed., Sept. 5** Sir Thomas More, *Utopia* , Book 1 (supplied by tutor)
- 8 **Fri., Sept. 7** Sir Thomas More, *Utopia*, Book 2 (supplied by tutor)
- 9 **Mon., Sept. 10** George Gascoigne, *The Adventures of Master F.J.* (supplied by tutor)
FIRST PAPER DUE
- 10 **Wed., Sept. 12** Baldassare Castiglione, *The Book of the Courtier* tr. Sir Thomas Hoby (supplied by tutor)
- 11 **Fri., Sept. 14** Sir Philip Sidney, *The Apology for Poetry* (supplied by tutor)
- 12 **Mon., Sept. 17** Sir Philip Sidney, *The Arcadia*, Book 1 (supplied by tutor)
- 13 **Wed., Sept. 19** Sir Philip Sidney, “My true love hath my heart” [Jones, p. 298]; “Ye goat-herd gods” [Jones, p. 299]
- 14 **Fri., Sept. 21** Sir Philip Sidney, *Astrophil and Stella* selections [Jones, pp. 303-320]
- 15 **Mon., Sept. 24** Edmund Spenser, selection from *Amoretti* [Jones, pp. 281-282] and *Epithalamion* [Jones, p. 282]
- 16 **Wed., Sept. 26** Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, Book 1, Canto 1 (supplied by tutor)

- 17 **Fri., Sept. 28** Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, Book 1, Cantos 11 and 12 (supplied by tutor)
- 18 **Mon., Oct. 1** Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, *The Faerie Queene*, Book 2, Canto 12 (supplied by tutor)
- 19 **Wed., Oct. 3** Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, Book 3, Canto 6 (supplied by tutor)
- 20 **Fri., Oct. 5** Christopher Marlowe, *Hero and Leander* [Jones, p. 488]
- 21 **Mon., Oct. 8** continued
- 22 **Wed., Oct. 10** Sir Walter Raleigh, from *The 21st and Last Book of the Ocean to Cynthia* [Jones, p. 374] and “Sir Walter Raleigh to his son” [Jones, p. 369]

MIDTERM EXAM

- 23 **Fri., Oct. 12** William Shakespeare, *Sonnets* : “When forty winters shall besiege thy brow” [Jones, p. 581]; “When I have seen by Time’s fell hand defaced” [Jones, p. 588]; “That time of year thou mayst in me behold”, [Jones, p. 590]; “When in the chronicle of wasted time” [Jones, p. 594]; “Let me not to the marriage of true minds” [Jones, p. 596]
- 24 **Mon., Oct. 15** **FALL RECESS: NO CLASS**
- 25 **Wed., Oct. 17** William Shakespeare, “My mistress’ eyes are nothing like the sun” [Jones, p. 599]; Samuel Daniel, “Look, Delia, how we stem the half-blown rose” [Jones, p. 508], “When winter snows upon thy golden hairs” [Jones, p. 510], and “Care-charmer sleep, son of the sable night”; and Michael Drayton, Sonnet LXI [Fowler, p. 40] and *To the Reader of these Sonnets* [Fowler, p. 36]
- 26 **Fri., Oct. 19** John Donne, “The Good Morrow” [Fowler, p. 99]; “Song [“Go and catch a falling star”], [Fowler, p. 106]; “The Indifferent” [Fowler, p. 99]; and “A Valediction: of Weeping” [Fowler, p. 109]

SECOND PAPER DUE

- 27 **Mon., Oct. 22** John Donne, selection from “Devotions upon Emergent Occasions” (supplied by tutor) and from *Divine Meditations*, Sonnets VII and X [Fowler, p. 117], and “Good Friday, 1613. Riding Westward” [Fowler, p. 120]
- 28 **Wed., Oct. 24** John Donne, “Elegy 19: To his Mistress Going to Bed” and selection from “A Sermon Preached to the Honorable Company of the Virginia Plantation”, supplied by tutor
- 29 **Fri., Oct. 26** Ben Jonson, “Epigram XXII: On My First Daughter” and “Epigram XLV: On My First Son” [Fowler, p. 125], and “Epigram CI: Inviting a Friend to Supper” [Fowler, p. 129]; and Robert Herrick, “His Prayer to Ben Jonson” [Fowler, p. 274]

- 30 **Mon., Oct. 29** Ben Jonson, "II: To Penshurst" [Fowler, p. 135]
- 31 **Wed., Nov. 1** Selections from the "King James Bible" and from Sir Thomas Browne, *Hydriotaphia* (supplied by tutor)
- 32 **Fri., Nov. 3** Francis Bacon, all essays in the anthology (supplied by tutor)
- 33 **Mon., Nov. 5** George Herbert, "The Altar" [Fowler, p. 305], "Easter Wings" [Fowler, p. 307], "Prayer (1)" [Fowler, p. 309], and "Jordan (1)" [Fowler, p. 379]
- 34 **Wed., Nov. 7** George Herbert, "The Collar" [Fowler, p. 330], "The Pulley" [Fowler, p. 331], and "Love (3)" [Fowler, p. 334]
- 35 **Fri., Nov. 9** **NO CLASS – MPL AWAY**
- 36 **Mon., Nov. 12** **NO CLASS – MPL AWAY**
- 37 **Wed., Nov. 14** **NO CLASS – MPL AWAY**
- 38 **Fri., Nov. 16** John Milton, *Lycidas* [Fowler, p. 420]

FINAL PAPER DUE

- 39 **Mon., Nov. 19** continued
- 40 **Wed., Nov. 21** **NO CLASS – THANKSGIVING RECESS**
- 41 **Fri., Nov. 23** **NO CLASS – THANKSGIVING RECESS**
- 42 **Mon., Nov. 26** Robert Herrick, "Delight in Disorder" [Fowler, p. 257], "Corinna's Going A-Maying" [Fowler, p. 258], "To the Virgins, To Make Much of Time" [Fowler, p. 264]
- 43 **Wed., Nov. 28** Robert Herrick, "The Hock Cart, or Harvest Home" [Fowler, p. 266]; and "Upon Julia's Clothes" [Fowler, p. 276]
- 44 **Fri., Nov. 30** Andrew Marvell, "The Nymph Complaining the Death of Her Fawn", "To His Coy Mistress" [Fowler, p. 590], and "The Garden" [Fowler, p. 602]
- 45 **Mon., Dec. 3** Richard Lovelace, "The Grasshopper" [Fowler, p. 566] and "To Althea, from Prison" [Fowler, p. 569]
- 46 **Wed., Dec. 5** Andrew Marvell, "An Horatian Ode Upon Cromwell's Return from Ireland" [Fowler, p. 593]

TUESDAY, DEC. 11, 8:30-11:00: FINAL EXAM

The dawn of Renaissance came first to Italy and a little later to France. To England it came much later, roughly about the beginning of the sixteenth century. In Italy, the impact of Greek learning was felt after the Turkish conquest of Constantinople the Greek scholars fled and took refuge in Italy carrying with them a vast treasure of ancient Greek literature in manuscript. Passing on to the prose writers of the Elizabethan age- the age of the flowering of the Renaissance- we find them markedly influenced both in their style and thought-content by the revival of antique classical learning. The first tendency is exemplified by the poetry of John Donne and the other so-called metaphysical poets, which carried the metaphorical style to heights of daring complexity and ingenuity. This often-paradoxical style was used for a variety of poetic purposes, ranging from complex emotional attitudes to the simple inducement of admiration for its own virtuosity. The outstanding prose works of the Renaissance are not so numerous as those of later ages, but the great translation of the Bible, called the King James Bible, or Authorized Version, published in 1611, is significant because it was the culmination of two centuries of effort to produce the best English translation of the original texts, and also because its vocabulary, imagery, and. Any account of the critical reception of English Renaissance prose should probably begin with the Romantic movement, since it is within that movement that the subject was constructed as a distinct entity and granted a literary status comparable with the achievements of Renaissance poetry and drama. In particular, it was Coleridge and his circle, whose enthusiastic rediscovery of the prose writers of the sixteenth and seven-teenth centuries reversed (in Coleridge's view) "the common opinion that the English style attained its greatest perfection in and about Queen Anne's reign.& Reading"poetry, prose, and drama"which emphasizes the fundamental attitudes and ideas pervasive in American literature. 2230 (224) Themes in British Literature. Three credits. Prerequisite-sites: ENGL 1010, 1020, and 2030. Reading in British literature"prose, poetry and drama"that expresses significant ideas, attitudes, and values in British culture. 2330 (223) Special Topics in Literature and Culture. Three credits. The theory and practice of satire, 1900 to the present, with an emphasis on prose fiction. 3800 (380) Literature for Adolescents. Three credits. Practical criticism: the technical analysis of poetry and prose. 4220 (422) Backgrounds of Modern Literature. Three credits. The prose of Renaissance age, though inferior to the contemporary poetry and drama, bears all the hallmarks of literary peak. The great writers of the era have all the highlights of Italian Renaissance like the novelty of thought, height of imagination, search for new truths, and the revival of Greek ideals. With the introduction of movable printing machine brought to England by William Caxton, the volume of prose print increased manifold. This genre always considered inferior from literary perspective was infact the same when viewed as a whole, because the bulk of prose in the sixteenth centu