

ENGLISH 204 SYLLABUS
British Literature: Early

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Office Hours: Tuesday/Thursday 12:00pm & by appointment
Time & Place: TBA
CRN
Web Page <http://cf.linnbenton.edu/artcom/english/milletl/web.cfm?pgID=54>
Text:

- **Moodle website for the course.** All our material is posted here.
- OR –
- Stephen Greenblatt, General Editor, *The Norton Anthology of English Literature, Major Authors edition.*

Text's Web Site www.wwnorton.com/literature. Your registration code is in the front of your text. If you have a used book, you can purchase the access code on the web site. Alternately, there is free access to much of the site.

Prerequisites WR 121 is strongly recommended for successful completion of this course. English 104 and 106 are also very recommended.

Course Description:

The goal of this class is to bring literature to life and to help you in the effort to understand the relevance of literature to our own lives and times. We'll learn about the social and historical forces that determine convention and values, and we'll try to relate those elements to what happens in our own lives. We'll look at literary genres such as satire and determine their value as political or social tools. And we'll discuss why long, epic poems once made the best-seller lists but are now out of fashion. In the process, we'll get to know the writers of the times we study, and try to grasp a little of their hopes, aspirations, and skills as men and women.

Specifically, we'll look at more than the crafting of creative writing into literature; we'll look as well into the role of religious/political/social beliefs in the writers because they reflect the philosophy, world-view, politics, and existential reference points, perspectives that are differently nuanced in different historical conditions. Literature is about the human condition, and this is the underlying dynamic for most art and mental constructs outside science. The context here is one wherein human beings try to make sense of the world around them—a world they cannot control or understand. They attempt to reach an understanding through art forms with styles and conventions—in this case, the samples of creative writing through the centuries with enough excellence to have become “literature.”

In trying to understand existence, writers and thinkers deal with imponderables, the questions that are

ever asked and always hard to answer. They try to construct a comprehensible world, and we see this in efforts from Beowulf through monotheism, from philosophy to science and the modern novel. It's an attempt to control and explain natural forces, and results from the interplay of the human mind and physical existence. This attempt to impose order on physical reality, on the world and its forces, embraces magic, superstition, mystery, myth, legend, and modern cosmologies.

British Literature (ENG 204, 205, 206) traces the common elements of need, order, intent, cultural and historical context of writers from the author of Beowulf through Hopkins' tortured and beautiful poems, down through Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, the inspiration for *Apocalypse Now*, and raises questions about what elements these creations have in their drive and origins. The motives remain the same: the language, styles, conventions are time-bound however, and differ.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS: We will be formatting our work using the Chicago Manual of Style for this class (see the Appendix or your handbook for details). You will have the opportunity to demonstrate our learning outcomes by accomplishing the following tasks:

Tuesdays

1. **Author Biographies.** These are to be prepared for discussion and check-in on Tuesdays w/ ✓+, ✓, ✓- (A, B, C) option. These 2-page reviews will be used as a springboard for class discussion.
 1. Go further afield in researching biographical information about writers. The dry statistics aren't that interesting (an obituary of facts) and don't help in bringing the life of the person before our eyes. What made these people interesting? What were they like, personally? Who were their friends, and why? What were they trying to do?
2. **Creative Writing Exercises.** (10 points each) We'll do these in the class Tuesdays for credit/no credit. We'll have the option to read them aloud, if you wish. Attendance & discussion is necessary for credit.
 1. We'll try to follow the form and intent of the author of the week in order to understand the process of writing.

Thursdays

1. **Analysis (Feedback) Letter.** (25 points each) Each of us will pick a single element from the list on the Moodle site, read the assigned work with that in mind and be prepared to talk about that aspect in the class discussion. A two-page analysis (feedback letter) is to be handed in during class or uploaded to me each Thursday before we talk about the work. No late work for this.
 1. These exercises will take the form of creative writing feedback letters addressed to the author and focusing on a particular fictive or creative element used in the piece of writing we are studying. A list of these topics can be found in the syllabus and on our Moodle website.
 2. Use the Feedback Template posted on the website. It contains guidelines and a list of topics to analyze.

3. Paste your biographical exercises to this document and upload them together.
1. **Final Essay.** (200 points) This take-home exam will be due during the final week of classes (1200-1800-word paper [5-7 pages]). It will be a self-reflection paper in which you will assess
 1. Changes (growth) in your thinking and attitudes towards yourself, literature, and the human condition
 2. Aspects about your own thinking that you have become aware of
 3. Insights about the relevance of literature and you.

The Story Feedback, due each Thursday on the assigned work:[1]

You will be responsible for turning in, on the dates specified, a thorough, thoughtful, two or more, typed pages of (double-spaced in courier #12 font) analysis of the assigned work from the textbook.

For the written critique, allow at least two readings of the work, then choose one of the following topics, and be prepared to talk about it. Write a three-paragraph “micro-analysis” focusing on your subject and its role in the story. **Please Note:** this is not to be a critique or review of these works. It is to be an example of *your own* close reading abilities and your understanding of the relationship between a writer’s craft and your interpretation of the story’s subject or psychological conflict.

In your analysis, use direct quotations from the text to support and explore your topic. I’ll evaluate these based on 1) the quality of your questions or inquiry; 2) open, but careful thinking; 3) clarity of presentation; 4) specifics from the text for support.

Written Analysis Topics for These Readings:

Pick ONE of the following for your analysis and use a different topic for each work.

1. The handling of time.
2. Place and imagery.
3. Voice and/or point of view.
4. “Focal” character.
5. The role of a minor character.
6. Humor.
7. Mythological (or other literary) motifs.
8. The pattern of the sentence.
9. The art of the dialogue.
10. The pattern of the paragraph.
11. Transitions.
12. The use of formal repetition.

13. The opening.
14. The pattern of development.
15. The dramatic moment or crisis—is there one?
16. Ending or resolution.
17. Poe's Single Effect.
18. The initial problem and its development.

NOTE: Please try to submit your work by uploading it on the Moodle website. I've provided links and instructions there for you. These assignments are due before class on the due dates. You will get them back sooner than written work (which is due in class), and have the opportunity to get more feedback on them.

Resources:

- My Web Page (<http://cf.linnbenton.edu/artcom/english/millet/web.cfm?pgID=54>) has a list resources and templates.
- See pages 18-19 in the General Catalogue for a list of **campus** resources. The Writing Center is an excellent place to get professional help with your essays.

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(Further information at <http://po.linnbenton.edu/BP1015 - Nondiscrimination and Nonharassment Policy.pdf>)

LBCC is committed to inclusiveness and equal access to higher education. If you have approved accommodations through the Center for Accessibility Resources (CFAR) and would like to use your accommodations in the class, please talk to your instructor as soon as possible to discuss your needs. If you believe you may need accommodations but are not yet registered with CFAR, please visit the [CFAR Website](#) for steps on how to apply for services or call 541-917-4789.

Tentative Schedule

(Subject to revision, with notice. The up-to-date and more detailed schedule is posted for on our Moodle course website))

Week1:

Tuesday

- **Course Introduction:** *Who Writes This Stuff, and Why?* Syllabus and overview
- What is literature and who wrote it? Who cares?
- Literature through the ages has been more than an art form. People have been killed for writing it
- A little bit about you: What's your name; where do you come from; where are you going; what time is it?

Begin reading *Beowulf* from the text.

Thursday: Poe's Single Effect.

- The Heart of the story: two levels.
- Writing Exercise #1: Who Speaks? Point of View. An autobiographical short-short story. First person POV, then a rewrite from third person POV. Think of a significant event that stands out in your life, and write a one-page story about it. Then rewrite it in the 3rd person POV: "he" or "she." Give the character a name: Grendel.
- Keep reading *Beowulf*! Have the long poem read with your biography finished for next Tuesday's class.

Week 2: *Beowulf*. See our Moodle website for details.

Week 3: Chaucer: *The General Prologue*

Week 4: Chaucer: See our Moodle website for details.

Week 5: Malory: *The Death of Arthur*

Week 6: Malory: *The Death of Arthur: Lancelot; Guinevere*

Week 7: The English Bible: *Corinthians* and the translations. See our Moodle website for details.

Week 8: Marlowe: *Doctor Faustus*. See our Moodle website for details.

Week 9: Marlowe: *Doctor Faustus*.

Week 10: John Donne: *Meditation 17*, etcetera; **Read several poems and be ready to talk about them...**

CAPSTONE Project due.

Week 11: Finals Week.

1 Read the work and examine its meaning closely. Mark the pages in your texts. **Allow at least two hours of outside work for each hour of class** and be sure to have all assignments done before class. Your grade will reflect your preparedness.

[2] **Early English:** Introduction to the text and course. Note how the worldview will evolve in this period with the exploration of the individual through poets and writers who explore the human condition in largely existential terms. The origin of the search for that meaning will move from exterior to interior, from physical confrontation with the forces of nature to the landscape of the mind and soul. The world will become defined as moral or immoral depending upon who defines it, a world with notions of sin and consequences, of moral struggle and exploration not so much of the physical world as was the case with early literature, but with the landscape of the soul and mind and the cosmos. But again, survival is more than that of the body.

A Note

As with any survey course, there is just not enough time to cover everything that should be covered. Read widely and do not limit yourself to the works covered in class.[3]