

COURSE NUMBER AND TITLE: English 7254, Seventeenth Century Literature (through the Long Restoration)

INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Catherine Martin, Patterson 449, 678-2686 cgmartin@memphis.edu

DAY/TIME W 5:30-8:30

TEXTS: [in chronological order] NOTE: Many of these texts are available as e-books.

Francis Bacon, *Major Works*, ed. Brian Vickers. Oxford. ISBN 978-0-19-954079-2

John Donne, *The Complete Poetry and Selected Prose of John Donne*, ed. Charles M. Coffin and Dennis Donoghue. Modern Library. 978-0375757341

Francis Godwin, *The Man in the Moon*, ed. William Poole. ISBN 9781551118963 (Broadview)

John Milton, *The Portable Milton*, ed. Douglas Bush. Viking. 0-14-015044-7

Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ed. Edwin Curly. Hackett, 1994. 0-87229-177-5

Daniel Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe*, ed. L.J. Swingle. Barnes & Noble, 978-1614823118

On Reserve: Neil Forsyth, *The Satanic Epic*; Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic*

AIMS AND ORGANIZATION: This course will explore the roots of the modern world in the works of Francis Bacon, John Donne, Francis Godwin, John Milton, Thomas Hobbes, and Daniel Defoe. In the process, the class explores the entirely new genres used for the first time in seventeenth century England: the philosophical, skeptical essay (Bacon); skeptical and metaphysical poetry (Donne); science fiction (Godwin); the biblical/historical--as opposed to chivalric--epic (Milton); purely deductive as opposed to faith-based political theory (Hobbes); and the journalistic essay and novel (Defoe). During this time scientific writing as we know it remained in its infancy, and by our standards, all of it remained highly poetic and imaginative, but we will also see how new conceptions of arriving at objective truth through empiricism method (usually credited to Bacon) strongly influenced all these genres. In Milton and Hobbes, we will also look at the birth of natural rights theory, especially the idea that inalienable rights of free speech and self-defense were fundamental to society and social progress. Although these developments have serious implications, all incorporated the idea of "free play" or creative thought that we now recognize as essential to bridging the often over-exaggerated gaps between art and science, truth and imagination. Also, in recognition of strong elements of Christian thought enduring throughout the century, we will be talking a lot about the devil!

ASSIGNMENTS AND WRITTEN WORK: Throughout the course, students will explore particular aspects of the seventeenth century background that interest them through oral/research reports. Students may either choose their own reports or select them from a list; the only requirement is that each author will be the subject of at least one oral. These reports plus weekly reading quizzes will constitute 25% of the student's grade. Each student will also write two essays: a short paper on a major poem or on two minor poems (25% of the grade), a term paper on one of the longer readings covered in class (40% of the grade). There will be no formal final exam other than a short 3-4 page written report on closely related developments of these genres in later texts or films (10% of the grade). The focus of the term paper and final will be arranged in consultation with the instructor and may be based (in part) on the research involved in preparing the oral report.