

ENGL 3210-001: British Literature to 1750

MW 12:40 p.m. – 2:20 p.m.

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This course surveys English literary history and its cultural contexts from Anglo-Saxon England through the 18th century. Our special focus will be on how writers position themselves and their writing by imitating or rejecting literary models; in the process we will see a variety of literary traditions and forms, from Anglo-Saxon mysticism to Elizabethan drama to the origins of the modern novel. Paying close attention to historical contexts as well, we will study how writers respond to, articulate, and even generate political, social, religious, and intellectual change. From poetry to prose, in an amazing range of genres and intellectual positions, over a grand sweep of time, the works on our syllabus have proven to be of lasting interest and influence for modern thought. We will read a large volume of material quite rapidly. A special challenge of the course, then, is to emulate how literary scholars come to grips with such a quantity of writing. What, besides plot, should you be reading for? What makes Chaucer's writing, for instance, instantly recognizable? How do Donne's sonnets differ from Herbert's? The work of the course gives special attention to such issues. While the lecture format might suggest students are passive receivers of information, your active engagement throughout the semester is vital to a positive experience of the course.

Requirements: short writing exercises; 5- to 7-page paper; midterm and final exams

*Norton Anthology of English Literature*, 9th ed., vol. 1 package A-C (Norton 2012) 9780393913002

*Beowulf: A Dual-Language Edition*, trans. Chickering (Anchor 2006) 9781400096220