

SYLLABUS

**San José State University
Department of English and Comparative Literature
ENGL 56A, Section 2: English Lit to the 18th Century
Spring 2009**

Instructors:	David Mesher
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Office Hours:	T-Th: 8:00-8:45, 4:30- 5:30
Class Days/Time:	T-Th 1:30-2:45
Classroom:	SH 413
Class Web Page:	www.sjsu.edu/depts/jwss/mesher/engl/56a

Faculty Web Page and MYSJSU Messaging

Copies of the course materials such as the syllabus, major assignment handouts, and so on, may be found on the class web page at www.sjsu.edu/depts/jwss/mesher/engl/56a. You are responsible for regularly checking with the messaging system through MySJSU for any messages that may be sent pertaining to this class.

Course Description

This course surveys English literature from its Anglo-Saxon beginnings through the eighteenth century—using a reading list of works that are not only important achievements in their own right, but also comprise an introduction to further study of all literature written in English, during this era and beyond. Lectures and discussions will focus on close readings, analysis and interpretation of the texts, as well as their linguistic, social, political, economic, cultural, religious, and historical background, including the literary and artistic movements and periods from which they come.

Course Goals and Student Learning Objectives

The course goals are: first, to provide students the opportunity to familiarize themselves with great works of English literature and, in so doing, to improve their ability to read, discuss, analyze, and writing about literature, with a focus as much on form as on content; second, to introduce students to the historical and cultural contexts of European and, specifically, British literature during the

medieval and early modern periods; third, to give students practice in expressing their own reactions to and interpretations of literary texts, both verbally and, especially, in writing; and last but not least, to give students a chance to read and appreciate some of the greatest works of English literature.

Student Learning Objectives

Upon successful completion of this course, students:

1. will have attained sufficient background in the literature of the medieval and early modern periods to pursue more advanced studies in this area, as well as to appreciate the contributions and influences of early English literature on later writers and their works, within and without the British Isles;
2. and will have demonstrated an understanding of the literary, historical, and cultural elements contained in these works, as well as expressed that understanding, logically and with insight, through their own analysis and arguments in their writing about the texts.

Required Texts/Readings

David Damrosch et al., eds. *The Longman Anthology of British Literature*, Third Edition, Volumes 1-3, 2006. ISBN: 0-321-33771-9.

Other Texts

In addition to the *Longman Anthology*, students should have access to a dictionary, thesaurus, and composition handbook (from English 1A or 100W, for example). That dictionary, incidentally, should not be reserved for essays alone. Students are expected to look up any unfamiliar words encountered in the texts that are not explained in the notes, and to be able to define them when called upon to do so in class. Obviously, this is particularly important in a class covering works originally written at quite a distance from us in time and space, since many of the places, concepts, items, and expressions may be unfamiliar.

Library Liaison

Toby Matoush, toby.matoush@sjsu.edu, 808-2096

Classroom Protocol

Preparation and Participation: Students should come to class having read the day's assignment and prepared to discuss it. Opportunities for such contributions may take the form of small-group or full-class discussions; in either situation, individual students may be called upon by the instructor to answer a question, interpret a passage, or express an opinion.

Quizzes: The best way to measure how carefully you are reading the texts, and how much of that reading you retain (at least for a day or so) is with short quizzes at the beginning of the class period. The quizzes will only cover significant information from that day's reading assignment, though that information may not be the sort readily accessible to you in plot summaries, outlines, or any other manner other than personally experiencing the text yourself. If you read well ahead of the assigned schedule, be sure to review your notes and come to class with a fresh and detailed impression of the works. A pattern of doing poorly on these quizzes should be taken as an indication that you are not doing the reading, or not reading attentively enough, or not reading with the care and analysis necessary to be successful as an English major and devotee of literature.

Recitations: Students will be asked to recite in class and by heart two passages during the semester – the first from the General Prologue of Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales*, and the second from a sonnet or play by Shakespeare. Memorizing great poetry is one way to ensure your familiarity and continuing enjoyment of it. Successful recitations will count in the overall participation grade.

Submission of written work: Your essay must be typed, double-spaced, and follow standard MLA format. Please number your pages, fasten them with a single staple in the top left corner, make sure your name is at the top of the first page, and do not use a cover page. Your paper may be handed in only during class, only by you, and only if you are attending the full session. Do not leave your paper in the English department office, under my office door, or anywhere else, unless by prior arrangement. Please keep a copy of all work submitted (on disk at least), and retain all graded work returned until the end of the semester; English majors should save a copy on disk and the graded copy of all their essays in department courses, since these will be required for the portfolio in their senior seminar. Please do not submit late work, or unassigned work, except by prior arrangement. Students should anticipate a significant delay in the return of any late work.

Classroom conduct: Please do not read non-course related materials during class, and refrain from conversations or inappropriate comments while the instructor or classmates are speaking. Turn off cell phones, music, pagers, and other likely distractions. while in class. Laptops may be used only for note-taking in class; otherwise they must be turned off.

Dropping and Adding

Students are responsible for understanding the policies and procedures about adding and dropping classes, including deadlines and penalties. Deadlines for adding and dropping are listed on the course calendar, below. Other information about academic policies is available at <http://info.sjsu.edu/web-dbgen/narr/soc-spring/rec-406.html>. Information about late drop is available at <http://www.sjsu.edu/sac/advising/latedrops/policy/>. Exceptions to these policies must be granted by administrators, not instructors.

Assignments and Grading Policy

1. Class participation, recitations, quizzes, and timely completion of work: 20%
2. One essay (1500 words total): 25%
3. Two midterm exam: 15% each
4. Final exam: 25%

Grading will be on a 100-point scale for each assignment. For the final mark, 100-97 will be an A+, 96-94 an A, 93-90 an A-, 89-87 a B+, 86-84 a B, 83-80 a B-, 79-77 a C+, 76-74 a C, 73-70 a C-, and so on.

In English Department courses, instructors will comment on and grade the quality of student writing as well as the quality of ideas being conveyed. All student writing should be distinguished by correct grammar and punctuation, appropriate diction and syntax, and well-organized paragraphs. Grades issued will represent a full range of student performance and will adhere to the following SJSU academic standards of assessment:

The “A” essay will be well organized and well developed, demonstrating a clear understanding and fulfillment of the assignment. It will show the student’s ability to use language effectively and construct sentences distinguished by syntactic complexity and variety. Such essays will be essentially free of grammatical, mechanical, and usage errors.

The “**B**” essay will demonstrate competence in the same categories as the “**A**” essay. The chief difference is that the “**B**” essay will show some descriptably slight weaknesses in one of those categories. It may slight one of the assigned tasks, show less facility of expression, or contain some minor grammatical, mechanical, or usage flaws.

The “**C**” essay will complete all tasks set by the assignment, but show weakness in fundamentals (usually development), with barely enough specific information to illustrate the experience or support generalizations. The sentence construction may be less mature, and the use of language less effective and correct than the “**B**” essay.

The “**D**” essay will neglect one of the assigned tasks and be noticeably superficial in its treatment of the assignment—that is, too simplistic or short. The essay may reveal some problems in development, with insufficient specific information to illustrate the experience or support generalizations. It will contain grammatical, mechanical, and usage errors that render some sentences incomprehensible.

The “**F**” essay will demonstrate a striking underdevelopment of ideas and insufficient or unfocused organization. It will contain serious grammatical, mechanical, and usage errors that render some sentences incomprehensible.

The Department of English reaffirms its commitment to the differential grading scale as defined in the SJSU Catalog (“The Grading System”). Grades issued must represent a full range of student performance: A= excellent; B= above average; C= average; D= below average; F= failure. Courses graded according to the A, B, C, No Credit system shall follow the same pattern, except that NC shall replace D or F. In such cases, NC shall also substitute for W (or Withdrawal) because neither grade (NC or W) affects students’ GPA.

University Policies

Academic integrity

Students should know that the University’s Academic Integrity Policy is available at http://www.sa.sjsu.edu/download/judicial_affairs/Academic_Integrity_Policy_S07-2.pdf. Your own commitment to learning, as evidenced by your enrollment at San Jose State University and the University’s integrity policy, require you to be honest in all your academic course work. Faculty members are required to report all infractions to the office of Student Conduct and Ethical Development. The website for Student Conduct and Ethical Development is available at http://www.sa.sjsu.edu/judicial_affairs/index.html.

Instances of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Cheating on exams or plagiarism (presenting the work of another as your own, or the use of another person’s ideas without giving proper credit) will result in a failing grade and sanctions by the University. For this class, all assignments are to be completed by the individual student unless otherwise specified. If you would like to include in your assignment any material you have submitted, or plan to submit for another class, please note that SJSU’s Academic Policy F06-1 requires approval of all instructors involved.

To discourage plagiarism and contribute to the student’s awareness of this issue, the essay for this class will be submitted online to Turnitin.com (in addition to the printed copy handed in to the instructor). More information about this will be contained in the essay assignment.

Campus Policy in Compliance with the American Disabilities Act

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, or if you need to make special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible, or see me during office hours. Presidential Directive 97-03 requires that students with disabilities requesting accommodations must register with the DRC (Disability Resource Center) to establish a record of their disability.

Student Technology Resources

Computer labs for student use are available in the Academic Success Center located on the 1st floor of Clark Hall and on the 2nd floor of the Student Union. Additional computer labs may be available in your department/college. Computers are also available in the Martin Luther King Library.

A wide variety of audio-visual equipment is available for student checkout from Media Services located in IRC 112. These items include digital and VHS camcorders, VHS and Beta video players, 16 mm, slide, overhead, DVD, CD, and audiotape players, sound systems, wireless microphones, projection screens and monitors.

Learning Assistance Resource Center

The Learning Assistance Resource Center (LARC) is located in Room 600 in the Student Services Center. It is designed to assist students in the development of their full academic potential and to motivate them to become self-directed learners. The center provides support services, such as skills assessment, individual or group tutorials, subject advising, learning assistance, summer academic preparation and basic skills development. The LARC website is located at <http://www.sjsu.edu/larc/>.

SJSU Writing Center

The SJSU Writing Center is located in Room 126 in Clark Hall. It is staffed by professional instructors and upper-division or graduate-level writing specialists from each of the seven SJSU colleges. Our writing specialists have met a rigorous GPA requirement, and they are well trained to assist all students at all levels within all disciplines to become better writers. The Writing Center website is located at <http://www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter/about/staff/>.

Peer Mentor Center

The Peer Mentor Center is located on the 1st floor of Clark Hall in the Academic Success Center. The Peer Mentor Center is staffed with Peer Mentors who excel in helping students manage university life, tackling problems that range from academic challenges to interpersonal struggles. On the road to graduation, Peer Mentors are navigators, offering “roadside assistance” to peers who feel a bit lost or simply need help mapping out the locations of campus resources. Peer Mentor services are free and available on a drop-in basis, no reservation required. The Peer Mentor Center website is located at <http://www.sjsu.edu/muse/peermentor/>.

Engl 56A: English Lit to the 18th Century, Spring 2009

Course Schedule

This schedule is subject to modification. If you miss class, please check for changes to the greensheet on the class web page at www.sjsu.edu/depts/jwss/mesher/engl/56a

Jan	22	Thur	Introduction; "Middle Ages" (3-26).
	27	Tues	<i>Dream of the Rood</i> (115-19); <i>The Wanderer</i> (153-56); Riddles (158-62).
	29	Thurs	<i>Beowulf</i> (27-74).
Feb	3	Tues	<i>Beowulf</i> (74-93); CD: <i>The Dirge</i> . Last day to drop.
	5	Thurs	Arthurian Myth (163-64); Marie de France (181-200); CD: "Sumer is icumen in"
	10	Tues	Geoffrey Chaucer (293-99); <i>Canterbury Tales: General Prologue</i> (316-57); CD: "General Prologue." Last day to add.
	12	Thurs	Geoffrey Chaucer, <i>Canterbury Tales: The Miller's Tale</i> (358-74)
	17	Tues	Geoffrey Chaucer, <i>Canterbury Tales: The Wife of Bath's Tale</i> (375-403)
	19	Thurs	No class
	24	Tues	Geoffrey Chaucer, <i>Canterbury Tales: The Nun's Priest's Tale</i> (444-59)
	26	Thurs	<i>Sir Gawain and the Green Knight</i> (200-228)
Mar	3	Tues	<i>Sir Gawain and the Green Knight</i> (228-258)
	5	Thurs	<i>The Second Play of the Shepherds</i> (531-551)
	10	Tues	First Midterm
	12	Thurs	Midterm review. "Early Modern Period" (667-87); Wyatt (695-702); Spenser (822-4, 828, 832-57)
	17	Tues	Spenser (867-79, 889-893); Sidney (1000-08, 1015-20)
	19	Thurs	William Shakespeare (1273-6), <i>Twelfth Night</i> (1288-1331)
	24	Tues	Spring Break
	26	Thurs	Spring Break
	31	Tues	César Chávez Day
April	2	Thurs	William Shakespeare, <i>Twelfth Night</i> (1231-1345), Sonnets (1277 [18], 1278 [30], 1280 [55, 60], 1284 [106], 1287 [130])
	7	Tues	Sidney (1036-8 [1,7], 1041 [39], 1043 [63], 1052-3 [106]); Marlowe and Raleigh (1158-9); Donne (1669-76, 1678-9, 1689-90 [10], 1691-2); Herrick (1709); Herbert (1721); Philips (1761-2); Marvell (1749-51); .
	9	Thurs	John Milton (1813), <i>Paradise Lost</i> , Book 1 (1824-44)
	14	Tues	John Milton, <i>Paradise Lost</i> , Book 9 (1983-2010)
	16	Thurs	Second Midterm
	21	Tues	Midterm review. "Restoration and 18 th Century" (2121-44); Pepys (2145-60), Swift (2591-8); Gray (2854-5)
	23	Thurs	No class
	28	Tues	Aphra Behn, <i>Oroonoko</i> (2278-2321); Essay Due
	30	Thurs	John Gay, <i>The Beggar's Opera</i> (2717-65)
May	5	Tues	Alexander Pope, <i>The Rape of the Lock</i> (2631-52)
	7	Thurs	Eliza Haywood, "Fantomina" (3081-99)
	12	Tues	William Hogarth, <i>A Rake's Progress</i> (2785-92)
	19	Tues	Final Exam, 12:15-2:30