REBIRTH AND REBELLION:
ENGLISH RENAISSANCE LITERATURE AND THE QUESTION OF AUTHORITY

ENGL-3341.001
Fall 2014
TR 12:30PM-1:45PM, IH-157
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Office Hours: Monday 12-3, Tuesday 2-4

COURSE DESCRIPTION
This course will survey the literature of the English Renaissance by tracing shifting ideas about the closely related concepts of authority and authorship during a period that was shaped by religious upheaval, the rediscovery of ancient texts, global expansion, the invention of print technology, developments in scientific thought, and civil war. As we examine the use of English as a literary language in the poetry, prose, and drama of the Renaissance, we will address a series of overlapping questions: What kinds of authority—political, divine, historical, textual—do Renaissance writers draw upon to authorize their works? In what ways do they celebrate or rebel against various forms of authority? How are ideas about authority and authorship inflected by questions of cultural identity, gender, race, language, translation, religion, and history? In addition to examining each work in its historical context, we will explore the relationships between texts and literary genres, and we will give careful consideration to the processes by which we construct and “authorize” the literary history of this period.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

❖ To learn about the literature and culture of the English Renaissance.
❖ To practice reading and analyzing forms of early modern English.
❖ To think actively and critically about the construction of literary histories and the questions of authority and authorship.
❖ To hone skills for improving academic writing and oral presentation by practicing close reading and constructing debatable and complex arguments.

MAJOR COURSE REQUIREMENTS (HOW YOU WILL EARN YOUR GRADE)

Two Short Close Reading Papers (10% each—20% total): These short 2-3 page papers will ask you to do a close textual analysis of one passage from the texts we have read and to generate a complex thesis about your passage. I will provide a set of passages and guidelines in advance. These papers will help you develop the analytical skills necessary for the long paper.

Long Paper (15%) In a paper of 6-8 pages, you will address the provided prompt of your choice by developing an argument that is stated in the form of a strong, debatable thesis and supported by textual evidence and close analysis. Your paper should also engage with at least three secondary sources in order to enter into a dialogue with other scholars who have written on the text or texts in question. We will discuss this assignment in more detail and practice using textual analysis and research to build arguments in class.
Commonplace Book Posts (10%) and Final Reflection Essay (10%): As a class, we will build and maintain a collective “commonplace book” using a Tumblr page. Commonplace books, described by The Atlantic as “The Tumblrs of an Earlier Era,” were used in the early modern period as a tool to record and collect memorable passages from texts. You will select and post passages from each text that you find intriguing or challenging to our Tumblr page and “tag” them with themes, ideas, or other organizing terms. You may also post images or videos that you think resonate with or help to explain the passage or text in question. I strongly encourage you to comment on and “re-blog” your classmates’ posts as well. At the end of the semester, you will write final reflective essay (4-5 pages) on your contributions to the collective commonplace book and the book as a whole.

Midterm and Final Exams (15% each—30% total): The exams for this course (a midterm and a final) are designed to provide an opportunity for you to demonstrate your knowledge of key literary concepts as well as your ability to analyze texts using the reading and writing skills that we have developed throughout the semester. Both exams will consist of key terms and concepts, passage identification, and an essay.

Participation (15%): Your active participation in class discussion and group work is essential to your learning as well as that of your peers. You should therefore come to class having done all of the reading, but I do not expect you to have mastered the material. Rather, you should take careful notes on the reading and generate questions for each class session. What do you find confusing? Difficult? Interesting? Exciting? This process will prepare you to become an active learner and participant in class discussions. It will also help you to prepare for papers and in-class writing assignments as well as for the midterm and final exams. **You must bring your textbook and any relevant additional readings to class with you in order to receive full credit for participation.**

**REQUIRED READINGS**


Additional readings will be available on the Blackboard site for this course; these texts are marked as BB in the Class Schedule section of this syllabus.

**COURSE POLICIES**

**Attendance/Tardiness:** The success of this course depends on your regular attendance. No more than two (2) unexcused absences are permitted in this course. Any absences beyond this allotted number will negatively affect your grade. Contact me by e-mail, preferably before the class, to explain the reason for your absence. It is also important that you arrive to each class on time out of respect for your peers and the instructor. Habitual
lateness will also result in the lowering of your grade. In the event of extenuating circumstances, please contact me as soon as possible.

**Deadlines:** Assignments are due on the deadlines listed on the syllabus. In fairness to everyone in this class, I cannot accept late work. If you are experiencing a problem or have an emergency, please notify me in advance of the deadline rather than waiting until the deadline has passed.

**Communication and Office Hours:** I encourage you to come to my office hours or schedule an appointment with me if you have questions or would like to discuss your writing and your progress in the course. The best way to contact me outside of class and office hours is by e-mail. Any communication I send out to the entire class will be to your Islander e-mail address, so please check your university e-mail on a regular basis.

**Technology Policy:** The success of this course depends on your full attention to the materials and the conversations that develop around them, so you are not permitted to use laptops, tablets, and cell phones during this class. (I will make exceptions for students with documented disabilities that make note-taking by hand difficult.)

**Paper Guidelines:** Papers should be double-spaced, in 12-point Times New Roman font. Please do not use Cambria or Calibri font. You should have a consistent documentation style and should always cite your sources; I have uploaded a guide to citing works and ideas using the MLA citation style on our class’s Blackboard site. If you have any questions about citations, or how to acknowledge ideas or language other than your own, please come visit me in office hours; we will also review citation practices before the first paper. I also strongly encourage you to come to discuss your papers before they are due, and may require meetings as the semester progresses. I do not read full drafts, but I would be delighted to set up a meeting to discuss your paper with you before it is due.

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY/PLAGIARISM**

University students are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the highest standards of academic honesty. Academic misconduct for which a student is subject to penalty includes all forms of cheating, such as illicit possession of examinations or examination materials, falsification, forgery, complicity or plagiarism. (Plagiarism is the presentation of the work of another as one’s own work.) In this class, academic misconduct or complicity in an act of academic misconduct on an assignment or test will result in failure of the course.

**DROPPING A CLASS**

I hope that you never find it necessary to drop this or any other class. However, events can sometimes occur that make dropping a course necessary or wise. Please consult with me before you decide to drop to be sure it is the best thing to do. Should dropping the course be the best course of action, you must initiate the process to drop the course by going to the Student Services Center and filling out a course drop form. Just stopping attendance and participation WILL NOT automatically result in your being dropped from the class. [DATE from academic calendar] is the last day to drop a class with an automatic grade of “W” this term.

**CLASSROOM/PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOR**

Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi has a diverse student population that represents the population of the state. Our goal is to provide you with a high quality educational experience that is
free from repression. You are responsible for following the rules of the University, city, state and federal government. We expect that you will behave in a manner that is dignified, respectful and courteous to all people, regardless of sex, ethnic/racial origin, religious background, sexual orientation or disability. Behaviors that infringe on the rights of another individual will not be tolerated.

**Grade Appeals**

Students who feel that they have not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in this class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. For complete details on the process of submitting a formal grade appeal, please visit the College of Liberal Arts website, cla.tamucc.edu/students/studentinfo.html. For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Associate Dean.

**Disabilities Accommodations**

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please call or visit Disability Services at (361) 825-5816 in Corpus Christi Hall 116. If you are a returning veteran and are experiencing cognitive and/or physical access issues in the classroom or on campus, please contact the Disability Services office for assistance at (361) 825-5816.

**Statement of Academic Continuity**

Recommended text or compose your own] In the event of an unforeseen adverse event, such as a major hurricane and classes could not be held on the campus of Texas A&M University–Corpus Christi; this course would continue through the use of Blackboard and/or email. In addition, the syllabus and class activities may be modified to allow continuation of the course. Ideally, University facilities (i.e., emails, web sites, and Blackboard) will be operational within two days of the closing of the physical campus. However, students need to make certain that the course instructor has a primary and a secondary means of contacting each student.

**Academic Advising**

It is imperative that all students visit regularly with an academic adviser. Each college within the university has an academic advising center, staffed by fulltime, professional advisers to assist students with course selection, degree plans, and other academic matters. To find out how to contact the right adviser, go to: http://www.tamucc.edu/academics/advising.php

Students who have yet to declare a major are advised by the Academic Advising Transition Center. For more information, go to: http://www.tamucc.edu/~aac

The College of Liberal Arts requires that students meet with an Academic Advisor as soon as they are ready to declare a major. The Academic Advisor will set up a degree plan, which must be signed by the student, a faculty mentor, and the department chair. The College’s Academic Advising Center is located in Driftwood 203E, and can be reached at 825-3466.
**REMINDER TO ENGLISH MAJORS**
As part of the English undergraduate capstone course (ENGL 4351), all English majors are required to submit a portfolio of writings in different discourse genres that they have completed for their college classes. To help you prepare for this assignment, you should **keep a copy** of all essays, research papers, literary analyses, creative and report writing, etc., so that you will have an ample selection from which to choose when the portfolio comes due.

**COURSE CALENDAR** (This schedule is subject to revision, with advance notice.)

**Week 1: Introduction**
8/28  
Introduction to the course and review of the syllabus  
What is the English Renaissance? How do we define authority?

**Week 2: Utopian Authority**
9/2  
Thomas More, *Utopia*, Book I
9/4  
Thomas More, *Utopia*, Book II  
(Please take time to explore [www.thopenutopia.org](http://www.thopenutopia.org))

**Week 3: “In me claim no more authority”: Love and Loss in English Renaissance Lyric**
9/9  
Sir Thomas Wyatt, “Farewell Love,” “My Lute, Awake!” “Whoso List to Hunt,” “They Flee from Me,” “And Wilt Thou Leave Me Thus?,” “Some Time I Fled the Fire,” “Blame Not My Lute”


9/11  
Christopher Marlowe, “The Passionate Shepherd”

Walter Ralegh, “The Nymph’s Reply”

**Week 4: Royal Authority**
9/16  
**Short Paper #1 Due**

9/18  
Walter Ralegh, “The Ocean to Cynthia,” “A Vision Upon the Fairy Queen,” “Nature That Washed Her Hands in Milk,” “Farewell to the Court,” “The Author's Epitaph, Made by Himself,” selection from *The Discovery of Guiana*, and selection from *The History of the World*

**Week 5: Allegorical Authority: *The Faerie Queene***
9/23 Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*: “A Letter of the Authors” (Letter to Ralegh) and Book I, proem and canto 1


**Week 6: Poetic Authority**

9/30 Philip Sidney, *An Apology for Poetry*

10/2 *Astrophil and Stella*: 1, 3, 7, 24, 31, 45, 53, 60, 68, 74, 89, 90, 104, 107, 108, and second song

**Week 7: “Art made tongue-tied by authority”: Shakespeare’s Sonnets**

10/7 Shakespeare, *Sonnets* 1, 18, 20, 35, 128

10/9 **MIDTERM EXAM**

**Week 8: Religious Authority: Psalms, Songs, and Sonnets**

10/14 Philip Sidney, Psalms 6, 23, and 32 (BB)

Mary Herbert, Countess of Pembroke: Psalm 52, Psalm 139, “Even now that care” (BB), and “To Thee Pure Sprite” (BB)

John Donne, “Upon the Translation of the Psalms by Sir Philip Sidney, and the Countess of Pembroke, His Sister”


**Week 9: Knowledge and the Rejection of Authority**

10/21 **Short Paper #2 Due**

Christopher Marlowe, *Doctor Faustus*, Scenes 1-7

10/23 Christopher Marlowe, *Doctor Faustus*, Scenes 8-13

**Week 10: Exercising and Exorcising Authority**


**Week 11: Women’s Authorship, Women’s Authority**


Week 12: The Authority of Science
11/11  Francis Bacon, selections from *The New Atlantis*
11/13  Margaret Cavendish, selections from *The Blazing World*

Week 13: “Authority and Reason”: *Paradise Lost*
11/18  Long Paper Due

John Milton, *Paradise Lost*, Book I
Aemilia Lanyer, “Eve’s Apology: In Defense of Women”


Week 14: Authorship, Literary History, and the Authority of the Canon?
11/27  No class. Happy Thanksgiving!

Week 15: Conclusions
12/2  Last day of class. Commonplace Book Final Reflection Essay Due

FINAL EXAM: Tuesday, December 9th at 11:00AM, Location TBD