

**ENGLISH 350: MONSTERS, KNIGHTS, LOVERS: EDMUND SPENSER'S POETICS
POLICIES & SYLLABUS**

SPRING 2013 | W 7:10 PM TO 9:40 PM | 011 ACADEMIC IV

INSTRUCTOR: KAREN NELSON, PHD

OFFICE: 309 PAHB | OFFICE HOURS: W 6 PM TO 7 PM & BY APPOINTMENT

EMAIL: KNELSON@UMD.EDU OR NELSONK@UMBC.EDU | TELEPHONE: 301 405-3185

REQUIRED TEXTS:

- Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, ed. Thomas P. Roche and C. Patrick O'Donnell. NY: Penguin Classics, 1979. ISBN 978014022078.
- Edmund Spenser, *Edmund Spenser's Poetry*, ed. Hugh Maclean and Anne Lake Prescott. NY: Norton, 1992. ISBN 9780393962994.

SCHEDULE (SUBJECT TO CHANGE)

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| W Jan 30 | Introductions. Course Policies; the 16th Century; Edmund Spenser; Reading Strategies; Code of Academic Integrity; www.umbc.edu/undergrad_ed/ai/students.html |
| W Feb 6 | <i>Faerie Queene</i> Book 1, Cantos 1-6 |
| W Feb 13 | <i>Faerie Queene</i> Book 1, Cantos 7-12 RECITATION DUE THIS WEEK. MAKE AN APPOINTMENT. |
| W Feb 20 | <i>Faerie Queene</i> Book 2, Cantos 1-6 |
| W Feb 27 | <i>Faerie Queene</i> Book 2, Cantos 7-12 FIRST PAPER DUE. |
| W Mar 6 | <i>Faerie Queene</i> Book 3, Cantos 1-6 FIRST REPORT DUE. |
| W Mar 13 | <i>Faerie Queene</i> Book 3, Cantos 7-12 |
| W Mar 20 | NO CLASS. Spring Break. |
| W Mar 27 | NO CLASS. Read ahead. |
| W Apr 3 | <i>Faerie Queene</i> Book 4, Cantos 1-12* [*note divergence in pattern!] SECOND REPORT DUE. |
| W Apr 10 | <i>Faerie Queene</i> Book 5, Cantos 1-6 |
| W Apr 17 | <i>Faerie Queene</i> Book 5, Cantos 7-12 PROPOSAL DUE FOR SECOND PAPER |
| W Apr 24 | <i>Faerie Queene</i> Book 6, Cantos 1-6 THIRD REPORT DUE |
| W May 1 | <i>Faerie Queene</i> Book 6, Cantos 7-12 |
| W May 8 | <i>Amoretti</i> , sonnets 1, 3, 6, 20, 22, 33, 34, 35, 45, 53, 60, 65, 67, 68, 74, 80, 83 SECOND PAPER DUE |
| W May 15 | <i>The Shepheardes Calendar</i> "March," "Aprill," "Maye," "June," "Januarie," "Februarie" |

FINAL EXAM: WEDNESDAY, 22 MAY 2013, 7:10 pm

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ENGLISH 350: MONSTERS, KNIGHTS, LOVERS: EDMUND SPENSER'S POETICS

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Spenser experiments with form as literature moves into English in the sixteenth century. He uses epics, eclogues, and sonnets to demand that his readers engage fully to battle or become the male and female monsters, knights, and lovers that populate his landscapes. The complexity of his work disguises the ways in which he, like advice columnists, guides readers through life's difficulties and, like Jon Stewart or *The Simpsons*, manipulates discourses of his day. We will consider genre, gender, politics, religion, sin, desire, visual arts, and more, and explore together how Spenser shapes these worlds and us as readers.

METHODS

This course is discussion-based, with students participating almost every class period. Discussion will be encouraged by in-class writing and by small group discussions. In addition, students will focus their attention on assigned characters or aspects of the text and report upon relevant findings either orally or via blog postings, depending upon the exigencies of the schedule. These reports will serve as the basis for contributions to a Wiki on-line resource.

REQUIREMENTS AND GRADES

Grades will be based on participation (discussion and recitation, 30% in sum), three 2-page reports (15% in sum), two papers (one 4-5 pp. source comparison, 10%, and one 6-8 pp. contribution to an on-line reader's guide, 15%), quizzes (10%), and a final examination (20%). Additional information about these assignments is included in this document, below, and is available on ELMS.

Note that **attendance** will radically affect the class participation grade. Those with more than three unexcused absences will be unable to earn an A in participation, and since participation and quizzes cannot be made up, absences will impact those grades as well. Course preparation outside of class should average two to three hours of study for every hour in class. Regular attendance and participation in this class are the best ways to grapple with the readings under consideration in this course.

For every **medically necessary absence** from class, you need to make a reasonable effort to notify me in advance of the class. When you return, you must bring a note or send email identifying the date of and reason for the absence. If you are absent more than once, you must provide documentation signed by a health care professional. If you are absent on days when tests or quizzes are scheduled or papers are due, you must notify the instructor in advance (either by sending email to knelson@umd.edu or by leaving a voice mail message at 301-405-3185), and upon returning to class, bring documentation of the illness, signed by a health care professional.

Students whose **religious observances** conflict with deadlines in this class must notify me of projected absences within the first two weeks of the semester so that we may arrange together for accommodations.

Students with **disabilities** should work with the campus's Disability Support Services office (410-455-2444 or lrc_comments@umbc.edu) to have their disabilities documented. Please provide letters of accommodation prior to the end of the add/drop period or, if documentation is in process, please alert me so that we can determine together the best way to support specialized learning styles.

In case of **inclement weather**, please check the UMBC homepage under the "events" section or call the Hot Line (410-455-6789). We will follow the campus procedures. I will also send announcement over email if conditions seem on the cusp; it may be true that we attempt to convene remotely or supplement a missed class with an on-line chat to keep on track with the reading schedule and other deadlines.

Academic Integrity: http://www.umbc.edu/undergrad_ed/ai/students.html

Do your own work. Cite the sources for any work not your own. If you are having trouble with the workload, come talk with me or send me email as soon as you recognize the problem. If an

assignment overwhelms you, we need to develop a plan of action together. Submitting other people's efforts as your own will submarine you, both in the short and the long term.

ADDITIONAL ASSIGNMENT INFORMATION

Readings: Complete assigned readings **before** the class day for which they are listed.

Papers and Reports: Should be typed, double-spaced, with 1" margins, in a "standard" 12-point font (Times, Cambria, or the like). *Papers should have a separate title page*, and the pages should be numbered. Please *staple* the pages together.

I evaluate papers and reports using these criteria:

- **Thesis/exigence:** You communicate an argument, and you show how your reading helps us understand this text.
- **Proof:** You use the best details from the text that support your argument. You do NOT summarize the plot; instead, you provide the precise elements from the text that ensure that your readers agree with your assessment of the way this text is working.
- **Analysis:** You explain to your reader how these details illuminate your thesis.
- **Argument/Organization:** You structure your ideas into a cohesive, logical explanation of the topic. You probably cannot rely upon the structure of one paragraph of introduction, three explanatory paragraphs, and one concluding paragraph. You also probably cannot offer a play-by-play summary of the text. Instead, think of the argument you are making about this text. What aspects of this text helped you understand this text in this fashion?

Reports: Context/Reviews

Deadlines: **March 6, April 3, April 24**

Grade: 5% apiece

Length: 2 pp. apiece

Attend **three** events related to Renaissance studies that suit your schedule. They might include departmental lectures ("Sea Dogs, Buccaneers, and Corsairs: Piracy in the Early Modern Age and Today," **Wednesday, February 20, 4:00 pm**, Albin O. Kuhn Library Gallery; "Free Medieval Manuscripts! Digitizing the Archimedes Palimpsest and Making Open Data," **Wednesday, March 27, at 12:00 noon**; and "Race and Shakespearean Performance," **Wednesday, April 17, 4:00 pm**, Albin O. Kuhn Library Gallery), or *Henry V* at the Folger, or the exhibition *Nobility and Newcomers in Renaissance Ireland* at the Folger from January 19 through May 19, or an art gallery (National Gallery of Art, Walters Art Gallery, Baltimore Museum of Art, Freer Sackler Gallery, Museum of African Art) and view their holdings from the fifteenth to the seventeenth centuries. Or, talk with me for more ideas. Then, write a two-page review for each. You might provide a brief summary of what you heard or saw, point to a detail or two that surprised you or was particularly thought-provoking, note possible connections to the *Faerie Queene*, or comment upon links you would make between this new information and issues we have been discussing in class.

Paper One: Source Comparison

Deadline: **February 27**

Grade: 10%

Length: 4-5 pp.

Focus: One small passage of text and relevant note (assigned). Follow the trail to the source. Read it. Analyze how Spenser manipulates this original text. What pieces of the story does he use? Does he expand it or contract it? What does he omit? Is it a complete re-telling, word-for-word? What does he accomplish in the *Faerie Queene* by making these changes? Why do you think he makes these changes you have outlined? Why incorporate this feature at this moment? What does its inclusion reveal about holiness, about Spenser as an author, about the characters concerned at this moment of the story?

Paper Two: Final Paper: Contribution to *Faerie Queene* Online Reader's Guide

Deadline: **May 8**

Grade: 15%

Length: 6-8 pp.

Focus upon the character or theme that has emerged for you this semester as central, or especially revelatory, or complicated in ways you find interesting. Assess in a methodical way its function in the work at large. You will need to propose two or three by **April 17** so that we can, as a class, develop an on-line resource; your paper will be the basis for a Wiki-based page. You will offer an overview of the aspect of the text, point to all of the relevant passages in the text, and then offer your analysis. We will develop the particular components together as a class, and I will post those details on our course website.

Recitation: During the week of February 13, you are required to meet with me for a recitation appointment. During your appointment, you will recite a portion of a text of your choosing. I must approve your choice PRIOR to your appointment. It must be at least 14 lines long. You will need to be able to discuss the text you've chosen as well as recite it, and you should be able to explain why you've chosen the text you're working with. You may also use this appointment time to discuss your ideas for your first paper assignment, or ask questions about the course.

Participation: Much of our class time will be devoted to discussion, which means that student participation is crucial. Your participation grade will be determined based on the quality of your contributions to class discussion and your work on any in-class or group projects. In general, but this depends a bit upon the group, average participation is one useful or thoughtful question or comment per class period. If you are not comfortable addressing the class, you might make a list of two or three questions that you have about the reading and start with one of those. You may want to keep a reading journal to help you prepare for class discussions and quizzes. See below.

Quizzes will be given at the beginning of class and cannot be made up (unless you have a university-sanctioned absence). If it seems as though the class cannot keep up with the reading, the quizzes will help prompt attention to the reading.

Reading Journal: You may decide to keep a reading journal to help you remember and manage the reading for this class. I will not collect them, but if you do keep one, you may bring it to class to assist you with discussions and quizzes. (If you keep it on line, print it and bring it.) Use it as a tool to help you engage as you read, in the way you practice arithmetic problems. Track issues you see recurring; list characters and identifying characteristics; map the trajectory of the plot(s). Consider the strangeness: note places that diverge from what you expect or captivate your imagination, and why they seem powerful or provocative. Identify the sources of your confusion, and begin to grapple with what may be at work. Note words or phrases or images that recur. Sketch what the words help you envision. Etc.

Deadlines: Papers are due **at the beginning of class** on the due date. Late papers (i.e. any papers submitted after the class begins) will be marked down one letter grade, and the grade will continue to fall one letter for every day it is late. If you are unavoidably absent, make arrangements to submit your paper in advance of the deadline.

Exam: The final exam for this class is scheduled for Friday, May 2, 2013, from 7:10 pm to 9:40 pm. We will use the final class period for a review session; students will generate a list of potential identification, short answer, and essay questions that will then appear on the exam.

Make-up Work: Quizzes and exams can only be made up if I have received notification in advance of your absence, at which point we will arrange together the possibility of a make-up session. If you do not show up for a quiz or an exam and have not made arrangements in advance, I will assume you will not be completing that assignment.

Draft dated 1/29/13

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