English 5117 WA: Spenser’s Shorter Poems

Course Location: RB3051
Class Times: T 2:30-5:30

Table of Contents

Instructor Information ................................................................. 1
Course Description/Overview .................................................... 1
Course Objectives and/or Learner Outcomes ............................. 1
Course Resources ..................................................................... 2
  Required Course Text(s) .......................................................... 2
Course Schedule ..................................................................... 2
Assignments and Evaluation .................................................... 2
  Assignment Policies ............................................................... 3
  Details of Assignments .......................................................... 3
  Marking Standards ................................................................. 5
  Collaboration/Plagiarism Rules ................................................ 5
Course Policies ......................................................................... 5
University Policies ................................................................. 5

Instructor Information
• Instructor: J.M. Richardson
• Office: RB3043
• Telephone: 8312
• Email: mrichard@lakeheadu.ca
• Office Hours: T: 1:00-2:00; WF: 11:45-1:00

Course Description/Overview
An examination of some of Edmund Spenser’s shorter poems in a variety of genres. “Shorter” here means “shorter than The Faerie Queene. We will be looking at Spenser’s sonnets, his Epithalamion, pastoral works (The Shepheardes Calender, Colin Clout Come Home Again), satire and beast fable (Mother Hubberds Tale), mock epic (Muiopotmos), complaints, and hymns.

Course Objectives and/or Learner Outcomes
• Read Spenserian texts of various kinds critically, and assess their rhetorical, ideological and aesthetic strategies.
• write well (grammatically correct, clear, effective prose).
• communicate ideas effectively and coherently, in both the persuasive essay, and a variety of other forms.
• identify the conventions of a variety of Spenser's poetic genres and modes (pastoral, sonnet, epithalamia, satire, beast fable, complaint, hymns, etc.) and to
identify ways in which individual texts work within, or expand the definitions of, those genres and modes.

• analyze specific literary devices and explain how those devices contribute to the meaning of a literary text.
• explain how a text is produced by, and produces, its historical and cultural context, and read texts critically within these contexts
• use library resources to research a topic and use what they discover to illuminate a text
• apply their knowledge of how literature works to their own writing.
• think independently and critically about literature and the issues raised by texts
• identify and assess the social, environmental and other ethical themes presented in texts
• analyze texts from a variety of theoretical perspectives.

Course Resources

Required Course Text(s)

Course Schedule
Note: This schedule is subject to revision, but does list the texts to be covered in the order in which they will be covered.

Weeks 1-2 (January 5-16): Introduction and start Amoretti and Epithalamion
Weeks 3-4 (January 19-30): Amoretti and Epithalamion, start The Shepheardes Calender
Week 5 (February 2-6): The Shepheardes Calender
Week 6 (February 9-13): No class, as I will be out of town delivering a conference paper
February 17-20: Study Break
Weeks 7-8 (Feb. 23-March 6): Mother Hubberds Tale
March 6: Final Drop Date (without academic penalty)
Week 9 (March 9-13): Muiopotmos, or the Fate of the Butterfly
Week 10 (March 17-20): Teares of the Muses
Weeks 11-end (March 23-April 7): Colin Clouts Come Home Again, Fowre Hymnes

Assignments and Evaluation

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Due date</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Length</th>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Due date</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Length</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Seminar</td>
<td>see descriptions below</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>c. 30+ minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long Research Essay</td>
<td>March 24, 2015</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>20 pages</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>due one week after classes end</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>see descriptions below</td>
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<td>Total</td>
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**Assignment Policies**

- All assignments, unless otherwise specified, are individual assignments and cannot be completed collaboratively.
- Assignments are due by 4:30pm on the dates indicated. If you do not hand in your paper in class, have it date stamped by security and submit it either to the English department office (RB3029), or to the instructor’s office.
- If you require an extension, you must ask for one BEFORE the due date and use my Extension Request Form.
- Policy concerning late assignments: Deadlines for assignments should be adhered to strictly. Unless extensions have been granted, the grades of late assignments will be reduced by 1/3 grade (e.g., from B to B-) on the day after the due date and by an additional 1/3 grade for each subsequent three-day period until the assignments are turned in.
- All assignments must be in MLA format, double spaced, with 1” margins, and in 12 point font.
- Exceptions to these policies are allowed only with a doctor’s note or other appropriate documentation.

**Details of Assignments**

**Essay (40%):** Since this is a graduate level course, you will develop your own essay topic, in consultation with me. Your topic will be based on your reading of the primary materials, the secondary literature, and background materials you may have decided are helpful to your understanding of the Spenserian poems (e.g., Petrarchan and other sonnets, earlier mock epics, beast fables, epithalamia, etc.). You should be thinking of a length of about 20 pages in a font like Times New Roman 12. Your essay topic may be a development from/extension of your seminar presentation or it may be on something completely different. In either case, it is a paper requiring research. I will distribute some starting bibliographies which will focus on the works themselves. If you develop an essay topic on, for instance, some aspect of gender relations, politics, law, class, medicine, geography, etc. in Spenser, you would, of course, need to do the appropriate background research on those areas as well. If your paper is based on your seminar presentation, I don’t want to see merely a slight expansion of your seminar notes, since it is not proper to receive credit twice for essentially the same piece of work. It would be
wise for you to start thinking about your topic fairly soon and see me about it before study break. The essay is due on Tuesday 24 March, 2015.

Seminar (30%): For your presentation itself, aim at a duration of about 30+ minutes, including the class discussion component. You may provide some sort of a handout to the class, use powerpoints, etc., if you think that will facilitate the presentation. If there is material other than the poem in question that you want the class to be familiar with ahead of time (e.g., an article on the poem, some background material, etc.) please let the class know in plenty of time. You may use whatever critical and theoretical approach(es) you wish and may tackle whatever issues you see as central to a fuller understanding of the poem (e.g., gender, class, Renaissance political machinations, religious disputes, etc.). You can do your presentation, for example, on some aspect of an entire poem, on some aspect of a smaller part of it (e.g., an eclogue in The Shepheardes Calender; a sonnet or two in Amoretti; one of the Fowre Hymnes), on a particular thematic or theoretical issue that interests you: for instance, genre issues (what Spenser does with pastoral, with the sonnet tradition, with satire, etc.), gender relations, politics (including the special issues that arise with a female monarch in a patriarchal system, colonialism in Ireland), class, etc. Whatever specific matter your seminar deals with, you should devise at least three questions that you will pose to the class in order to focus and direct the discussion. Email those questions to me, either before or immediately after, the presentation. I will be archiving them to help students with the other assignment described below. After the presentation, you will hand in whatever notes, powerpoints, etc. that you used. You may develop your seminar presentation into an essay topic, as noted above. The seminar will not be considered complete and ready to be graded until the questions, notes, etc. have been handed in.

Other (30%): You will do three short (c. 3 pages) papers, each of which responds to one of the questions posed by another student in his or her seminar. Each short paper will be worth 10%. Begin each of these papers by identifying the seminar and the question being addressed. These short papers are to be on three different works of Spenser, and they will also be different from the work you are focusing your essay on. In other words, by the end of the course, you will have handed in something on at least four different works of Spenser (for these purposes, Amoretti and Epithalamion will be considered separate works, as will the various poems in the Complaints volume). You should attend all the seminar presentations, note who presented on what, note the questions posed by presenters, listen and take notes on the responses of fellow students as well as keeping track of what you may have said in class on the questions. In short, your paper in response to a question can include ideas that you may have picked up from others during the in-class discussion. As for when to write these short papers and hand them in, it would be best to strike when the iron is hot: if a particular question or discussion arising from a question catches your fancy try to get your response in to me within a week of the presentation (since this is a form of participation grade as opposed to a research essay, further research, while welcomed, is not required). In any case, all three must be handed in by one week after the end of term.

NOTE: I may later provide other materials, such as short bibliographies for some of the plays. If so, I will probably either provide them in hard copy, or by email.
**Marking Standards**

All assignments will be marked in accordance with the [English Department Marking Standards](https://www.lakeheadu.ca/academics/departments/english/marking-standards).

**Collaboration/Plagiarism Rules**

Plagiarism is the unacknowledged use of someone else's words and/or ideas. Not acknowledging your debt to the ideas of a secondary source, failing to use quotation marks when you are quoting directly, buying essays from essay banks, copying another student's work, or working together on an individual assignment, all constitute plagiarism. Resubmitting material you've submitted to another course is also academic dishonesty. All plagiarized work (in whole or in part) and other forms of academic dishonesty will be reported to the Dean, who is responsible for judging academic misconduct and imposing penalties. The minimum penalty for academic misconduct is a 0 on the assignment in question. It might also be subject to more severe academic penalties. See the [Code of Student Behaviour](https://www.lakeheadu.ca/faculty-and-staff/policies/student-related/code-of-student-behaviour-and-disciplinary-procedures).

**Course Policies**

In order to keep the environment as conducive to learning as possible, students are expected to attended class regularly, and behave in a respectful and professional manner. All work is to be done individually, not collaboratively (except in the case of shorter assignment, option three.

**University Policies**

- Students in this course are expected to conform to the [Code of Student Behaviour](https://www.lakeheadu.ca/faculty-and-staff/policies/student-related/code-of-student-behaviour-and-disciplinary-procedures).
- Lakehead University provides academic accommodations for students with disabilities in accordance with the terms of the Ontario Human Rights Code. This occurs through a collaborative process that acknowledges a collective obligation to develop an accessible learning environment that both meets the needs of students and preserves the essential academic requirements of the course.

This course outline is available online through the English Department homepage.