Engl. 3314.01 – Chaucer

[Study of The Canterbury Tales and Chaucer’s world. [3] (HCA)]

Pavneet Aulakh
TR – 1:10-2:25

In this course we will go on a spring-time "pilgrimage" with Chaucer and some of his vividly imagined pilgrims who swap stories as they journey to Canterbury. Called "the well of English undefiled" by Edmund Spenser and the "father of English poetry" by Dryden, Chaucer and his tales will also allow us to travel back in time to familiarize ourselves not only with medieval England and culture, but also with the linguistic and poetic roots of the language that he helped to make our own.

This course satisfies the History/Pre-1800 requirement

Engl. 3340.01 – Shakespeare: Representative Selections:

“Shakespeare and the Conduct of Manhood”

[A representative selection of plays, including histories, tragedies, comedies, and romances, designed to give the student a sense of the full range of Shakespeare’s work in one semester. Repeat credit for students who have completed 3340W. [3] (HCA)]

Vereen Bell
TR – 1:10-2:25

In his mighty tome, Shakespeare: The Invention of the Human, Harold Bloom makes the extravagant claim that the complexities of what we now understand to be human nature had not existed in representation before Shakespeare put them before us in his plays and poems:

Literary character before Shakespeare is relatively unchanging; women and men are presented as aging and dying, but not changing because their relationship to themselves, rather than to the gods or God, has changed. In Shakespeare, characters develop rather than unfold, and they develop because they reconceive themselves.... The dominant Shakespearean characters– Falstaff, Hamlet, Rosalind, Iago, Lear, Macbeth, Cleopatra among them– are extraordinary instances not only of how meaning gets started, rather than repeated, but also of how new modes of consciousness come into being.

This episode of English 3340 will take what Bloom says for granted (not that there aren’t plenty of claims about Shakespeare) and explore one corner of the project he describes. We will focus on how some of Shakespeare’s strongest male characters both conceive of and reconceive themselves, for better and worse, within the context of their being male subjects to begin with, maleness being what it is they have to work with. Think of Falstaff versus Prince Hal, or of Macbeth constantly having to be told by his wife to man up and get the job done, or Hamlet brooding over the code of honor, or Lear’s deranging patriarchal pride, or Marc Antony as warrior and triumvir on the one hand and as the passionate lover of Egypt’s queen on the other.

The plays we will study– Richard II, Henry IV, Part I, Henry IV Part II, Henry V, Hamlet, Othello, King Lear, and Antony and Cleopatra– are far too complex to risk strangling with a single thematic approach. The issues described above involving manhood (very different in each of the plays) will be addressed more as a thread that runs through the plays, as a sometimes barely visible common denominator, than as an exclusive, foregrounded theme. In fact, it is the whole, complicated gestalt of each of these great plays that commends them, as Bloom implies, to our study and our understanding in the first place.

Your instructor in this section of “Shakespeare” is not an Early Modern specialist– is in it for interest in the subject and love of the plays– so the playing field between the instructor and the students will be more nearly level than it normally is, for better or for worse.

This course satisfies the History/Pre-1800 requirement
Engl. 3340W.01 – Shakespeare: Representative Selections:
“Feeling Knowledge in Shakespeare”
[A representative selection of plays, including histories, tragedies, comedies, and romances, designed to give the student a sense of the full range of Shakespeare's work in one semester. Repeat credit for students who have completed 3340. [3] (HCA)]

Pavneet Aulakh
TR – 11:00-12:15

In this course, we will engage a representative selection of Shakespeare's works spanning his career and covering the multiple genres he worked in: from comedies, to a history, to some of his most staggering tragedies, and finally plays that seem to defy these tidy classifications. Along the way, we will ask: what precisely are these plays representative of; and how are they representative of Shakespeare himself and his age? To answer these questions, we will consider the rhetorical and generic conventions by which Shakespeare's plays were understood by his audiences; but we will be equally concerned with learning about our own cultural, editorial, and interpretative practices and how they shape our own understanding of his art. In addition to being guided by these larger questions of interpretation, authorship, and cultural history, our study of Shakespeare will respond to the frequency with which his plays stage the limits of reason, the power and danger of the imagination, and the means by which we arrive at knowledge. With our focus on questions of epistemology, of what and how something can be known, we shall also have occasion to reflect on how plays as different as Midsummer's Night's Dream, Henry V, Much Ado About Nothing, Hamlet, Othello, King Lear, The Winter's Tale, and Cymbeline all represent Shakespeare's and his culture's views on his craft, which itself traffics in illusions and practices on the eyes and ears of its audiences, including ourselves.

This course satisfies the History/Pre-1800 requirement

Engl. 3346.01 – Seventeenth-Century Literature
[Poetry and prose from 1600 to the English Civil War, such as Metaphysical and Cavalier poetry, essays, romances, and satires. Authors may include Bacon, Cavendish, Herbert, Jonson, Lanier, Marvell, and Wroth. [3] (HCA)]

Leah Marcus and Rick Hilles
MW – 4:00-5:15

This course looks in depth at some of the most moving and intriguing poetry ever written, some of it erotic, some devotional, some mysteriously both at once. There will be special attention to the work of John Donne, Robert Herrick, George Herbert, and Andrew Marvell. We will also consider the modern legacy of these poets by studying their strong influence on contemporary poets like Elizabeth Bishop, Robert Lowell, Tom Gunn, Natasha Trethewey, Ada Limón, Seamus Heaney, and Mark Jarman. It would be fair to say that modern poetry would not have the shape it has without the legacy of seventeenth-century poetry. The course will be team-taught by Rick Hilles, who is a practicing poet, and Leah Marcus, a scholar who specializes in seventeenth-century literature.

This course satisfies the History/Pre-1800 requirement
Engl. 3360.01 – Restoration and the Eighteenth Century:
“Sex, Celebrity, Money, and Power: Culture and Literature in Britain, 1660-1800”
[Explorations of the aesthetic and social world of letters from the English Civil War to the French Revolution. Drama, poetry, and prose, including Restoration plays, political poetry, satire, travel narratives, and tales. Authors may include Behn, Dryden, Congreve, Addison, Swift, Finch, Pope, Fielding, Burney, Johnson, and Inchbald. [3] (HCA)]

Bridget Orr
MWF – 10:10-11:00

In 1660, London theaters reopened after closure by the godly government of the Interregnum, and actresses appeared on stage for the first time. They became the stars of the first celebrity culture; their images were sold widely, scandals circulated and they acquired fans and stalkers. A libertine court defied puritan and bourgeois morality and the theater displayed a new sexual frankness. Women began writing professionally for the first time in these years and their poetry, plays and novels engaged critically with social and political structures that embedded male privilege. Writers were not just preoccupied with vicious internal national politics but by the world beyond Europe, newly visible and important through trade, not least that in African slaves.

In this course, we will read poetry, plays, novels and memoirs produced during the creation of a commercially driven society that endured the first great financial crash, invented Anglophone feminism and pornography, pet-keeping, culture wars, coffee-houses, a fashion system and new media. We will also read texts by laboring-class writers and writers of color whose previously occluded voices found responsive readers in the new market place of print, joining and shaping debates over social justice and human rights.

This course satisfies the History/Pre-1800 requirement

Engl. 3364.01 – The Eighteenth-Century English Novel
[The English novel from its beginning through Jane Austen. Development of the novel as a literary form, and the study of selected works of Defoe, Richardson, Fielding, Sterne, and other novelists of this period. [3] (HCA)]

Jonathan Lamb
TR – 11:00-12:15

The eighteenth century is generally regarded as the period that saw the rise of the novel. Compared with the prose romances of the previous centuries, where knights battled each other and ladies were alternately wooed and abducted in Arcadian landscapes, the novel was new (novel) because it showed life as it was, ‘really’ was. ‘What delights are works of fiction such as exhibit life in its true state, diversified only by accidents that happen in the world,’ wrote the critic and lexicographer Samuel Johnson. So we shall try to do three things. First of all we shall look at two romances: Malory’s Morte d’Arthur from the late 15th century and Eliza Haywood’s Love in Excess from the early 18th. Having made some provisional judgements about how romance represents experience, we shall read three novels that consciously reject the improbability and immorality of romance, but all in different ways: Cerenates’s Don Quixote, Madame de Lafayette’s The Princess of Cleves, and Henry Fielding’s Joseph Andrews. Then we’ll go the first part of Samuel Richardson’s Pamela, whose epistolary style (‘writing to the moment’ as Richardson called it) gave unrivaled and apparently immediate access to the thoughts and feelings of his heroine, a servant-girl. By way of contrast we shall look at a novel of sensibility that makes comedy out of immediacy (Laurence Sterne’s A Sentimental Journey), and then our survey will end with two novels recalling features of romance, Matthew Lewis’s The Monk and Jane Austen’s Northanger Abbey. Third and concurrently with the first and second parts of the project, we shall be examining how the consumption of novels was understood by critics in the eighteenth century, and how it is understood now.

Thomas Malory, Morte d’Arthur (selections); Eliza Haywood, Love in Excess; Miguel de Cervantes, Don Quixote (first part); Marie-Madeline de Lafayette, The Princess of Cleves; Henry Fielding, Joseph Andrews; Samuel Richardson, Pamela (up to the marriage with Mr. B); Laurence Sterne, A Sentimental Journey; Matthew Lewis, The Monk; and Jane
Austen, Northanger Abbey. There will be a fair lump of reading to be done each week, but you will find these novels for the most part as easy to read as modern ones and none of them is very long. Where necessary I shall either reproduce and circulate ancillary material—portions of the Morte d’Arthur, critical essays, etc.—or direct you to where you can find it. Presentations will be done in groups of three and tackle a specific issue important for the class’s appreciation of the background of a given novel: the status of literature as a cultural and economic phenomenon; the status of women as characters and readers; differences between genres such as history, chivalric and pastoral romance, pornography and realist fiction; the importance of the print-market and its relation to intellectual property.

This course satisfies the History/Pre-1800 requirement

Engl. 3370.01 – The Bible in Literature

[An examination of ways in which the Bible and biblical imagery have functioned in literature and fine arts, in both “high culture” and popular culture, from Old English poems to modern poetry, drama, fiction, cartoons, and political rhetoric. Readings include influential biblical texts and a broad selection of literary texts from all genres and periods of English literature. [3] [HCA]]

Roy Gottfried

MWF – 11:10-12:00

Echoes and long shadows of the Authorized Version of the Bible (King James Version) in English Literature of the 17th through the twentieth centuries. Works include: poetry of Donne, Herbert, Marvell, and others; Milton’s epic Paradise Lost; Tennyson’s elegy In Memoriam; and Eliot’s The Waste Land. Some familiarity with the Bible is helpful, but not necessary. A midterm essay exam, a 15 page paper, and a final exam.

This course satisfies the History/Pre-1800 requirement