

LIT 3031-4080: Narrative Poetry from Milton to Browning

Syllabus – Course Objectives and Policies

Class Meetings: T Periods 5-6 (11:45-1:40), Th Period 6 (12:50-1:40) TUR 2305

Instructor: J. Stephen Addcox

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COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

This class will study narrative poetry in the two hundred years between John Milton's publication of *Paradise Lost* in 1667 and Robert Browning's publication of *The Ring and the Book* in 1868. While literary studies of this period have generally focused on the "rise of the novel," this class will consider the narrative verse that was produced during this period of the novel's growing ascendancy. Of interest to the work of this class will be the ways in which poetry is particularly suited to telling stories. What do poetically rendered narratives have to offer that is singular and distinctive? What makes any particular story better suited for poetry than some other form? To aid us in posing answers to these questions, we will also study traditional poetic meter and rhyme, especially as they inform and influence the narrative. In addition to Milton and Browning, we will read works by Alexander Pope, Lord Byron, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Alfred, Lord Tennyson, and Elizabeth Barrett Browning.

Traditionally, the narrative poem is a longer poetic form, and as a result, we will be reading lengthy poems over multiple class sessions. You will be expected and required to maintain the reading schedule as laid out in this syllabus. The study of these poems can be very rewarding, but it often requires a more sustained engagement that you might put into a sonnet or other short poetic form. Keep this in mind as you prepare for this course.

Required Texts and Materials

- Browning, Elizabeth Barrett. *Aurora Leigh*. Oxford World's Classics (ISBN: 9780199552337)
- Browning, Robert. *The Ring and the Book*. Broadview (ISBN: 9781551113722)
- Lord Byron, *The Major Works*. Oxford World's Classics (ISBN: 9780199537334)
- Lewis, C. S. *A Preface to Paradise Lost*. Oxford UP (ISBN: 9780195003451)
- Milton, John. *Paradise Lost*. Oxford World's Classics (ISBN: 9780199535743)
- Pinsky, Robert. *The Sounds of Poetry*. Farrar, Straus, and Giroux (ISBN: 9780374526177)
- Alfred, Lord Tennyson. *The Idylls of the King*. Penguin Classics (ISBN: 9780140422535)
- Additional readings will be made available on Sakai as PDF files. Students are expected to print their own copies of these readings and bring them to class on the days they are assigned.

COURSE POLICIES

The following policies apply to all students equally; do not request special treatment as it is unfair to others.

Attendance

- 1) **Attendance is required.** This course relies extensively upon discussion and interaction in class to facilitate learning. Each unexcused absence after three (3) will lower your course grade by half a letter. (Note: Because this class only meets twice a week, missing Tuesday will count as two [2] absences.)
- 2) **Be in class on time.** If you know that you are going to miss a class, be prepared to turn your work in early. You are responsible for obtaining any notes or information from missed classes.
- 3) **Absences for university-sponsored events, such as athletics and band, and religious holidays will be excused.** Written confirmation of your involvement in said activities is required for the missed classes to be excused.

Preparation & Late Work

You are expected to be prepared for every class, including completing all reading and writing assignments on time. Failure to be prepared for or to contribute to discussion will lower your participation grade. All assignments are due at the beginning of class. **Late work will be penalized one (1) letter grade for every calendar day the paper is late. Work will NOT be accepted more than a week past the due date.**

Academic Honesty

All students must abide by the Student Honor Code. For more information about academic honesty, including definitions of plagiarism and unauthorized collaboration, see: <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/honorcodes/honorcode.php>

Plagiarism is a serious violation of the Student Honor Code. You commit plagiarism when you present the ideas or words of someone else as your own. Any student who plagiarizes all or any part of an assignment will receive no credit for that assignment. Remember, *you are responsible* for understanding the University's definitions of plagiarism and academic dishonesty, which are outlined at the website above.

Classroom Behavior

Please keep in mind that students come from diverse cultural, economic, religious, and ethnic backgrounds. Diversified student backgrounds require that you demonstrate respect for ideas that may differ from your own. Any conduct that disrupts the learning process may lead to disciplinary action and a failing grade for the day.

Harassment

UF provides an educational and working environment that is free from sex discrimination and sexual harassment for its students, faculty, and staff. For more about UF policies regarding harassment, see: <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/sexual/>

Students with Disabilities

The Disability Resource Center in the Dean of Students Office provides information and support regarding accommodations for students with disabilities. For more information, see: <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/>

Graded Materials

Students are responsible for maintaining duplicate copies of all work submitted in this course and retaining all returned, graded work until the semester is over. Should the need arise for a re-submission of papers or a review of graded papers, it is the student's responsibility to have and make available this material.

Any complaint about separate assignments should be addressed to me and not to the English Department. If you have complaints about your final grade, you may see me at the beginning of the next term. If you find that you still have complaints after our meeting, you should consult with Professor Robert Thomson in the English Office. A review committee may decide to raise, lower, or keep the originally-assigned grade. This decision is final. The material submitted will remain on file in the English Department Office.

ASSIGNMENTS

- 1) Research Prospectus (15%):** [1000 words] The prospectus functions as a proposal for your research paper topic. In it you will describe your research paper topic and why you think it is worth writing. You will also describe two critical articles that will be useful to your project and how your paper will elaborate on or critique those authors' arguments.
- 2) Research Paper (30%):** [3500 words] You will be expected to produce a polished, well-researched paper on one of the texts that we have studied during the course of the semester. Students will choose their topics in consultation with me. More detailed requirements will be given around mid-semester.
- 3) Final Exam (30%):** The final exam will cover all the poetry we have read during the semester. It will consist of identifications, scanning exercises, and an essay. The essay questions will be posted to Sakai prior to the test date. Exam Date: Friday, December 16, 7:30am.
- 4) Weekly Response Papers (15%):** [12 papers @ 500 words each] Students will turn in weekly response papers throughout the course of the semester. Papers are due to Sakai by 11:55pm on Sunday evening. The response paper must address a particular theme or topic from *the upcoming week's* readings. Think of your response papers as testing grounds for ideas that you may decide to incorporate into your research paper.
- 5) Participation (10%):** You are expected to be an active and engaged student in this class. Those who speak up often and maintain a current knowledge of the assigned readings will do well; those who rarely or never speak in class or obviously fail to keep up with the readings will do poorly.

GRADE SCALE

A 4.0; A- 3.67; B+ 3.33; B 3.0; B- 2.67; C+ 2.33; C 2.0; C- 1.67; D+ 1.33; D 1.0; D- 0.67; E 0

Daily Schedule – Reading and Writing Assignments

*NOTE: All reading and writing tasks are **due on the day** they appear on the syllabus. This schedule of assignments is subject to change at any time; it is your responsibility to keep informed of any updates, including when you are absent.*

Week One (August 23 – August 25) **Drop/Add ends 8/26 @ 11:59pm

T - Course Intro: What is narrative poetry?
- *Paradise Lost* and the spoken word: *Six Centuries of Verse*

Th - *Paradise Lost*, Book I
- Preface to PL, Chs. 1-5 (pp. 1-32)

Week Two (August 30 – September 1)

T - PL, Books II-III
- Sounds of Poetry, Intro & Ch. 1 (pp. 1-24)

Th - PL, Books IV-V

Week Three (September 6 – September 8)

T - PL, Books VI-VII
- Preface to PL, Ch. 9-14 (pp. 62-107)

Th - PL, Book VIII-IX

Week Four (September 13 – September 15)

T - PL, Books X-XI
- Sounds of Poetry, Ch. 2 (pp. 25-49)

Th - PL, Book XII

Week Five (September 20 – September 22)

T - The Rape of the Lock (handout)
- For Better Verse @ University of Virginia

Th - Coleridge, Christabel (Handout)

Week Six (September 27 – September 29)

T - Don Juan, Canto I
- Sounds of Poetry, Ch. 3 (pp. 51-78)

Th - Don Juan, Canto II

Week Seven (October 4 – October 6)

T - Aurora Leigh, Books I-II
- Sounds of Poetry, Ch. 4

Th - Aurora Leigh, Book III

Week Eight (October 11 – October 13)

T - Aurora Leigh, Books IV-V

Th - Aurora Leigh, Book VI

Week Nine (October 18 – October 20)

T - Aurora Leigh, Book VII-VIII

Th - Aurora Leigh, Book IX

Week Ten (October 25 – October 27)

T - R&B: Intro (ll. 1-837), Book V (ll. 1-931)
- Sounds of Poetry, Ch. 5

Th - R&B: Book V (ll. 932-end)

Week Twelve (November 1 – November 3)

T - R&B: Book VI

Th - R&B: Book VII
- Prospectus Due

Week Thirteen (November 8 – November 10)

T - R&B: Book XI

Th - R&B: Book XII

Week Fourteen (November 15 – November 17)

T - Idylls: Dedication; The Coming of Arthur; Gareth and Lynette

Th - Idylls: The Marriage of Geraint; Geraint and Enid

Week Fifteen (November 22 – November 24)

T - Idylls: Balin and Balan; Merlin and Vivien; Lancelot and Elaine

Th - **Thanksgiving Holiday**

Week Sixteen (November 29 – December 1)

T - Idylls: The Holy Grail; Pelleas and Ettarre; The Last Tournament

Th - Idylls: Guinevere; The Passing of Arthur; To the Queen

Week Seventeen (December 6)

T - End of semester wrap-up
- Research Paper Due