British Literature I: The Middle Ages, Renaissance, and 18th Century

ENGLISH 3020 British Literature I: The Middle Ages, Renaissance, and 18th Century. Survey of English literature from the Anglo-Saxon period through Chaucer, Shakespeare, the 17th and 18th centuries.

15 lessons and 3 exams. 3 hours of college credit. 08/11/04.

Prerequisite: The satisfactory completion of English 1002, 1003, 1005, or equivalent credit is prerequisite for all English courses numbered 2001 or higher.
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How to Take an Independent & Distance Learning (IDL) Course

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- Other Materials
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Welcome

Congratulations! By enrolling in this course, you have taken a major step toward achieving your educational goals. We would like to let you know what you need to do before you start studying and remind you of some of our procedures and rules (for a full listing, please check our website at www.outreach.lsu.edu/idl).

Textbooks

To find out which textbooks you need for the course, refer to the course syllabus. To order your textbooks, see “Where the Books Are” on page vii in this course guide. If you wish to order your books by mail, please use the “Textbook Order Form” that is enclosed in your packet of materials.

Other Materials

Check to see if you need any supplementary materials, or if you need to arrange any interviews or extra materials for projects. You can find this
How to Take an IDL Course

information by reading “Other Materials” section in the course syllabus, and then reviewing the Lesson Assignments at the end of each lesson.

Time Limits & Extensions

Start planning your timetable now. Please note the following rules concerning timing:

- You have an enrollment period of *nine months* from the date of your enrollment to complete this course. If you are an LSU student, your dean may have given you a shorter deadline. If you cannot finish your course within nine months, you can make a written request for an extension of an additional three months, provided we receive your request before your course enrollment expires. It may be possible to request a second extension. Second extensions are given when you have made progress in the course, but have encountered significant difficulty in reaching completion. For a second extension, you must make a written request, explaining your circumstances. The request must be received prior to the expiration of the first extension period. There is a fee for each extension.

- We will accept a *maximum* of three lessons every seven calendar days. There must be an interval of seven days between each set of three lessons. If you submit more than three lessons in a seven-day period, the additional lessons will be held until they are eligible, and then logged in and forwarded to your instructor for grading. If more than six lessons are received in a seven-day period, the ineligible lessons will be returned to you for resubmission.

- We recommend that you submit your first lesson and wait for your instructor’s feedback before submitting additional lessons. That way, you will know whether you have a clear understanding of your instructor's expectations.

- We ask your instructor to grade your lessons and exams within two weeks, but during campus examination periods and vacation time, it may take your instructor longer to return your work.

- **If you are a graduating senior**, you must allow *at least* four weeks between taking your final exam and expecting your transcript to reach your university.

Exams & Grading

As soon as possible, begin to make arrangements for where you will take your examinations. To find out about your options, read the College
Examination Information in the appendix of this course guide. Then (if you do not plan to take your exam at LSU-BR), fill in the Exam Proctor Information Form in the appendix and send it to us before you start the course, so that we will have all your information prepared when you are ready to take your examinations.

Before we can send your exams to your exam proctor or allow you to take your exams in our office, we must have received all of your completed lesson assignments that precede the exam. Exams may not be taken until all of the assigned lessons have been submitted and accepted within our three-lessons-per-seven-days requirement. If an instructor grades any of your assignments as incomplete, you will not be eligible to take your exam(s) until you have completed the lessons.

Each course has its own grading scale, but for nearly all courses you must pass the final exam to receive credit for the course.

Remember that you only have one chance to take your examinations. You will not be allowed to repeat a failed exam within the same enrollment period. If you need to re-enroll in a course, please contact our office.

Typically, you will have three hours to take a three-credit-hour exam.

You should take your exam at least four weeks before you need your grade.

**Refunds & Transfers**

We hope you have enrolled in the course you wanted, but if not, you have 30 days to make a written request to receive an 80% refund, provided you have not submitted any lessons. Alternatively, you can transfer to another course, provided you make your written request within three months and pay a transfer fee. If you transfer, your enrollment period begins on the date of your original enrollment. Enrollments may not be transferred to another student.

If you want to withdraw from a course after the refund and transfer periods have expired, please let us know in writing that you have decided to drop the course. Provided that you do not sign in to take your final examination, there will be no record on your transcript to indicate that you ever enrolled in the course.
Electronic Resources

To assist you with your independent learning experience, we have created StudyNet, available at www.outreach.lsu.edu/idl. Once you reach the site, click “college services” from the enrolled students menu items.

This site includes up-to-date information on policies and procedures as well as resources and a number of online options to help you with your course. Using StudyNet, you may check to see whether we have received a lesson or exam, find out your grades, enroll in a course, submit change of address and exam proctor forms, and locate contact information for LSU Independent & Distance Learning staff members.

Contact Us

If you need us to clarify any of our policies, let us know! We are available by phone, by mail, by fax, and by e-mail.

- For questions regarding enrollment, lessons, or testing, call 800-234-5046.
- For questions regarding difficulty locating textbooks, call 800-234-5046 and ask to speak to the publications section.
- Our fax number is 225-578-3090.
- Our e-mail address is Answers@outreach.lsu.edu.
- Our mailing address is:
  LSU Independent & Distance Learning
  1225 Pleasant Hall
  Louisiana State University
  Baton Rouge, LA  70803-1508
Where the Books Are

Contents

✓ General Textbook Information
✓ LSU Online Bookstore
✓ Local Baton Rouge Bookstores
✓ Other Online Options

General Textbook Information

You must buy your own textbooks and other supplies. The bookstores listed below stock the textbooks used in LSU Independent & Distance Learning courses. If the books are not available from one of the following bookstores, they may be available from the publisher, online vendors, or from other local booksellers.

Other required materials for your course such as calculators, binders, etc., may be purchased locally.

Secondhand and paperback copies of textbooks are often available. If secondhand or paperback books are desired, make that request at the time the order is placed.

You must use the edition of the textbook specified by the course guide! Please do not ask if an alternate book is available. Always order using the ISBN provided in the syllabus to insure that you have the correct materials.

All of the bookstores listed below are independently owned and operated; they are not operated by Louisiana State University or LSU Independent & Distance Learning. Please be aware of refund and buy-back policies before you make your purchase.

LSU Online Bookstore

Specialty Books is the official bookstore for LSU Continuing Education. To order your textbooks online, go to www.specialty-books.com/LSU and follow the instructions provided.
Where the Books Are

Specialty Books
6000 Poston Road
Athens, OH 45701
800-466-7132
www.specialty-books.com/LSU

Note: Specialty Books is not a part of LSU; any questions or concerns should be directed to their representatives.

Local Baton Rouge Bookstores

The following Baton Rouge bookstores also carry course materials and textbooks:

Chimes Textbook Exchange (Gonzales location)
432 N. Burnside Avenue
Gonzales, LA 70737
800-925-1704 (toll-free)
E-mail: Chimestext@eatel.net

Chimes Textbook Exchange
268 W. Chimes St.
Baton Rouge, LA 70802
225-383-5161
www.chimestext.com

Co-Op Bookstore
3960 Burbank Dr.
Baton Rouge, LA 70808
225-383-9870 or 866-383-9870 (toll-free)
E-mail: books@coopbookstore.com
www.coopbookstore.com

Note: Always order using the ISBN provided in the syllabus to insure that you have the correct materials. These bookstores carry a wide variety of books that are used in on-campus and IDL courses. Be sure to indicate that you are ordering a book for an independent study course.

Other Online Options

Books may also be obtained from any vendor that sells college-level textbooks, including online booksellers, university bookstores, and publishers, but you must purchase the correct edition of the textbook(s). Independent & Distance Learning does not sell textbooks (any exceptions are specifically indicated in
your course guide), so please do not send money for textbooks to Independent & Distance Learning.

You must use the correct edition of the textbook, as specified in your course guide. Please take care to provide the correct information about the author, title, edition, ISBN, and date of publication when ordering your books. If complete information is not given when the order is placed, the wrong edition may be sent.

The best way to make sure that you order the correct textbook is to order by the ISBN provided in the syllabus.

For additional information on ordering books from online book vendors, visit our website at http://idl.lsu.edu/bookvendoronline.asp?nid=106.
ENGL 3020—British Literature I: The Middle Ages, Renaissance, and 18th Century

Textbooks


ISBN-10: 0-393-97486-3

William Shakespeare. I Henry IV. Any edition of this history play will be fine. Make sure you buy Henry IV Part I. Signet has a very readable edition with helpful notes.

Optional Textbook


(This is a dual language book: Middle English and Modern English on facing pages.)
It is recommended that you buy your textbooks as soon as possible. If you wait, you may not be able to find the correct textbook. During the nine months that you have to complete the course, a revised version of the course may be released. If the newer version of the course uses a more recent edition of the textbook or a different textbook from the one required by the version that you are enrolled in, you may have difficulty getting the textbook that you need for your version of the course. For that reason, you should buy your textbooks as soon as possible.

If you have trouble finding a book, check the list of recommended bookstores on the IDL website and order by the ISBN, not the title. If you are outside of the Baton Rouge area and try to buy your textbook locally or from an online bookstore and have difficulty locating the correct textbook or the required edition, please call one of the recommended bookstores. These bookstores try to maintain an inventory of all IDL textbooks. Be sure to specify that you need a textbook for the Independent & Distance Learning version of the course and verify the ISBN number to make sure you get the correct edition of the textbook.

Other Materials

Because proper MLA documentation is required in your writing, you should have access to the most current MLA Handbook or a reputable college handbook, like the Harbrace College Handbook (any edition later than the eleventh).

Since this course is a 3000-level course, no outside secondary research is necessary or required for its completion. Although secondary critical sources cannot be prohibited, I strongly caution you about using such material, especially Cliffs Notes or similar critical commentaries. To quote, paraphrase, or summarize from any sources without properly citing that source in your writing, whether done inadvertently or intentionally, is plagiarism.

Nature and Purpose of the Course

In his novel Howards End, British author E.M. Forster urges readers: “Only connect!” I will urge the same of you, fearless student, in this survey course of British Literature from its beginning to approximately 1800. In English 3020, you will immerse yourself in the rich literary heritage of Great Britain, a heritage that has profoundly impacted not only America but the entire world. In the process of your voyages in English, I hope you will discover some of your own cultural roots.

Your exploration should lead you to recognize shared human qualities in the diverse works we will survey and to understand that time and place influence both the artist and the audience. These are discoveries that you will make at
your own pace as you read works from the fifth century through the eighteenth century. You will have moments of recognition when a voice from another century speaks to you of a familiar pain or a shared joy. At other times, you will recognize how culture and beliefs affect human behavior—for example, what is unseemly bragging to one audience may to another audience be a necessary guide to a man's proper conduct.

The *Norton Anthology* and this course guide will help you to understand the words and the world that produced them, but your response will be determined by your own efforts. I don't expect you to love each work—some of the writing may seem difficult, some of the beliefs ridiculous. But I do expect you to understand the literature and to appreciate the conditions under which the artist worked.

**Working with the Course Material**

**A Note on Language**
The literature from the earliest periods is presented in translation. Old English cannot be read without some serious study; it is an ancestor, but a remote one, of the language we use today. Middle English is more clearly our tongue, with a peculiar sense of spelling and a difference in pronunciation that you simply cannot “hear” on the printed page. It is readable, however, if you are patient and use the notes provided in the text. By the time you reach the sixteenth century, the works are in Modern English, though you could quite rightly argue that we don’t speak the way the people of Shakespeare’s time did. Nonetheless, the language becomes more familiar and (again with the help of the notes) accessible with a little effort.

**Reading and Interpreting Literature**
The literature in this course was written for audiences vastly different from us and from each other. To study the literature, we must make the effort to see the works as the original audiences might have—through the filter of their cultures and values. Therefore, reading both the literature and the background presented in the text and in this study guide is important to your success in this course.

English 3020 includes material from fourteen centuries, material that was part of the oral culture of early Britain and material that was copied by hand and printed on early printing presses. It includes boasting tales sung in medieval halls and religious meditations from sermons and private writings. There are tales of chivalry and daring, stories of mythical beasts and aging warriors, songs of love and sex and death, and plays about kings and princes and fathers and children. There are images of indecision and foolishness and lust and greed and grief. The words tell of human history, of triumph and sorrow, of personal and public moments, but only you will know what each story has to tell you.
As you study literature, you might wonder how anyone can be “right” about what a work means. The answer is that there is rarely one way to interpret a work. There might be interpretations that have been traditionally accepted. There might be records of what other people have thought of the work. Ultimately, though, the “meaning” of a work for you is in your own head and heart.

Being aware that literary works can have varied meanings does not relieve you of your obligation to read carefully and correctly. There are points of agreement in a work—the plot line of a story, for example, or the physical image that the poet uses. If you have a basic understanding of what has happened or of what words mean, then you have room to form your own judgments about the motives or the morality of the characters. The burden remains on you to prove what you think is reasonable, logical, and possible based on the words in front of you. An additional factor to consider is the era in which the work was produced. For example, it is not reasonable to argue that an author from a non-Christian culture was thinking of Christ’s life and death when he produced his work.

Preparation of Lesson Assignments

Remember, this course covers an entire semester of work or the equivalent of a classroom course lasting 15 weeks. That means that each lesson in this course equals nearly a week of course work and will require the same time and effort on your part. Do not expect to complete each lesson in a single study session.

In order to receive the most rapid service, mail each lesson in one of the addressed envelopes as soon as the lesson is completed or use the electronic submission option (see Electronic Submission Options in the appendix for additional information).

General Instructions

A large part of the instructional process is conducted through the lesson assignments that are located at the end of each lesson. Follow the steps listed below when mailing assignments.

Type or write on one side of 8½” by 11” paper, leaving a one-inch margin on both sides for instructor notes.

Put your name, enrollment number, course number, and lesson number at the top right hand corner of each page. Number your pages 1 of __, etc.

Make a copy of your lessons in case any of them are lost in the mail.
Complete a lesson cover sheet (located in your course packet) for each lesson, and fold it so that your address is on the outside.

Submit one lesson per envelope. Failure to follow this procedure may result in your lesson not being recorded for grading and will require resubmission.

For each lesson, place the corresponding label on the envelope, and mail or bring to the IDL office.

Your lessons will be recorded according to the date received in the IDL office, not the date you mailed them.

IDL will only accept three lessons every seven calendar days.

Follow any additional instructions listed below.

Course Specific Instructions

Since English 3020 is a college English course, you are expected to write in clear, grammatical English with sophisticated sentence structures and meaningful insights. Your responses for written assignments are to be essay answers (full paragraphs), unless otherwise indicated. For non-essay answers, I will say that list form is expected. For essay answers, a one-sentence response is inadequate and unacceptable. An essay answer should be at least one paragraph in length—a well-developed paragraph is about half a page. **Here is a general rule of thumb:** determine the length of your answer by the point value of the question. A 10-point answer requires one full paragraph, a 30-point question at least three full paragraphs; a 40-point question would require four paragraphs, and so on.

When responding to an assignment question, begin by stating your thesis, or making clear what you are asserting, and then work from there (i.e., support your thesis with evidence from the story). For instance, in your study of Beowulf, if you are asked to determine the culpability of the Danes in the death of Grendel, you might respond in this fashion:
Monsters have rights, too, even Old English ones.

When the story of Beowulf opens, the monster Grendel has plagued King Hrothgar and his thanes for twelve years. Grendel comes like a thief in the night and ravages the mead hall Heorot, killing, maiming, and, in general, wreaking havoc. On one night alone “greedy and grim, he grabbed thirty men” (l. 122). Our natural aversion to senseless killing tends to make us sympathetic toward the warriors (humans like us, after all). They are pathetic and at the mercy of an unfeeling, horrible monster. But do we stop to consider the monster’s side of the story? Maybe he has good reason for ravaging Hrothgar’s mead hall...

Then, you as analyzer would give these good reasons. These good reasons are your evidence, the support for your thesis. To illustrate your observations (your interpretation of the story), cite evidence from the text (either through direct quotation or paraphrase) and explain how this evidence supports your assertions. It is important to note that when writing literary analysis (which is precisely what you are doing in this course), you may assume that the reader is familiar with the text but has not thought deeply about it. You will reveal to the reader a new twist or insight that is not readily apparent.

Also, in writing literary analysis, stay in the present tense in your own interpretive sentences, but don’t change the tense of a direct quote. For an example, refer to the above paragraph of analysis.

In quoting evidence from the text, please remember that brevity is the rule. Avoid quoting long sentences, but rather choose the quintessential part of a sentence, the part that proves your point.

Appendix B at the end of this course guide reviews methods and strategies for writing about literature. Read it thoroughly before you begin this course, and refer to it as you prepare your answers.

The lesson assignment for each lesson is worth 100 points and is composed of questions with different point values. Follow the instructions for each lesson to see what questions you should answer.

Before writing your lesson assignment, study the lesson’s objectives and introductory material carefully. The objectives, introduction, and the lesson assignment questions attempt to simulate the kind of discussion that would emerge in the classroom setting.
Read the assigned material until you understand it. Several readings may be needed. Remember that notes in the text will guide you through the more difficult pieces.

Word process your answers on standard 8½" x 11" paper, on one side only. (Handwritten papers, to be submitted only with my permission, should be written clearly in ink).

Double-space your work, using 10- or 12-point fonts. Leave at least a one-inch margin top, bottom, and sides for my comments.

**Suggested Study Techniques**

Carefully study the textbook, study guide material (if applicable), additional resources provided, and the information in your course guide before you begin to prepare the lesson assignments. This study should include a detailed examination of the illustrative problems and examples, as well as the assigned reading. After a lesson assignment has been completed, a rapid re-reading of the related text and other materials is strongly recommended.

Review your lesson assignments after they have been graded and returned to you. LSU Independent & Distance Learning suggests that you wait for your first lesson to be returned to you before you submit subsequent lessons; however, after the first lesson, it is normally not necessary to wait for the corrected lesson assignment to be returned before completing and submitting the next one.

One temptation you may have in an independent study course is to rely too heavily on textbook material when preparing your lesson assignment. If you give in to such a temptation, you may not realize until exam time that the perfect response you prepared was possible only because you repeatedly referred to the textbook without really learning or understanding the material. Therefore, you should attempt each assignment without referring to the textbook, and if “thumbing back” is necessary, be sure you have actually learned the point rather than merely reflected it in the answer.

Put yourself on a definite schedule. Set aside a certain block of hours per day or week for this course and work in a place where distractions are minimal. Try to submit a lesson each week or at least every two weeks. Delays in submitting lessons usually result in lagging interest and the inability to complete the course.
Academic Integrity

LSU Independent & Distance Learning adheres to Louisiana State University’s policy on academic misconduct. This policy defines plagiarism as follows:

“Plagiarism” is defined as the unacknowledged inclusion of someone else’s words, structure, ideas, or data. When a student submits work as his/her own that includes the words, structure, ideas, or data of others, the source of this information must be acknowledged through complete, accurate, and specific references, and, if verbatim statements are included, through quotation marks as well. Failure to identify any source (including interviews, surveys, etc.), published in any medium (including on the internet) or unpublished, from which words, structure, ideas, or data have been taken, constitutes plagiarism.

Falsifying or fabricating any information or citation in any academic exercise, work, speech, thesis, dissertation, test, or examination.

Submission of essentially the same written assignment for two courses without the prior permission of the instructors. ¹

Contact Information

If you need to contact your instructor concerning your lesson assignment, you may include a note with your completed assignment, or you may email him or her at MyInstructor@outreach.lsu.edu. Your instructor does not have an office within the Independent & Distance Learning building. Instructors only answer questions related to course content. Please direct all other questions to our Learner Services office by emailing Answers@outreach.lsu.edu or by calling 800-234-5046.

Examinations and Grading Policy

The grade assigned to your lesson assignments will be based on three things:

1. Your demonstrated completion and understanding of the assigned reading.

2. Your ability to respond directly to the question and supply the appropriate evidence to support your observations.

3. The clarity and correctness of your writing.

Your course grade will be determined as follows:

1. You must complete every lesson assignment in the course.

2. You must earn a passing grade on all three exams averaged together, a minimum grade of 60%. Exam I must be taken after Lesson 5, Exam II after Lesson 11, and Exam III after all lessons have been submitted.

3. The three exams will be averaged together numerically to create one grade: for example, 65 + 75 + 80 = 220, and 220 ÷ 3 = 73.3 = C. (100–90 = A, 89–80 = B, 79–70 = C, 69–60 = D, 59 and below = F)

4. The course lesson assignments will be averaged to create one grade. The lowest grade will be dropped, and the remaining grades will be averaged.

5. The lesson assignment average and the exam average will be averaged to determine your final course grade. For example, exam average of 73.3 + lesson assignment average of 84.2 = 157.5, and 157.5 ÷ 2 = 78.75 = C.

YOU MUST EARN A PASSING AVERAGE ON THE EXAMINATIONS IN ORDER TO PASS THE COURSE.

Note: There are three exams to be taken in accordance with the policies of the Office of Independent & Distance Learning. You cannot pass English 3020 unless you earn a passing grade (60% or higher) on the three exams averaged together. Explanations of the exam formats can be found after Lessons 5, 11, and 15 in this course guide.

Exam I

Exam I will cover material from Lessons 1–5 and will test your knowledge of the literature and of the historical periods. In a section of matching, you will be asked to recognize specific historical events, different works, and characters in these works. In both short and long discussion questions, you will also be asked to examine conflicts faced and themes in works, as well as to explain the origins of different kinds of literature. As the course moves from one historical
period to the next, changes occur in the lives and literature of the people. You should know those changes and be ready to compare and contrast major characters and writings from different periods.

Exam II

Exam II is not comprehensive. It covers the material studied in Lessons 6–11. Once again, you will be asked to discuss major themes and traditions as well as major writers and their works. Know specific works and writers, and understand the effect that historical events and figures have on the types of literature produced. Instead of identification of terms and characters, be ready to identify quotations from the works and to explain why they are significant.

Final Exam

The final exam is not comprehensive. It will cover only the material studied in Lessons 12–15. Once again, you will be asked to discuss major themes and traditions as well as major writers and their works. Know specific works and writers, and understand the effect that historical events and figures have on the types of literature produced. Instead of identification of terms and characters, be ready to identify quotations and to explain why they are significant.

In preparation for all exams, lessons are an invaluable guide. If material was not emphasized in the lessons, do not expect it on an exam. Review your graded lesson assignments, and make sure that you can answer all discussion questions—even the ones you did not write on.

You will be allowed three hours to complete each exam. Study materials and texts will not be allowed in the examination room.

Transcript Information

After you have completed this course, your grade will be filed with the Office of the University Registrar. If a transcript is needed, it is your responsibility to make a request in writing to:

Office of the University Registrar
Louisiana State University
Thomas Boyd Hall
Baton Rouge, LA  70803
Phone: 225-578-1686
FAX: 225-578-5991

Examination Proctors
If you are not going to take your exam at LSU–Baton Rouge, notify us of your proctor by sending the completed Exam Proctor Information Form located in the appendix of this course guide to the Independent & Distance Learning office.

Please read the College Examination Information document in the appendix of this course guide for further details.
Part I: Medieval Literature: The Old English Period

Introduction to Part I

The Old English period of the Medieval Age has a loosely defined beginning, dating from the fifth century when the Romans withdrew from Britain. The literature from this time tells of events that predate recorded history. A surviving poem may be the only “record” of a battle or the reign of a leader. Such a record was performed orally, perhaps for hundreds of years, before it was written down. As it passed from generation to generation, from tribe to tribe, it changed. Working from memory, poets had to fill in forgotten lines.

The close of the Old English period is easier to define: 1066. In 1066, William of Normandy conquered Harold of England at Hastings. Ironically, Harold and his men had just defeated the Viking invaders at Stamford Bridge, bringing to an end the threats of invasion from the north. Turning almost immediately to face William, the English forces could not repeat their victory. Harold fell at the Battle of Hastings, and the Normans (from the coast of France) took control of the country. Changes in language, political structure, religious hierarchies, and literature were inevitable over the next hundred years. What emerged after the conquest was an English culture markedly different from that of the pre-1066 days. The changes are so complete and so final that we can easily distinguish between the earlier “Old English” period and the subsequent “Middle Ages” (1066–1485).

During the next two lessons, you will explore Old English culture and literature from the fifth century to 1066. *Beowulf*, an Anglo-Saxon folk epic, defines the culture at this time, and much of the poetry—heroic, religious, and elegiac—bears the influence of Christianity on the culture. In all the poetry that you read, you will see a major theme—the brevity and sadness of life—worked into the poet’s investigation of the courage of the hero, the necessity of friendship, and the ultimate value of life. This dwelling on life’s harshness makes much of the
Part I: Medieval Literature: The Old English Period

... poetry elegiac. Like the wanderer from the poem by that name, the culture asks the old question *Ubi sunt*?—where are they who were once so glad to be alive?
Lesson 1: Old English Epic—Beowulf

Lesson Objectives

After you have completed this lesson, you should be able to do the following:

✓ Understand and discuss the definition of folk epic
✓ Understand and discuss the nature of Anglo-Saxon culture
✓ Understand and discuss the importance of the king, the hero, and the mead hall within this culture
✓ Understand and discuss the distinctive features of Anglo-Saxon literature

Lesson Introduction

Before William the Conqueror defeated the English at the Battle of Hastings in 1066, the language and culture of England were Anglo-Saxon. Anglo-Saxon rule, however, dated back only a few hundred years. What is now England was called Britannia by the Romans who conquered the native Britons and ruled the land from the first to the fifth century. When the Romans withdrew to defend their homeland, the island was left to the claims of the strongest tribes. The Angles and the Saxons contested with the Jutes for control of England, while a legendary Briton named Arthur heroically resisted all invaders. Despite his celebrated leadership and courage, the Anglo-Saxons emerged as the controlling force.

Anglo-Saxons were a violent, arrogant, aggressive, and warlike people who valued highly the family as the primary cohesive unit. Their daily life was characterized by endless feuds and bloodshed (wergeld refers to the price a person paid to compensate a family for killing one of its members). Families were organized into tribes ruled by warrior kings who led their men into battle. The king’s faithful fighters were called thanes, a retinue of fighting men who pledged a loyalty oath to the king. In return for this absolute devotion, the king generously rewarded his thanes’ steadfast service, i.e. their prowess in battle and feats of daring do (why the king is described as “ring-giver”). What mattered most to this society?—military success, material wealth generously shared, widespread fame, and monuments such as the mead hall to represent that fame.
Lesson 1: Old English Epic—Beowulf

Beowulf

The Anglo-Saxons did not read or write and transmitted their culture orally. Yet, Anglo-Saxon culture is faithfully recorded in Beowulf. Its distinction as the first masterpiece in English literature is ironic because the poem has nothing to do with England. Rather, it describes a Swedish hero who comes to the aid of Danish people, and thus the poem deals with England’s Germanic forebears. Beowulf is an idealized history of the people for which it was composed—as much a family and tribal history as anything else. Characterized by solemn dignity and elevated style, the poem is considered a folk epic, composed orally by the tribe’s bard, or scop (pronounced scŏp) and orally transmitted by the Germanic tribes who invaded England. Around 725, someone took the folk epic of Beowulf and wrote it down in Anglo-Saxon, fully 200 years after the events of the poem (one historical fact in the poem is certain: the Swedish king Hygelac did die in battle in 521). The Old English scholar J.R.R. Tolkien argues that the Beowulf-poet was writing an intentionally archaic poem—that he knew about Christianity and consequently would no longer name the heathen gods, but that because he was writing about the past, he did not introduce any explicit references to the New Testament but stayed deeply rooted in the Old Testament.

Many discussions of Beowulf concern the religious elements of the poem: references to Cain and Abel, to God in Heaven, to the peace of Heaven’s King. Alongside these Christian elements are pre-Christian behaviors such as pagan sacrifice and omen readings. One explanation for such a mix is that Beowulf is about the adventures of a hero who lived before the land was converted, but the poem itself was composed by a Christian who comments on the failings of the warrior ideals. Another possibility is that the poem was composed without any Christian references, and the references to God and to the Old Testament were added by a scribe, most likely a member of a religious order, who copied down the poem and tried to make it more fitting for a religious library. As you read the work, consider whether the religious elements are necessary to the poem. If they were removed, how would the poem be changed?

Beowulf, as well as other heroic poems like “The Battle of Malden,” has careful references to names, families, and tribes. You will see such references in the stories told around the mead hall, in the introduction of characters, and in the commentary by the narrator. You are not expected to know the genealogies in any detail, though you should understand the relationship between Beowulf and Hygelac and the path that ultimately leads Beowulf to the throne. Also be advised that it is not only the heroes whose family trees are reviewed; Unferth is carefully identified as well.
Lesson 1: Old English Epic—Beowulf

Folk Epic

Folk epics, like Homer’s Iliad and Odyssey and the Old English Beowulf, are the products of the heroic age when virtue is largely identified with physical strength and when poets sing of this virtue. Epic is a long, serious, narrative poem that celebrates the deeds of a hero and his companions. The hero often has superhuman or divine traits—Beowulf swims the sea “shouldering thirty battle-dresses” to avenge the death of King Hygelac (ll.2361-62)—and the action is simple (Beowulf slays monster; dragon slays Beowulf) but amplified by allusions and figurative language. Epic builds a culture’s world order and establishes foundation myths. In the beginning of Beowulf, we hear of Scyld Scefing (in your translation, Shield Sheafson), legendary founder of the Danish royal line: he is the best of kings that all kings should be modeled on (although he is mythical king in that he returns to the water from which he came). He gives his people everything they need, including a son.

Features of Anglo-Saxon Poetry

Because scops composed spontaneously before an audience, their lines abound in formulas—repeated elements in the poem that afford pleasure to listeners because of familiarity and that helped the poet compose and keep his material in mind.

Alliteration: basic organizing device for each poetic line. Every line breaks in the middle, dividing into two half lines, each with two stressed syllables. These two half lines are linked to each other by the alliteration. This repetition of consonant sounds at the beginnings of words or within words, especially accented words, is used to reinforce meaning, unify thought, or simply to make the line more musical. The break in each line is not apparent in the Seamus Heaney translation, but Heaney has attempted to keep the alliteration:

The God-cursed brute was creating havoc:
  greedy and grim, he grabbed thirty men
(ll. 121–22)

Kenning: descriptive metaphors that are used in place of simple, proper, and common nouns. For example, the king may be referred to as the “treasure-friend” or the “ring-giver”; warriors might be called “hearth companions” or “stouthearted oath-givers.” The path traveled by the ships might be called the “whale road,” the sun “heaven’s candle,” and the body the “bone-house.” Kennings not only avoided the repetition of names; they also added information about the function or nature of the noun described.

Litotes: understatement. When the poet says that Grendel’s death was “not much mourned,” he is understating the joyous reaction to that event. Likewise, he describes the funeral pyre of Beowulf as “no small one.”
Lesson 1: Old English Epic—Beowulf

Reading Assignment

Read through the discussion questions in the lesson assignment before you read the assignment.

“The Middle Ages” (pages 1–6)

Beowulf (pages 29–99)

Lesson Assignment

Complete the following and submit to LSU Independent & Distance Learning for grading. Be sure to follow the guidelines under “Preparation of Lesson Assignments” in the course syllabus. This lesson assignment is worth 100 possible points.

Answer the following 40-point question.

1. The ideal of kingly behavior is enormously important to the Anglo-Saxon migratory way of life. While the hero saves the present day, it is the king who is the chief spiritual force behind the society for all the days to come. Since the heroic ideal is excellence, the king has to do everything better than anyone else: sail a ship through a storm, swim a river or bay, tame a horse, choose a campsite, and set firm defenses. In times of peace, he is the best at plowing a field or building a hall that is beyond compare. Above all, the king is the best at fighting—with skill, courage, prowess, and strength. With all this in mind, it would be easy to look at Hrothgar and say, “bad or ineffective king.” Look again. The poet provides several kingly models upon which to judge a king’s reign: Shield Sheafson, Hrothgar, and Beowulf. Using Shield as the model king, discuss how King Hrothgar and King Beowulf measure up to this ideal. (40 points)

Answer the following 24-point questions.

2. The mead hall is the central civilizing influence in Anglo-Saxon society. It is a gathering place where every important event occurs: celebrations of victories as well as ceremonies, like the giving of gifts. It also provides a place to sleep and a place of honor for the scops to sing of the culture’s heroic past. Discuss how the poem Beowulf dramatizes the importance of the mead hall. (24 points)

3. What qualities of Beowulf make him the hero of his people? Must the hero be triumphant in battle to be honored by his people? (24 points)
Lesson 1: Old English Epic—Beowulf

Answer one of the following 12-point questions.

4. The poem Beowulf is divided into two major adventures: Beowulf’s defeat of Grendel and his mother at Hrothgar’s court and 50 years later, Beowulf’s encounter with the dragon. In each section, certain imagery dominates: water imagery for the first part and fire for the second. In a paragraph, explain how the imagery underscores either the hope or impending doom of each section. Include examples of each kind of imagery. (12 points)

5. The Beowulf poet is a writer in love with words and language. Find at least three examples of kennings and three of litotes. List the examples and give a brief explanation of each one. (12 points)

Example of kenning: Bone-house—the body
Example of litotes: The Danes decked Shield’s body “no less bountifully” than those who first set him adrift (1. 43). The description “no less bountifully” is an ironic reminder that Shield came with nothing.
Lesson Objectives

After you have completed this lesson, you should be able to do the following:

✔ Understand and discuss the warrior code in Anglo-Saxon society
✔ Understand and discuss the Church’s influence in Anglo-Saxon culture: the Christian code
✔ Understand and discuss the nature of religious and elegiac poetry
✔ Understand and discuss major themes in Anglo-Saxon literature: brevity and sadness of life, nature of success and true friendship, and the final value to be found in life and death

Lesson Introduction

The introduction to “The Battle of Maldon” points out that the poem is based on an actual incident, a “local battle of no historical importance.” The episode it describes, a Viking attack on a coastal English area, could have taken place almost anywhere. The fact that the Vikings crushed the local militia might make a modern audience question the choice of material. Why would a poet choose to immortalize such a defeat in verse? Who would want to hear, again and again, the details of the deaths of family and friends? The answers to those questions give insight into the nature of heroic literature, a celebration of the ideals and behaviors that a culture values.

Look closely at the behavior of Birhtnoth and his men before the battle begins. They drive off their horses to make a retreat less tempting. They let loose their hawks—today is no day for games and hunting. Men are mentioned by name as they recall their vows to serve their leader and ready themselves for battle. When the Vikings demand tribute as the price for peace, Birhtnoth is angry and
resolute. Look at the words he flings at the Vikings, the rhythmic and noble answer to their threats. His men stand ready; both sides are “eager for war.”

The note in your text suggests that Birhtnoth is guilty of “heroic overconfidence.” The Old English description of Birhtnoth was that he possessed “ofermod,” which translates loosely into “he was over-spirited.” But consider this: to the people who loved this poem enough to memorize it, repeat it, and eventually record it, Birhtnoth was not a flawed man who lost a stupid and unnecessary fight. He was a hero worthy of celebration. This poem is not an apology or a weak explanation of his actions. It is a model for men to follow; variations of the phrase “so should a man do/be” are found in this poem and in other heroic poetry of the time. In Anglo-Saxon times, a hero was a man who was more than other men—he had more strength, more courage, more daring. The “ofermod” of Birhtnoth becomes somehow tarnished when the translator chooses “overconfidence”; in fact, to have “ofermod” was to have more spirit, more confidence than the average man had. “More than average” is a better reading than “overconfidence”; it helps us to see that Birhtnoth was an unambiguous hero whose insignificant historic battle was an important example of a culture’s finest traits in action.

**Warrior Culture**

A warrior, heroic culture placed much value on unflinching loyalty and courage. There is also much emphasis on the giving and receiving of gifts such as weapons, horses, and other displays of wealth. The lord and his followers had a bond or a kind of contract; those who were close to the lord (his “hearth-companions”) ate his food and received many gifts from him. In exchange, they vowed to fight with him until death and to avenge his death if he should fall first. Note the places in the poem where men remind themselves and each other that their vows must now be fulfilled. The death of Birhtnoth does not relieve them of their obligations.

The heroic culture celebrated in Anglo-Saxon verse, however, was not the sole force at work. Remember that the people had been exposed to Christianity, and the influence of the Church continued to spread. Along with the values of a heroic society grew the virtues preached by Christian religious leaders. As you look at the story of Birhtnoth and his last fight, notice the references to Christian beliefs.

**Comitatus**

The relationships between Beowulf and his men and between Birhtnoth and his men illustrate the bond called “comitatus.” Leader and followers were bound together in a mutually beneficial relationship—the lord (the term comes from an Old English word for “loaf-protector”) provided riches and rewards for his
men; in turn, they vowed loyalty to him and to his causes. All were protected by the strength that comes from unity against the enemy. For contrast, look at the Wanderer who has lost his lord and has no hall to call “home.” Isolation made men vulnerable. Like the Wanderer, the Last Survivor (whose sad farewell to his former life is included in Beowulf) is aware that his life and all that gave it meaning have been lost with his comrades. “The Wanderer” and “The Last Survivor’s Speech” are elegies—works that mourn a passing or a loss. The single speaker and the meditative, personal revelations of these poems separate them from other works of the period.

Increasing Influence of Christianity

Christianity introduced to Britain by Augustine and other Christian missionaries from 597–637 was crucial to the development of Anglo-Saxon culture. The Church brought the essential skill of writing as well as contact with other cultures. The Church also served as an early force for unity and peace, trying to teach new values, in particular, respect for life. The Church attempted to tame the violent, aggressive Anglo-Saxons.

Although Old English heroic warrior poetry and the meditative religious poetry have different purposes and conventions, they were not produced according to neat formulas and precise definitions. As missionaries spread the message of Christianity, the principles blended with existing traditions resulting in “Christian” literature that at times looks remarkably like heroic poetry. God and His Son Christ are often presented as triumphant rulers attended by loyal, warrior-like angel bands. The kingdom is made strong through victories in battle, and the riches expected of a great lord are part of the surroundings. By the same token, celebrations of heroic deeds show signs of warriors pausing in the midst of battle to offer prayers to “Almighty” God. Christian principles that mixed poorly with the heroic tradition (e.g., humility rather than pride, forgiveness rather than revenge) receive little attention.

This slow transition to Christianity is evident in the literature of the period. Poems like “The Battle of Maldon” have only a few awkward religious references, while the “Dream of the Rood,” despite its essentially Christian subject, retains the heroic atmosphere of warrior-Christ and loyal retainers resplendent with the treasure so dear to Old English warriors. Poems like “The Wanderer” and Beowulf are more difficult to categorize; each has elements of the older Anglo-Saxon warrior culture and of the newer code of Christianity.
Lesson Assignment

*Reading Assignment*

*Read through the discussion questions in the lesson assignment before reading the assignment.*

*Norton’s Introduction to “The Battle of Maldon”* (pages 103–04)

“The Battle of Maldon,” Appendix C of this study guide

*Norton’s Introduction to “The Wanderer”* (pages 99–100)

“The Wanderer,” Appendix C of this study guide

*Norton’s Introduction to “The Dream of the Rood”* (page 26)

“The Dream of the Rood,” Appendix C of this study guide

“The Last Survivor,” Lines 2231–2269 of *Beowulf*

*Lesson Assignment*

*Complete the following and submit to LSU Independent & Distance Learning for grading. Be sure to follow the guidelines under “Preparation of Lesson Assignments” in the course syllabus. This lesson assignment is worth 100 possible points.*

*Answer the following 20-point questions.*

1. In “The Battle of Maldon,” men are named carefully; in some cases, fathers and uncles and brothers are identified so that there would be no mistake in identifying the heroes and the cowards (see the brothers Godric, Godwine, and Godwig). In several detailed paragraphs, describe heroic behavior as defined by the poem and its society. Using the comments in the poem, give specific examples of what a man should do; you may also include what a man should not do. *(20 points)*

2. Find at least three references in “The Battle of Maldon” to religious rather than heroic beliefs or concerns. Briefly describe each of the three, and give your opinion on this question: “Was the religious reference you found part of the original poem, or does it seem to have been added later?” One way to test your answer is to consider whether the poem would be substantially changed if the religious references were removed. *(20 points)*
3. Today, a hero who boasts about his deeds so boldly might be rejected by the audience as a braggart. In contrast, Beowulf's boasting was not only tolerated, but was expected by the medieval audience. Why was boasting about oneself and one's deeds a necessary part of the literature and culture? (20 points)

**Answer one of the following 40-point questions.**

4. Compare and contrast the two codes (the warrior code and the Christian code). Note the differences in attitudes toward treasure, reward, fate, and humility. Use examples from several of the readings in this lesson; you may include examples from *Beowulf* as well. (40 points)

5. Describe the comitatus bond as seen in the readings from Lessons 1 and 2. Use examples from several works. Be specific about exchanges of gifts and vows of loyalty. Look at the fate of those who are loyal as well as the fate of those who are not—both types of men are described in the poems. Considering this bond, why would the Wanderer or the Last Survivor have a hard time finding a new hall and a new lord to serve? Why would a survivor be treated with some suspicion? (40 points)
Introduction to Part II

We have been examining the literature and the culture of the Old English period. While we are still in the Medieval Age, the next three lessons will look at the Middle English period, a period that began in 1066 and ended in 1485. William of Normandy, illegitimate son of the King of France, earned a kingdom of his own when he conquered King Harold of England at Hastings in 1066. It is impossible to overestimate the effect of this Norman Conquest. William’s French heritage was superimposed over the Anglo-Saxon world that had celebrated warriors like Beowulf. The Normans introduced feudalism, the system of land tenure based on military service, as well as the knight, a mounted warrior who became the chief symbol of the code of chivalry.

Language, of course, was affected as a result of the Norman Conquest. The languages of the royal court and of learned men became French and Latin (the Church played an important role in this era); Anglo-Saxon was the language of the common folk, but it gradually blended with the Norman tongue, creating a language that we now call “Middle English.” It had not yet become the “Modern English” that we recognize as the early form of our own language, but it had more in common with our present-day English than did the Anglo-Saxon language seen (and heard) in Beowulf. In fact, if you look closely at the language of medieval drama, as well as The Canterbury Tales, you will see much that you recognize.

For you as a student, the language similarity presents another challenge: the editors of the text have chosen to present Chaucer’s Canterbury Tales in its Middle English form. You might be slowed down by the erratic spellings and the sometimes unfamiliar vocabulary. Read carefully, using the footnotes and definitions to make sure that you are reading correctly. For instance, the “lusty”
month of May should not mislead you—“lusty” is the Middle English word for “merry.”

Just as the Norman Conquest of 1066 is a definitive marker for the beginning of the Middle English period, the end of this period as well as the close of the Medieval Age is also very definite: 1485. In 1485, Henry VII took the English throne as the first of the Tudor sovereigns, bringing peace to a nation long involved in civil war. That same year, William Caxton used the printing press to produce multiple copies of Thomas Malory’s version of the Arthurian legend, Morte Darthur, making books available to the common people and not just to the religious orders and the very wealthy. The impact of those two events forever changed the political, social, and literary culture of the nation; as a result, it is relatively simple to designate 1485 as the terminus of the Medieval Age.
Lesson 3: Sir Gawain and the Green Knight

Lesson Objectives

After you have completed this lesson, you should be able to do the following:

✓ Understand and discuss the nature of chivalry and the chivalric code (code of the knights)
✓ Understand and discuss the difference between the romance hero and the epic hero

Lesson Introduction

Written at the same time as The Canterbury Tales, Sir Gawain and the Green Knight is a wonderful example of the Alliterative Revival (a revival that Chaucer despised). This medieval romance—a story of knights and their deeds—was considered escapist literature for the nobility. But that does not mean it is simplistic. The Pearl poet utilizes highly sophisticated devices—parallelisms in structure and plot—that link everything together; these devices are the sign of a polished writer working in an advanced literary context. For example, Parts 1 and 4 deal with the “Beheading Game”—the Green Knight’s challenge in Part 1 and then the return blow to Gawain in Part 4—and these sections frame the story of Gawain’s quest and temptation in Parts 2 and 3.

Chivalry

A major effect of the Norman Conquest was the spread of chivalry to England. A French invention, chivalry developed during the 12th century, the period of the Crusades and the flowering of Arthurian romance. The word comes from the French word for horseman—chevalier: the king awarded horses to his knights, so a knight was one who had a horse. Chivalry represented an aristocratic world-view that softened the harshness of medieval life, that bound the often-lawless warrior by a code (the violation of which meant loss of honor), and finally that raised the status of woman and gained her a larger role both in life and literature.
In *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, we see the embodiment of the ideal knight in the figure of Gawain. The story is about Gawain’s acquiring of wisdom, but it also represents a test of King Arthur’s court, a test that reveals the virtues a knight should stand for.

**Why the Translation?**

Unlike the readings for Chaucer, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* is presented in a modern English translation. Although Britain is not a huge country, in medieval times, each region remained isolated enough to develop its own dialect. Because London was the political and cultural center of the nation, the dialect used there (Midland) eventually dominated the others and evolved into our own form of English. Thus the language looks quite familiar to us. In the remote northern sections of Britain, the dialect remained unaffected by the way Londoners spoke, and the literature produced there was in a dialect virtually impossible for us to read without translation.

The significant difference in the northern literature can also be traced to its extreme distance from London. While William and the later French kings brought with them the traditions of French literature, those traditions had little impact on the distant northern regions. For example, the French tradition gives the ultimate English hero, King Arthur, a French sidekick (Sir Lancelot du Lac) who is the epitome of knightly perfection. The northern legends of King Arthur, like the story of Sir Gawain given here, had no interest in glorifying the French. Sir Lancelot is conspicuously absent; instead, it is Arthur’s cousin Gawain who is the leading knight of the court.

Not only does the northern literature ignore the French influences; it also recognizes other enemies. The Green Knight, for instance, carries a Danish ax, a most fearsome weapon to a culture that was all too familiar with the pesky Norsemen who terrorized the convenient northern shores of Britain.

**Reading Assignment**

*Read through the discussion questions in the lesson assignment before reading the assignment.*

“Anglo-Norman England” and “Middle English Literature in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries” (pages 7–14)

*Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* (pages 156–210)
Lesson Assignment

Complete the following and submit to LSU Independent & Distance Learning for grading. Be sure to follow the guidelines under “Preparation of Lesson Assignments” in the course syllabus. This lesson assignment is worth 100 possible points.

Answer the following 40-point question.

1. Sir Gawain represents a different kind of hero from the Anglo-Saxon epic hero. Beowulf appears as a superhuman with supernatural strengths and qualities (his sword, Hrunting, was fashioned by a god). During his story, Beowulf exhibits already well-known qualities (loyalty and courage), and we know what he will do. The romance hero (Gawain), on the other hand, is not so predictable. Although his reputation is well-established (everyone at Bercilac’s court has heard of Gawain and his famous way with the ladies), Gawain’s actions and behavior are more unpredictable than Beowulf. Discuss by comparing and contrasting the two heroes. (40 points)

Answer three of the following 20-point questions.

2. The first section of Part 2 describes Gawain’s preparation to leave on his journey. Much attention is given to the pentangle, his symbol, and the symbol of knightly perfection. Explain what the pentangle stands for (there are “five fives” to describe), and tell why the pentangle is an appropriate symbol for Gawain. (20 points)

3. Part 3 recounts Gawain’s “adventures” while a guest at the castle. There is a parallelism between the outdoor hunting scenes and the indoor wooing scenes: what happens in the field is mirrored by what happens in the bedroom with Gawain behaving very much like the animals that are hunted. (The deer and the boar are royal animals, while the fox is not.) Briefly describe Gawain’s three encounters with the lady. How well does he fulfill his agreement with the lord of the castle at the end of each day, and how does his behavior compare to the three animals hunted by the lord of the castle? (20 points)

4. In Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, the poet intimates that civilization is a moral overlay that we can lose easily. The story begins by placing Arthur’s age in historical perspective. Britain is a descendant of Rome which in turn was founded by survivors of Troy (Aeneas and company): the suggestion is that civilizations don’t last, but are fragile—a fragility paralleled in Gawain’s flaw. This fragility is also tied to Christianity, which we have seen is a great civilization. Discuss how Gawain’s failing involves a rejection of an important
Lesson 3: Sir Gawain and the Green Knight

part of his religion and also shows that the great court of King Arthur is indeed not perfect. **(20 points)**

5. Color imagery is fairly easy to trace in this story with green and gold dominating. Green commonly evokes nature, as in the natural world or human nature, while gold (and the beautiful artifacts fashioned from gold) more appropriately stands for the treasures of civilization. The Green Knight, of course, is green—but his attire shows traces of gold embroidery. Gawain, at the beginning of the story, is associated with gold (see the description of the pentangle) and perhaps traces of red. Discuss the changes in color associations at the end of the tale. **(20 points)**
Lesson 4: Chaucer and *The Canterbury Tales*

**Lesson Objectives**

After you have completed this lesson, you should be able to do the following:

- Understand and discuss the kinds of literature prevalent in the Middle Ages
- Understand and discuss Chaucer’s contribution to medieval literature
- Understand and discuss satire as a weapon to expose injustice and human hypocrisy

**Lesson Introduction**

Chaucer is the dominant figure to emerge from the Medieval Age. His *Canterbury Tales*, written in rhyming iambic pentameter couplets (known as heroic couplets), ranks as one of the greatest works of all time.

He intended his *Canterbury Tales* to be an encyclopedia work—what the Middle Ages loved to do. He sought to draw together all forms of literature prevalent at the time. His *Canterbury Tales* includes exempla (an exemplum is an anecdote that exemplifies a moral, right way of living; it was used by preachers to prove their points; the Pardoner’s Tale is an exemplum); knightly romance (story of knights and their deeds; main elements include adventure, love, and magic; the Wife of Bath’s Tale is a knightly romance); French fabliaux (the fabliau is a bawdy tale that involves bourgeois or lower class people in an outrageous, often obscene plot; the Miller’s Tale is a fabliau); sermons, and beast fables. A kind of literature notably missing from *The Canterbury Tales* is allegory—a narrative in verse or prose in which abstractions, such as virtue or death, are made concrete (Mrs. Virtue, Sir Death) for the purpose of communicating a moral. Allegory was one of the ways the Church taught the illiterate masses about their religion, but for Chaucer it was too obvious and direct, not subtle or witty enough for his taste. Allegory hits one over the head with a moral. Chaucer preferred a more indirect, sophisticated approach through broad humor and satire.
Lesson 4: Chaucer and *The Canterbury Tales*

It might surprise you to learn that a good bit of Chaucer’s material is taken from other writings, but before you write off Chaucer as a plagiarist, look at his era. There were no copyright laws (Shakespeare, too, was quite a “borrower” of other plots), and the originality of the story line was not much valued. Instead, the teller who could make the story come alive was celebrated and treasured. Chaucer was that kind of story-teller. Comparisons of his works with other treatments of similar plots reveal his genius for developing characters and recreating dialogue. His handling of detail, as you will see in the Prologue, is more revealing than paragraphs of description by a less-talented writer. The variety in the collection of stories shows that he was a master of many forms. The sheer brilliance of his story-telling is enough to ensure his reputation, but there is more.

To gather the diverse forms into a coherent narrative, Chaucer built a world in *The Canterbury Tales* that is unparalleled in literature. He unified his work in two ways: he used the journey motif, and he made the stories and their tellers interact and comment on other stories and tellers. This “frame” for his tales is as lively and interesting as the tales themselves. Other writers had used frames, but Chaucer is again far above the rest of the crowd. He employed the device of a pilgrimage, a journey undertaken to some religious shrine (quite familiar to his audience), to bring together a sampling of medieval society. He included representatives from the basic classes of his world: the upper class world of the court is seen in the knight and his squire; the religious world, with its saints and sinners, is amply revealed in the pious Parson, the dainty Prioress, the nefarious Summoner, the greedy Pardoner, the unholy Monk, and the calculating Friar. He includes the middle classes with characters like the Wife of Bath (a weaver) and the Franklin, and the lower classes are figures like the uncouth Miller and the Reeve. In fact, Chaucer’s cross section of the population of 14th century England is missing only the very highest and the very lowest ranks, the nobility and the serfs.

The mix of classes only hints at the diverse personalities on the trip, and Chaucer creates a lively scenario as the travelers compete to see who can tell the best tale. Not only do the tales match the character of the teller (the Knight tells of chivalry and romance, the Miller tells a bawdy tale of a carpenter being cuckolded by his wife with the scholar boarder, the Prioress tells a sweet and saintly legend), but the stories relate to and comment on each other. As the travelers begin to interact with each other, the stories interlock in a most cunning way. The first story is the Knight’s Tale, a conventional knighthly romance. The Miller responds in the second story with parody of the knight’s story. The drunken Miller offends the Reeve (a carpenter), who rejoins by telling a tale that makes a miller the target of an obscene joke; the Wife of Bath tells a tale that defines a happy marriage as one dominated by the wife, and the Clerk responds with a story of a mean-spirited husband and submissive wife in his version of “Patient Griselda.” The exchanges between the travelers on the journey are as central to *The Canterbury Tales* as the tales themselves.
There are thirty pilgrims, including Chaucer himself. Each was to tell four stories, two on the way to the Shrine of Thomas Becket and two on the return journey. Chaucer only completed twenty-four stories, but his multi-leveled complex array of frame and tales has never been duplicated in English literature. It's too bad that Chaucer died before it was even half-finished.

**The Portraits in the General Prologue**

In Lines 19–34, the narrator tells how he came upon this company of pilgrims and asked to join them. He then begins to describe each traveler in sections that have been called “portraits.”

Chaucer’s wit is superb here with his seemingly straightforward and sincere descriptions. He sets the pilgrims up with a very flattering and pleasing depiction of them and then undermines that praise with a line or two. Look at the brief description of the cook (ll.381–389). The man has been brought along to cook, and cook he can (“He could roast and boil and broil and fry”), but note that Chaucer slips in a vivid detail alongside praise for the man’s cooking: he had an open sore, a “mormal,” on his shin. (How would you like a cook to have an oozing ulcer so near the food he is preparing for you?) The portraits are full of such quick details—the nun who wears fine jewelry and has elegant table manners, the friar who knew the best taverns in town—that suggest to careful readers that these travelers are complex, often flawed, characters.

**Irony in Chaucer**

Irony recognizes the disparity between what appears to be and what really is. Irony is a fine, broad technique that doesn’t hit one over the head but rather sneaks up and subtly undercuts the character’s worthiness. For example, Chaucer reveals that with the Prioress “all was sentiment and tender heart” (l.150). This is very ironic because she is tenderhearted and sentimental about the wrong things. Her medallion inscription “love conquers all” sounds like a Christian religious statement, but coupled with what we know about the Prioress (her concentration on proper dress and table manners and things that should not concern someone who has abjured the world) the statement probably means a different kind of love, sensual or erotic.

Look for irony in Chaucer and appreciate his mastery of this sophisticated literary technique.
Lesson Assignment

Use either the Norton Anthology or the Bantam Classic edition—the Bantam is a dual language edition with Middle English on the left page and modern English facing it on the right page. Read through the discussion questions in the lesson assignment before reading the assignment.

Page numbers are for the Norton Anthology:

“Geoffrey Chaucer” and “The Canterbury Tales” (pages 210–214)

“The General Prologue” (pages 214–235)

“The Miller’s Prologue and Tale” (pages 235–252)

“The Wife of Bath’s Prologue and Tale” (pages 253–281)

“The Pardoner’s Prologue and Tale” (pages 281–296)

Lesson Assignment

Complete the following and submit to LSU Independent & Distance Learning for grading. Be sure to follow the guidelines under “Preparation of Lesson Assignments” in the course syllabus. This lesson assignment is worth 100 possible points.

Answer five of the following 20-point questions.

1. Review the characters in the “Prologue” and comment on the following statement: “A zest for actual life shows itself not only in the plenty and variety of Chaucer’s pilgrims, but especially in their normality. He did not exaggerate or look for freaks; he delighted in the world as he found it” (England in Literature, 7th edition). In a unified discussion, either agree or disagree. (20 points)

2. The Wife of Bath and her story are often used to show Chaucer’s skillful linking of vivid character and appropriate tale. How is the Wife’s Tale suited to her? In what ways is the Tale like her own life? (20 points)

3. Knighthood is one of the preeminent institutions of the Middle Ages. Among its professed ideals are courage, loyalty, piety, and respect for women. How closely do Chaucer’s Knight and the knight in “The Wife of Bath’s Tale” adhere to these ideals? (20 points)
4. In “The General Prologue,” Chaucer devotes many lines to the church men and women of 14th century England. In fact, in the order of lines devoted to them, the six most fully described pilgrims all deal with the Church: Friar (68 lines), Parson (50 lines), Summoner (48 lines), Pardoner (46 lines), Prioress (45 lines), and Monk (43 lines). Do you think he is satisfied with the Church of his day? Does he attack all of the figures associated with it? If not, who is spared and why? (20 points)

5. The Miller is a big, brawny red-haired lout who likes to talk about uncouth, vulgar things. “The Miller’s Tale” is a bawdy story about a carpenter cuckolded by his wife with the boarder. How does his tale suit his personality? Given that all three men—Nicholas, Absolon, and John [the carpenter]—are husband types, how is the Miller’s Tale a lesson for husbands? (20 points)

6. “The Pardoner’s Tale” has been called one of the greatest short stories ever written. Explain why you agree or disagree with this assessment. In your discussion, consider the Old Man whom the revelers encounter and explain what you think he symbolizes. (20 points)
Lesson 5: Medieval Drama

Lesson Objectives

After you have completed this lesson, you should be able to do the following:

✓ Understand and discuss the difference between mystery and morality plays
✓ Understand and discuss how medieval drama served the needs of the Church
✓ Understand and discuss the concept of allegory

Lesson Introduction

Mystery Plays

With the beginning of the Middle Ages, drama (or at least any records of it) all but disappeared. While the ancient Greek and Roman governments officially supported drama, the Catholic Church, which had considerable control over European governments during medieval times, considered the performance of drama an evil activity related to the old pagan gods. Thus it is ironic that drama would be reborn in church.

Although ancient Greece is generally accepted as the birthplace of the theater, the springs of drama in British literature are found in the rituals of the Medieval Church. Originally the plays were part of the church service as a simple dialogue between two people. The Quem Quaeritis Trope (a little Easter play meaning “Whom seekest thou?”) was one of the originals (a trope was a variation on words already in the liturgy). The drama evolved from these simple tropes that dramatized bits of the Christmas and Easter Gospels. The pageants that presented Mary, Joseph, and the Christ Child, and brought the Easter liturgy to life became more and more elaborate, incorporating costumes and scenery and complex dialogue, until the altar (and even the churchyard itself) could not hold the staged presentations. As the dramas moved out of the churchyard and into the town, the church exercised less and less control. When the guilds (think of medieval labor unions) took over the dramas, talented writers began to explore the dramatic and comic possibilities inherent in the plots. For one thing, bawdiness and slapstick humor crept into the plays that
gradually became filled with rowdy lowlife. Old Testament figures were represented as stereotypes: Noah was always the henpecked husband; Mrs. Noah was a shrew, Abraham always a drunk, and Herod always ranting and raving.

The label “mystery play” is of uncertain origin. The editors of your text relate it to the spiritual mysteries of Christ’s redemption of mankind: the plays represent the Old Testament, which foretold those mysteries, and the New Testament, which fulfilled them. Another explanation is that the guilds, which became the chief presenters of the plays, were made up of skilled craftsmen, or “masters,” who were well past the apprentice stage. They were said to have “maistrie” or mastery of their craft, and their plays were the “maistry plays.”

**Morality Plays**

A second type of medieval drama was the morality play—a dramatized sermon. For these plays, subject matter expanded from Biblical narratives to morality tales that pitted Vice and Virtue in the struggle for souls. These cautionary tales showed audiences the rewards of good life and the fate that awaited the unrepentant.

An important feature of morality plays is allegory, a literary device that gives abstract ideas a physical representation. Modern examples of allegory include Death as a black-robed figure with a scythe and hourglass, or the old and new years represented by an old man and a baby. According to the *Bedford Introduction to Drama*, “the allegorical way of thinking derived from the medieval faith that everything in the world had a moral meaning.” Morality plays were grounded in this belief, and their use of allegorical characters makes character development unnecessary.

Familiar with the plots (and the outcomes) of the Bible stories, the medieval audiences were attracted to inventive presentations that tugged at their emotions; the most enduring of the plays tend to be either humorous or cautionary. By the end of the Middle Ages, the drama has become quite sophisticated; it is a genre ready for masters like Shakespeare and Marlowe to develop into the magnificent plays we still enjoy today.

**Reading Assignment**

Abrams, “Mystery Plays”, pages 379-380

Abrams, *The Second Shepherds’ Play*, pages 391-419

Lesson Assignment

**Complete the following and submit to LSU Independent & Distance Learning for grading. Be sure to follow the guidelines under “Preparation of Lesson Assignments” in the course syllabus. This lesson assignment is worth 100 possible points.**

**Answer the following 20-point questions.**

1. In the play *Everyman*, saving one’s soul is likened to a business transaction where God will ask, “Do you have enough grace stored up (your credits) to offset your sinful actions (your debits)?” *Everyman* talks of getting his accounts straight and preparing for a reckoning. For images from accounting, think business ledger containing debits and credits, money spent and money collected. Here is an example—in line 104, Death tells *Everyman*, “Thy book of count with thee thou bring.” (*Norton* explains that “count” means “accounts.”) A modern equivalent of *Everyman*’s ordeal is being audited by the IRS! Find five other examples of images from accounting and quote these specific examples. (List form is expected. Include line numbers, speaker, and a brief explanation.) (20 points)

2. *Everyman* is often performed today. Assume that you are casting a Hollywood version with access to any star (living or dead) to play the parts. You may also draw from well-known political figures. (Which part might suit Bill Clinton? Newt Gingrich?) Submit your suggestions to Central Casting, including a brief note about why the person you chose fits that part. Your list must include casting for God, Death, *Everyman*, and any other five characters. (List form is expected.) (20 points)

Example:

God: Charlton Heston; Heston has the voice and image that suit the part. Since God is angry as the play opens, Heston’s booming voice and stern face make a good first impression.

3. Examine the Doctor’s speech at the end of *Everyman*. Why, given the medieval world-view represented in the play, is it appropriate that a Doctor of Theology have the last word? Can we also consider this physician of the soul in more encompassing terms as one who has care of the whole person, much as our modern physicians do today? (20 points)
Lesson 5: Medieval Drama

Answer one of the following 40-point questions.

4. *The Second Shepherds’ Play*, as the halfway point in the development of English drama, features the double plot, one serious and one comic, that is the prototype of the plot/subplot of Elizabethan drama. Discuss how the comic plot informs (deepens the meaning of) the serious one. (40 points)

5. *The Second Shepherds’ Play* is peopled with everyday characters of low estate. It starts out in the English countryside in winter and ends in Bethlehem. Discuss how the interchangeable baby/sheep is the unifying device: mistaken baby (sheep) in the first part and lamb of God (baby Jesus) in the second part. (40 points)
Examination I

Preparation

It is now time to prepare for and take the mid-course examination. If you are not going to take your exam at LSU-Baton Rouge, notify us of your proctor by sending the completed Exam Proctor Information Form located in the appendix of this course guide to the Independent & Distance Learning office.

Please read the College Examination Information instructions located in the appendix of this course guide for further details.

About Examination I

Exam I will cover material from Lessons 1–5 and will test your knowledge of the literature and of the historical periods. In a section of matching, you will be asked to recognize specific historical events, different works, and characters in these works. In both short and long discussion questions, you will also be asked to examine conflicts faced and themes in works, as well as to explain the origins of different kinds of literature. As the course moves from one historical period to the next, changes occur in the lives and literature of the people. You should know those changes and be ready to compare and contrast major characters and writings from different periods.

In preparation for this exam, Lessons 1-5 are an invaluable guide. If material was not emphasized in the lessons, do not expect it on an exam. Review your graded lesson assignments, and make sure that you can answer all discussion questions—even the ones you did not write on.

You will be allowed three hours to complete each exam. Study materials and texts will not be allowed in the examination room.
Examination I

Study suggestions:

Know what: What kinds of writing appear in these periods. What happens in those writings?

Know when: When did certain types of writing appear, and how do they connect to the period that produced them? When did certain periods begin and end (and why are those points chosen)?

Know who: Who wrote? Who fought? Who is celebrated or reviled? Know the names.

Know why: What influences can you see? For example, how important is the Church in each of the ages studied? What effect did William the Conqueror have on English life and literature?
Part III: The Sixteenth Century

Introduction to Part III

England in the Sixteenth Century

The opening and closing dates for this “century”–1485 to 1603–illustrate that trying to follow the calendar will not be very helpful. The end for this period comes in 1603: Elizabeth I, daughter of Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn and the last of the Tudor sovereigns, died in 1603, without a marriage or an heir. At her death, the Tudor sovereigns were replaced by the Stuarts, and the sixteenth century is marked “complete.”

Historians mark the beginning of this period at 1485 for several good reasons. First, in 1485, the Tudor reign began when Henry VII took the throne, ending the thirty-odd years of conflict called “The War of the Roses.” An extended period of peace is a memorable thing. Peace allows resources to be used for something other than warfare. It allows culture to develop, economy to stabilize, politics and religion to explore the fine points of power, and people to learn, explore, and prosper. As you will see, the Renaissance moves to England during the Tudor reign. Although Italy had spent decades exploring the classics and developing its art and literature, England had been too occupied with civil war to participate in the “rebirth” of knowledge and culture. With peacetime, the prosperity and leisure time necessary for cultural development fostered the new spirit of learning that had been sweeping over Europe, and the Renaissance in England had begun.

A second historical event also marked the end of the medieval period. In 1485, William Caxton brought to England the technology to print from movable type. This flexible method of printing created an explosion in the production of books, which had formerly been copied painstakingly by hand. As a businessman, Caxton printed what would sell, not what was deemed holy and suitable. His varied publications would fill a shelf approximately five feet in
Part III: The Sixteenth Century

length. Included in his production were Malory’s *Mort Darthur* and Chaucer’s *The Canterbury Tales*. While accessibility to books did not turn the British into a literate population overnight, it did create a climate where the rising middle class could afford the previously unaffordable.

The changes in the thinking and lifestyles of the sixteenth century are reviewed in your text. Read the material carefully, contrasting what you read with what you already know about the earlier medieval age.

*Shift from Roman Catholicism to the Church of England*

Henry VIII, convinced that his first wife would never bear him sons, sought first an annulment and then a divorce. Neither was possible in the Roman Catholic Church, so he separated from the Roman Church and created the Church of England, naming himself as head and granting himself a divorce. During his reign, the resistance to the new church cost the head of many a loyal Catholic. His daughter Mary, a Catholic herself, sought a forcible return to Catholicism, resulting in many executions and earning her the title “Bloody Mary.” Elizabeth, Mary’s younger sister, had a long and influential reign during which she established the Anglican Church on terms acceptable to the general public. Although the Puritans and the staunch Catholics did not accept her compromises, during her reign, the populace found a way to worship according to their consciences; by the time she died, the Anglican Church was well-entrenched.

*Christian Humanism*

Humanism is one of the most influential philosophies of the Renaissance, affecting the education of both men and women in the period. It might surprise you to learn that humanism, particularly in England, was closely concerned with Christianity as well as classical learning. The reverence for the Greek and Roman classics (produced in a pre-Christian era) was part of humanist thinking, but humanism stressed that God had created man with abilities and talents that man was obligated to develop. In fact, the English humanists were in vigorous opposition to the so-called “secular” humanists in Italy who did not center their praise for man on reverence for God’s creation.

*The Elizabethan World Picture*

The Elizabethans also held a radically different view of the world—not just philosophically but also scientifically. Copernicus proposed his radical hypothesis that the Earth revolved around the sun in 1543, but it did not find wide acceptance among Elizabethans. Instead, their vision of the world order
was based on the old Ptolemaic universe that placed the Earth at the center of the universe with the moon, the planets, and the sun revolving around it. Even as Copernicus’ theory gained scientific acceptance, in the popular imagination, the geocentric world maintained its place. As a result, writers continued to use the metaphor and the imagery of that world for literally hundreds of years after it lost scientific support. During the remaining lessons, expect to find references to the spheres, the chain (or ladder) of being, and the doctrine of correspondence. This section is a brief overview to make you aware of the views on which these references are based. Read the discussion of the Ptolemaic universe (2960–2961) and the following discussion before answering the lesson assignment questions.

The diagram (2961) should help you to understand references to the spheres in the literature of the sixteenth (and the seventeenth and eighteenth) century. It was originally believed that all of these spheres moved in perfect harmony, producing a heavenly music that ended when Adam and Eve disrupted the order by eating the infamous apple. Only a return to the perfect balance and the order of that prelapsarian time (before the fall) could bring back the heavenly concord. At the moment of Christ’s nativity, say some legends, that harmony was briefly restored, and earth-dwellers could once again hear the angels sing.

The Elizabethans accepted the medieval vision of world order, using the metaphor of a great chain or ladder of being. Because God is the architect of the chain, He is not on it, but everything else in the universe is placed in a specific, well-defined spot. The top link of the chain (or rung of the ladder) is reserved for the angels. They are carefully arranged in nine ranks, ranging from the tiny cherubim to the mighty archangel. The link below the angels is for human beings, who are similarly arranged in careful ranks. In the political world, the top of the ranking is the king, with assorted nobles, workers, and peasants filling the ranks below. The structure is echoed in each facet of life; the man is the head of the household, the pope is the head of the church, and so on. An important part of this ordering is the concept of place—a man was expected to know his place and to play his part to the best of his ability. It was possible for a man to move up in rank—a duke might, through proper channels, eventually inherit the throne; however, for one to step out of his place and assume an unearned, unseemly position created chaos in the ranks below. When an upstart usurped the throne, therefore, chaos followed. In 1 Henry IV, for example, Henry IV has taken the throne from Richard by deceit and treachery. The play opens with the king doing penance and longing for the leisure to go
Part III: The Sixteenth Century

on a pilgrimage, seeking to reconcile his soul and his subjects with his deeds. Shortly we learn that his kingdom is in chaos, with his former allies in rebellion and civil war about to break out. Not only is there political chaos, but on the homefront, his relationship with his son, Prince Hal, is extremely rocky. Not until the two make peace with each other and put down the rebellion is there any peace, and not until the son inherits the throne from his father (in an orderly, appropriate succession) is there harmony in the country.

The ordering of the universe by the chain or ladder continues throughout the whole of creation. The mammals fill the link below humanity, with a king of beasts (the lion); the creatures of the sea and air also had order in their links, with the respective kings being the whale and the eagle. Flowers were ranked (from the rose down); gemstones were ranked (diamonds led the list), and every aspect of the world that could be catalogued was arranged in place. While the twentieth century no longer gives scientific validity to this ordering, we still retain many of the images it created. The hierarchy of the animals and the association of each ranking with specific traits (i.e., a bear for courage, a fox for slyness, a daisy for innocence, a tulip for friendship) continue.

Additional implications of this world order can be found in the literature you are assigned to read for the remaining lessons. The “trickle-down theory,” which argued that chaos above led to chaos below, was much accepted. Signs were read in the heavens and in natural events; eclipses and comet showers spoke of chaos or change in the spheres above the earth and thus portended chaos in this world, while floods and earthquakes were signs that the earthly frame was breaking down and the end of the world was near. God’s displeasure was read into natural disasters, and the culprit was much sought after. If the droughts ruined crops, the fault lay in some insult to the heavens. If the country suffered, the king must surely have acted awry. Even lovers were ruled by this world order. Classified as “lunatics” because they were ruled by the moonlight, lovers were said to be as changeable as the phases of the moon. John Donne made use of that imagery by declaring to his love that they were above those “dull, sublunary lovers” and would not change. Refer to page 1073, the second paragraph, for a review of the structure of this great order of being. That section reviews the thinking of the sixteenth century in order to contrast it with the new values of the seventeenth, but you may find the review quite useful.
Lesson 6: Elizabethan Poetry—The Sonnet

Lesson Objectives

After you have completed this lesson, you should be able to do the following:

✓ Understand and discuss the history, definition, and conventions of the sonnet
✓ Understand and discuss significant sonnet writers: Wyatt, Surrey, Sidney, Spenser, Shakespeare, Marlowe, and Ralegh

Lesson Introduction

In this lesson, you will look at the poetic works of seven men. They were well-known in their lifetimes, though not necessarily for their writing. Read through their introductions, noting their varied careers and diverse accomplishments. For most of these men, writing was a leisure activity rather than a living (even Shakespeare made most of his money managing the acting company, not writing plays). The Renaissance in England was a demanding time if one wished to be regarded as an accomplished person. Humanism, as you saw in the introduction for the Sixteenth Century, was a dominant force, encouraging a well-rounded education for men and for women. The Renaissance person was expected to be accomplished in a number of areas, including diplomacy, foreign languages, mathematics, and fine arts. A man who wished to do well at court had, of course, to be politically well-connected, but he was also expected to be adept at the social graces and capable of writing fine love poetry. Although Caxton’s press made printed books fairly common, the men of the upper classes were more likely to circulate their writings in manuscript form. The references in the poetry may seem obscure to us, but those at court had little trouble figuring out who was in love with whom and whose love was futile.
Lesson 6: Elizabethan Poetry—The Sonnet

The Sonnet

From Italian literature, English poets borrowed a tidy little genre called the sonnet. This verse form had to meet fairly rigid expectations: fourteen lines of iambic pentameter, with the end rhymes following a set schema. Before you begin the readings for this lesson, review the poetic terminology starting on page 2944 in your text. Be sure that you understand the opening section on rhythm and meter, with its definitions of “iambic foot” and “pentameter.” Since the writers were forced by sonnet form to make their lines follow a certain beat and rhyme in a certain pattern, you will better understand their challenges and forgive their deviations from the rigid form. Stanzas, couplets, quatrains, and sonnets themselves are discussed on pages 2948–2950; read those paragraphs carefully. Also review the discussion of “Figurative Language,” since the lesson material will refer to metaphors, similes, conceits, paradoxes, and personification, expecting you to know these terms. This section can be useful to you throughout this course; become familiar with what it has to offer.

Practice in Paraphrasing

To begin this lesson on Elizabethan poetry, with emphasis on the sonnet, let’s look closely at the sonnet “Farewell, Love” by Wyatt on page 528.

First, break it into four sentences, using the punctuation in the text. Notice that the first eight lines (or first two sentences) are different from the last six lines. In fact, the transition “Therefore” in line 9 is a clue that some shift has occurred. The early English sonnets, leaning heavily on the Italian sonnets that preceded them, are typically divided into an octave and sestet, with the octave stating some problem or complaining about some difficulty and the sestet offering a kind of resolution, solution, or decision. That pattern is evident here.

Paraphrase of “Farewell, Love”

In the first eight lines, Wyatt is saying goodbye to Love, not a particular woman, but the pursuit of women and all love relationships. He compares such pursuits to “baited hooks” that have snared and entangled him, and he is through with such pains. Instead, he will study the classical writers to perfect his wit. The second sentence (ll. 5–8) describes the pains he has suffered in the pursuit of love. When he persisted in “blind error,” he was repulsed in a most painful way. He has learned to place no value (“set no store”) in the trifling matters of Love, and he is escaping (remember the “baited hooks”) because he prefers his liberty to such traps.

“Therefore” begins the sestet, the concluding six lines that explain his solution or decision. He tells Love to go and tempt younger hearts and to give up trying to rule him. The “brittle darts” (which suggest Cupid and his arrows) should be shot at idle youth, since the poet has no more time to waste. He no longer
cares to climb on “rotten boughs,” which presumably break and drop him down to earth.

**Sonnet Conventions**

Conventions are accepted ways of doing things or shared cultural codes.

Wyatt’s poem is an early English sonnet, still leaning heavily on the Italian form of octave and sestet. It uses conventions like *apostrophe* (love, an abstract thing that cannot answer, is addressed directly), *metaphor* (love is compared to a hunter/fisher with baited hooks and to a tree with rotten boughs), and *allusion* (Cupid is suggested without being named directly).

All of the terms in italics are further discussed in the glossary. Review them as necessary.

**Reading Assignment**

*Read through the discussion questions in the lesson assignment before reading the assignment.*

Abrams:
“The Sixteenth Century” (pages 469–490)

“Sonnets” (page 1028)

“Sir Thomas Wyatt the Elder” (pages 525–526); “Farewell, Love” (page 528); “My Galley” (page 528); “Whoso List to Hunt” (page 527); “They Flee from Me” (pages 529–530)

“Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey” (pages 569–70); “Love, That Doth Reign and Live Within My Thought” (page 571); “The Soote Season” (pages 570–571)

“Edmund Spenser” (pages 614–616, 863–864); From *Amoretti*, #54, 64, 68, 75, and 79 (pages 865–868)

“Sir Walter Ralegh” (pages 878–879); “The Nymph’s Reply to the Shepherd” (page 879)

“Sir Philip Sidney” (pages 909–911); From *Astrophil and Stella*, #1, 5, 7, 31, and 39 (pages 917–923)

“Christopher Marlowe” (pages 970–971); “The Passionate Shepherd to His Love” (pages 989–990)
Lesson 6: Elizabethan Poetry—The Sonnet

“William Shakespeare” (pages 1026–1027); Sonnets #18, 19, 29, 30, 55, 73, 116, 130, and 138 (pages 1031–1041)

Lesson Assignment

Complete the following and submit to LSU Independent & Distance Learning for grading. Be sure to follow the guidelines under “Preparation of Lesson Assignments” in the course syllabus. This lesson assignment is worth 100 possible points.

Answer three of the following 10-point questions.

1. Write a brief overview of the sonnet as a form of poetry, including its origins, its form, its conventions, and its subject matter. Use the introductory material and the glossary in the back of your text to form your answer. (10 points)

2. After reading the material on and by Sir Philip Sidney, define “sonnet sequence” or cycle. How is Astrophil and Stella a sonnet sequence? (10 points)

3. Shakespeare’s sonnet #130 (1040) is sometimes called anti-Petrarchan in its imagery. Remember that Petrarchan sonnets praised the lover’s beauty in glamorous, extravagant ways—eyes like stars, hair like silk, lips like roses, etc. List some of the images in #130 that directly contradict the Petrarchan conventions. Is the poet making fun of the woman? Is she nasty and distasteful to him? Explain your answer. (10 points)

4. Shakespeare’s sonnet #138 (1041) is a long and elaborate pun on the word “lie.” In what two senses does the sonnet use that word? What lies does the woman tell? What lies does the speaker tell? How do they lie together? (10 points)

Answer one of the following 20-point questions.

5. Wyatt’s sonnets often hint at his own struggles at court. “Whoso List to Hunt” is generally assumed to refer to his earlier relationship with Anne Boleyn, the woman who became Henry VIII’s second wife, and “My Galley” (his ship, or in this case, his life) more than hints at a troubled, stormy time when no safe port is visible. Further, it suggests that he is not entirely sure why he is in such trouble (“The stars be hid…”). Notice that each sonnet has a central metaphor—his life is a ship on a storm-tossed sea, and the woman is a deer that belongs to the King and must not be touched. Choose one of these two sonnets and explain it thoroughly, paraphrasing it by sentences and including the main ideas as we did for Sonnet Practice in the Introduction of this lesson. (20 points)
6. Read Marlowe’s poem and Ralegh’s reply. Because poetry circulated in manuscript form, there was no publishing delay, and an author who was intrigued by one work could pen (and circulate) a response as swiftly as he could a letter. Ralegh’s was not the only response to Marlowe’s poem, but it remains the best known. For a poem that also shows familiarity with Marlowe’s, read John Donne’s “The Bait” (1247). In a brief paragraph, contrast the mood of Marlowe’s speaker with the pragmatic tone of Ralegh’s. Be sure to use examples from the poems to prove your point. (20 points)

Answer the following 50-point question.

7. Spenser and Shakespeare wrote some of the most sophisticated, varied, and original sonnets in history, yet it would be a mistake to think that they rejected all tradition. Quite a number of their sonnets repeat traditional praises or present traditional beliefs of their age. Read Spenser’s Sonnet #75 (867–868) and Shakespeare’s Sonnets #18, 19, and 55 (1031–1034). Were any of these poems familiar to you? These four sonnets have a similar theme. In a short essay, identify the similar idea at the heart of these four sonnets. For each sonnet, describe the imagery (metaphors, similes, etc.) that the poets use to develop the idea. Which one of these sonnets do you like best? Explain your answer. (50 points)
Lesson 7: Renaissance Drama—Dr. Faustus

Lesson Objectives

After you have completed this lesson, you should be able to do the following:

✔ Understand and discuss the connection between medieval drama and Renaissance drama
✔ Understand and discuss how Christopher Marlowe paved the way for the tragedies of Shakespeare

Lesson Introduction

During Queen Elizabeth’s forty-five-year reign, drama flowered, so much so that the period is now considered the Golden Age of English drama. The plays of great dramatists like Christopher Marlowe and William Shakespeare contained something for everyone: low comedy for the uneducated, elevated philosophical concepts for the educated, and strong story lines to engage the attention of all classes. Although Christopher Marlowe wrote the most famous poem to emerge from Elizabethan England—“The Passionate Shepherd to his Love”—he will be most remembered for his contribution to English drama. This contribution is twofold: First, he adapted blank verse (unrhymed iambic pentameter) to the stage. Since iambic pentameter is the rhythm closest to human speech, Marlowe’s blank verse made the speeches and actions on the stage closer to the level of conversation, rather than declamation or bombast. Ben Jonson expressed his admiration for this achievement when he referred to “Marlowe’s mighty line.” Marlowe’s ability to compress thought, image, and idea into superb lines of blank verse inspired Shakespeare and later practitioners of the art.

Marlowe’s second contribution to drama lies in his main characters: he created towering heroes who are strong and overpowering until tragedy strikes. These heroes are a bridge between Greek tragedy of the pagan world and Shakespearean tragedy of the Christian world.
As can be seen with *The Second Shepherds' Play* and *Everyman*, drama in the Middle Ages was either comical or allegorical. There was no possibility of tragedy because the medieval world was God-centered and certain in the conviction that no man was punished unjustly. If terrible things happened, they were either a test of a person's character or were deserved by sin (original or otherwise). In the medieval Christian view that produced *Everyman*, a person's actions in this world determine his place in the next. There is divine justice at work here because in the afterlife, good is rewarded and evil punished.

During Marlowe’s time, we see a change in world view as a result of the rebirth of classical learning and the ramifications of the Protestant Reformation. Greek works, lost in the Middle Ages, were rediscovered. Instead of God-centered, the world became human-centered with a Protestant emphasis on a personal relationship with God that bypasses a priest and a congregation. Because of political, social, and religious upheavals, people began to see life, not as well-ordered (exemplified by the Great Chain of Being) but as unpredictable: no one could be sure of anything. This new sense of reality opened up the possibility for tragedy. Tragedy recognizes the abyss and the possibility of falling into it because the world is out of joint (as Hamlet says). In tragedy, there is a sense that one may not be able to achieve justice.

Tragedy depends for its effect on an essentially good and noble character’s sudden and terrible fall from grace, with consequences that far outweigh the offense. Think here of Lear who laments, “I am a man more sinned against than sinning” (3.2.59-60). While Dr. Faustus is not yet the full-fledged tragic hero (he’s not more sinned against than sinning), we do sympathize with him and feel the terror he goes through. Faustus is trying to be good and seeks knowledge, but knowledge is not what he gets. He is the master of his fate and yet is incredibly foolish and proud. He both deserves and doesn’t deserve his fate. In order to set this paradox up, Marlowe taps into the contradictions of his world.

Acting like a bridge to Shakespearean tragedy, *Dr. Faustus* borrows from both Greek and medieval drama. Marlowe’s play contains a chorus, such as is found in Greek drama, to offer commentary at the beginning of each act, as well as to help set the scene since there isn’t a great deal of continuity between one act and the next. *Dr. Faustus* also employs many elements found in medieval morality plays. The seven deadly sins and good and evil are personified. Dr. Faustus has the counsel of a good angel and a bad angel when he decides whether or not to make a pact with the devil, and later, Mephistopheles calls upon the seven deadly sins to illustrate the “pleasures” of Hell.

As in *Everyman*, *Dr. Faustus* concerns itself with salvation. However, *Dr. Faustus* is a product of a Protestant culture, so the play’s emphasis is on free will. It’s Dr. Faustus’s choice to make a pact with the devil. Everyman, on the other hand, is
concerned with the inevitability of death and his salvation. Like all mortals, Everyman must die and make his reckoning with God.

Finally, *Dr. Faustus*’s influence can be seen on later works of literature. The long speeches, the brooding tragic hero, and the comic servants can all be found in later dramas of William Shakespeare, such as *Hamlet*. Also, nineteenth-century author Mary Shelley is much indebted to Christopher Marlowe for Victor Frankenstein, another man who pursues knowledge he would be better off leaving alone.

**Reading Assignment**

*Read through the discussion questions in the lesson assignment before reading the assignment.*

Abrams:

“The Elizabethan Theater” (pages 490–495)

“Christopher Marlowe” (pages 970–971)

*Doctor Faustus* (pages 990–1023)

**Lesson Assignment**

*Complete the following and submit to LSU Independent & Distance Learning for grading. Be sure to follow the guidelines under “Preparation of Lesson Assignments” in the course syllabus. This lesson assignment is worth 100 possible points.*

**Answer the following 40-point question.**

1. Compare and contrast *Dr. Faustus* and *Everyman* from the standpoints of main characters and each play’s use of allegory. (40 points)

**Answer three of the following 20-point questions.**

2. The Renaissance was a time when great advances were made towards increasing human knowledge of science, history, and art. Information that had been lost during the fall of the Roman Empire or hidden in medieval monasteries was rediscovered, and wholly original scholarship added still more information to the wealth of human knowledge. Education was changing from the privilege of a select few to the prerogative of anyone with the money to attend a university. Knowledge and education were generally thought to be good things. Why then would Marlowe (a Cambridge-educated
Lesson 7: Renaissance Drama—Dr. Faustus

man) write a play about the evils of knowledge? What sort of knowledge is evil and why? (20 points)

3. Given the choice, would you go see a performance of Dr. Faustus or Everyman? Explain your answer in terms of which drama you find more entertaining or thought provoking. (20 points)

4. Why does Dr. Faustus make a pact with the devil? He obviously knows the consequences. (20 points)

5. His devilish deal notwithstanding, Dr. Faustus is a figure who elicits our sympathy. In other words, we care about what happens to him and are saddened by his terrible fall from grace. What about Dr. Faustus makes him a sympathetic character? (20 points)
Lesson 8: Renaissance Drama—*1 Henry IV*

Lesson Objectives

After you have completed this lesson, you should be able to do the following:

- Understand and discuss the definition of history or chronicle play
- Understand and discuss the flowering of the plot/subplot from medieval drama
- Understand and discuss the nature of kingship

Lesson Introduction

You might remember from the earlier lesson on Chaucer that copyright laws were non-existent, and that plagiarism was an alien concept. It was not the originality of the plot line that mattered—Shakespeare’s history plays, for example, covered material rather well-known to his audience. Rather, it was the ability to tell an engaging story that made a playwright and his works distinguished. Consider the movie *Titanic*; do many people go to the theater not knowing that the ship will sink? It is not the outcome of the story, but the presentation that makes theater (film or stage) work for the audience.

*1 Henry IV* is a chronicle play, also called a history play. Shakespeare frequently used history as a source of inspiration; in fact, half of his plays are based on some historical event. Many of his English chronicle plays are based on a work by Ralph Holinshed, *Chronicles of England, Ireland, Scotland, and Wales*. That work was commissioned in the early part of the century by the Tudors. From your earlier reading, you should recall that the Tudors began their reign after victory in the long-running civil war called “The War of the Roses.” The Tudors were direct descendants of the Lancasters, who had battled the Yorks for the throne for some thirty years. Ideally, according to the orderly view of the universe held by Elizabethans, succession to the throne was by heredity, not military might. Holinshed had been instructed to glorify English history to build up the morale and nationalistic spirit of the English; he was also expected to clean up the image of the Tudors and their “disorderly” ascent to the throne.
Not surprisingly then, Holinshed’s work celebrated the achievements of his employers, but Holinshed did more than glorify the Tudors. Richard II, who lost his throne to the Bolingbroke who was crowned Henry IV (the first of the Lancaster kings), was cheapened in Holinshed’s history, and the Lancasters were made to seem more noble and more suited to the throne.

Shakespeare, then, gets more than a historical record from his source. He also has an attitude to borrow. Elizabeth I, a Tudor herself, reportedly enjoyed the series, which glorified her family line. To give him credit, Shakespeare does much more than a public relations job for the queen. In fact, his chronicles develop beyond the simple history plays into complex studies of character, as we see in *1 Henry IV*. He also addresses issues of orderly and just succession in the play, with Bolingbroke’s concern that his own son will not be judged fit to take the throne. The play thus reflected the concern of its original audiences who faced the end of the century with Elizabeth unmarried and questions of succession a genuine fear. Who would follow? Would the country return to a disastrous military struggle for control of the throne?

Another angle developed by Shakespeare is the conflict between Henry IV (Bolingbroke) and his son, Prince Hal (who will one day be Henry V). Like most fathers, Bolingbroke wants to see signs of greatness in his son; instead, Hal seems to be rejecting his (new) heritage and pleasuring himself in the taverns. This story of father-son conflicts is not unique to the play. Bolingbroke’s laments over his wayward son and Hal’s assertions that he will earn his father’s respect have an ageless ring to them.

Another approach to the play is that it represents Shakespeare’s portrait of the ideal king. Historically, Henry V did become one of the most popular English heroes. So exploring the character of Hal as he develops from the tavern rat of the first act to the honorable soldier on the plains of Shrewsbury can provide insight into the virtues and values Shakespeare saw as central to the ideal king. Hal acquires a certain reputation here as he demonstrates honor and bravery and loyalty and responsibility. In *2 Henry IV*, Hal’s reputation centers more on the public virtues—he shows wisdom and concern for justice, particularly civil justice. By the third play (*Henry V*), Hal is mature and heroic, the unquestioned leader of his people.

As you read the play, define Hal by the company he keeps. His friend Falstaff is a kind of father figure in an alternate world to the court, a world unrestrained by demands of honor and obligation. Is Hal part of that world purely to irritate his father? Or does he have another purpose for living among the lowly folk he will one day rule?

Bolingbroke himself invites a comparison between Hal and Hotspur. In one of his earliest speeches, he wonders, even wishes, that Hotspur might indeed be his own son, switched at birth by mischievous fairies.
It is Hotspur that Hal targets when he vows to his father that he will aid in the defeat of the rebels. What Bolingbroke fears is that the people will turn away from Hal to Hotspur and honor Hotspur as their leader and king. Watch carefully—as Hal accepts responsibility, Hotspur shows his temper and his lack of judgment. Could he be a king? Watch the rise of one star and the decline of the other until they meet in battle, vowing that the universe is not big enough for their two stars to share an orbit.

Whatever approach you take to defining Hal, be sure to look at his character as it evolves throughout the play. The portrait we see in the early scenes is not complete until Hal steps between his father and Douglas on the battlefield and saves his father’s life.

Reading Assignment

Read through the discussion questions in the lesson assignment before reading the assignment.

Abrams, “The Elizabethan Theater” (pages 490–495)

Shakespeare, 1 Henry IV (Be sure to read Henry IV Part I.)

Lesson Assignment

Complete the following and submit to LSU Independent & Distance Learning for grading. Be sure to follow the guidelines under “Preparation of Lesson Assignments” in the course syllabus. This lesson assignment is worth 100 possible points.

Answer the following 60-point question.

1. As noted earlier in the discussion material for this lesson, 1 Henry IV can be read as a study in the ideal traits of a king, particularly personal traits that are seen as he interacts with other characters. Hal may not seem a promising specimen for king at the beginning of the play; his father certainly expresses disappointment in him in the opening act and again when the two are face to face in act 3. By the end of the play, however, he has shown himself to be a better man than we first might have thought.

In a series of well-developed paragraphs, explain the traits that Hal demonstrates throughout the play. Give specific examples of actions or comments that reveal his true nature. Consider: How does he treat his friends, both in the early tavern scenes and in the later scenes when he has accepted his responsibility? How does he speak
Lesson 8: Renaissance Drama—1 Henry IV

of and to his enemies? How does he treat Hotspur? Douglas? What kind of son is he? How does he treat his brother? Be specific as you describe Hal.

It might be useful to contrast him with other characters—for example, how did his father treat his promises to his former allies? How does Hotspur treat Hal, both to his face and behind his back? How does Falstaff feel about honor? (60 points)

Answer two of the following 20-point questions.

2. When Hal describes his purpose and his plans when he is alone (act 1, scene 2, ll. 150–172), note the language shift as Hal speaks to himself, from prose to blank verse—the conventions of the theater established blank verse as the appropriate form for noble characters and prose for the speech of clowns and lower classes. What does Hal reveal and what does this language shift imply? (20 points)

3. Act 3, scene 2 presents Hal and Bolingbroke face to face for the first time in the play. The moment is one of the major turning points. What does Bolingbroke say to Hal about his behavior? How are his feelings typical of fathers in any age or culture? How does Hal respond? (20 points)

4. Mortimer, the legitimate heir to the throne, is left a prisoner of the Welsh ruler Glendower when Bolingbroke refuses to ransom him. Mortimer, who is the brother of Hotspur’s wife, is accused of treason because he has fallen in love with Glendower’s daughter. Glendower joins the rebels partially because of his daughter’s alliance and partially because he himself is promised a part of England once Bolingbroke is conquered. The allies first gather in act 3, scene 1. What is it that Glendower takes great pride in? How does Hotspur react to Glendower’s boasts? Evaluate the wisdom of Hotspur’s treatment of Glendower. Bolingbroke has said that he fears that Hotspur will be favored as king over Hal. Looking at Hotspur in action as a diplomat, do you think that he would make a good king? (20 points)

5. What is Falstaff’s opinion of honor? How does his behavior on the battlefield show that he takes his own definition seriously? (20 points)
Lesson 9: Renaissance Drama—Shakespeare’s *King Lear*

Lesson Objectives

After you have completed this lesson, you should be able to do the following:

- Understand and discuss the connection between Marlowe’s *Dr. Faustus* and Shakespeare’s *King Lear*
- Understand and discuss the development of the plot/subplot from medieval drama
- Understand and discuss the nature of kingship
- Understand and discuss the Great Chain of Being as dramatized in *King Lear*

Lesson Introduction

*1 Henry IV* required much historical background to understand the intrigues of the plot because it drew so heavily on political intrigue. In contrast, *The Tragedy of King Lear* is less about politics and more about nature. It is not a pretty portrait. The natural world, as in Mother Nature, is described as howling storms and empty plains, while the natural course for human beings here is betrayal and rejections. What is the nature of man? Is it to be proud, tyrannical, and foolish? Is it to be greedy and ambitious? Is there room for honor and nobility and true affection? Remember that you are about to read a tragedy. A simplistic distinction between comedies and tragedies is that in comedies, the characters are alive at the end of the play, usually eating, and in tragedies, most of the characters are dead. But more than the body count, tragedies can be measured in the flaws that bring about the great falls from happiness to despair, from joy to tears, from life to death. When characters live, there can be repentance and reconciliation and restoration; when characters die, what is left of their world? These are questions that do not require history lessons—we repeat them every day, in great and little scale.
Lesson 9: Renaissance Drama—Shakespeare’s *King Lear*

As you study this play, remember that a tragedy shows the downfall of a hero from a great and happy state to a state of great misery (and usually death). So from the beginning, note that happiness (however short-lived) of Lear and his daughter Cordelia. Based on earlier sources, *King Lear* mixes the unhappy fate of the King (and the kingdom) with the misery visited upon his subjects, notably Gloucester and his family. You should be ready to discuss the parallels between the two families; it is typical of the Elizabethan world vision that the lower rankings of the chain would echo the chaos of the upper. Also note that the natural world reflects the madness and disorder of the human world.

**Reading Assignment**

*Read through the discussion questions in the lesson assignment before reading the assignment.*

Abrams, *King Lear* (pages 1106–1191)

**Lesson Assignment**

*Complete the following and submit to LSU Independent & Distance Learning for grading. Be sure to follow the guidelines under “Preparation of Lesson Assignments” in the course syllabus. This lesson assignment is worth 100 possible points.*

**Answer the following 30-point questions.**

1. Compare and contrast the characters Dr. Faustus and King Lear from the standpoint of tragic protagonist. Remember that tragedy dramatizes the complete downfall of a person of high estate. Sometimes this terrible fall happens because of the protagonist’s tragic flaw, a moral weakness like hubris (Greek for overweening pride, arrogance or excessive confidence). Sometimes the protagonist makes a misstep, an error in judgment that turns out badly. In your discussion of the two tragic protagonists, show how Lear is a more advanced development (in terms of character depth and the complications of Lear’s plight) from the earlier Faustus.  **(30 points)**

2. In act 1, scene 2, Edmund and Gloucester deliver contrasting speeches about the nature of the world (ll.103–135). Summarize Gloucester’s traditional, chain-of-being explanation for the events; then describe Edmund’s beliefs about the source of human troubles.  **(30 points)**
Answer two of the following 20-point questions.

3. The authority figures in this play (at various times, Lear, Cornwall, even Oswald) are openly resisted by family members and supposedly loyal servants. Do you approve or disapprove of the defiance of characters such as Cordelia and Kent and Cornwall’s servant? What seems to be the judgment of the play? (20 points)

4. Cordelia relies on her father’s natural affection for her, and expects him to do the same. Lear relies on the natural affection of his daughters Regan and Goneril; like Cordelia, he is sorely disappointed. Using those misdirected beliefs and any others you find in the play, describe the ways in which this world is out of order and unnatural. (20 points)

5. The subplot of Gloucester and his family parallel the story of Lear. Briefly describe the similarities. (20 points)

6. The Fool is not a comedian; his job is to say to Lear what other characters do not have the nerve or the standing to say. Compare the words of Kent that so anger Lear to some of the comments of the Fool. What happens to Kent? Why is the Fool not treated the same way? (20 points)

7. Consider the ending of the play. Is there anything optimistic about it? Are there any signs of hope for this world, or is it so broken that it cannot be fixed? (20 points)
Introduction to Part IV

Because the “boundary” between literary periods is drawn less by the change of the calendar and more by historical events, discussions of before and after tend to deal with extremes. In reality, changes in philosophy and lifestyle were far less abrupt than they seem when we look back over centuries and see the differences. Even breakthrough discoveries in science have a gradual impact on society; the acceptance of such discoveries may be slow and the effect on the life of the common man even slower. The change of leadership in a country is, similarly, more dramatic to historians than to the people of the land.

But the impact of such changes on the lives of the few can be a powerful influence on the writings of the period, particularly if those affected are the upper classes, which produce most of the writers, philosophers, and politicians. Further, the effects of some changes are cumulative; that is, their impact grows over the years. Such was the case with the ending of the Tudor reign and the accession of the Stuart line. Because Elizabeth I had reigned past the point when she could be expected to produce an heir, the country had long known that the Tudors would end with her. The peaceful transfer of power to the Stuarts was at first something of a relief, but the difficulties that had simmered under Elizabeth erupted under the Stuarts, and by the middle of the century, civil war raged, the king had been executed, and the country was ruled by the strong hand of Oliver Cromwell. The initial success of the Puritan Revolt had a tremendous impact on the literature of the early seventeenth century. Its collapse after the death of Cromwell also affected the literature of the later period called the Restoration.

In this group of lessons, you will look at the uncertainties that marked the first part of the century and influenced the literature produced. You will examine in particular two major movements in poetry, called “schools,” that were influential...
Part IV: The Early Seventeenth Century

in that time. Remember that labels like “school of poetry” are applied after the fact; John Donne and the writers we now call “metaphysical poets” did not organize in any way but did read and emulate writings they admired. An exception might be the young “Cavalier” poets who so admired the work of Ben Jonson that they were proud to be called “Sons of Ben.” (See “Schools” 2953.) Remember, too, that the two groups studied in these lessons were hardly warring camps; Jonson much admired and praised John Donne even though he did not imitate his style or care for his innovative approach to rhyme and meter. Jonson and his “school” will be examined in this lesson; Donne and his “school” in the next.
Lesson 10: Cavalier Poetry

Lesson Objectives

After you have completed this lesson, you should be able to do the following:

✓ Understand and discuss the characteristics of Cavalier poetry
✓ Understand and discuss the ways that Cavaliers borrowed from the classics

Lesson Introduction

Like most categories, the metaphysical and Cavalier “schools” of poetry in the early seventeenth century are best viewed as general characteristics rather than as rigid containers. “Metaphysical” was not applied until decades after the writings appeared, and the label “Cavalier” had many applications. During the conflicts with the Puritans, the Puritans were often called “Roundheads” because of their simple, almost bowl-like haircuts. The nobles who opposed them were the “Cavaliers,” a term that implied an easy grace that did not falter under pressure. Today, young Cavaliers might assert, “Never let them see you sweat” as a motto; then, the Cavaliers were marked by a casual bravado, a light touch, and an easy wit. In poetry, Cavalier poets produced polished, simple verse that paid careful attention to rhyme and meter. Often drawing on classical forms like epigrams and elegies, these poems had an art and simplicity, a sense of ease and grace, that was often achieved at the expense of intellectual complexity. Ben Jonson was the most prominent of these poets, and the writers who much admired his work and sought to emulate it called themselves the “Sons of Ben.”

Cavalier poetry has many characteristics of classical poetry: the attention to form, the emphasis on clarity, moderation, allusions to classical mythology, simplicity of diction, decorum, and rationality. As you read the works of Jonson and Herrick, identify these traits.
Lesson 10: Cavalier Poetry

Reading Assignment

Read through the discussion questions in the lesson assignment before reading the assignment.

Abrams:

Introduction (pages 1209–1220)

“Ben Jonson” (pages 1292–1294); “On My First Daughter” (pages 1394–95); “To John Donne” (page 1395); “On My First Son” (page 1396); “Inviting a Friend to Supper” (page 1398); “Epitaph on S. P., a Child of Queen Elizabeth’s Chapel” (page 1399); “Song: To Celia” (page 1402); “Still to Be Neat” (page 1414)

“Robert Herrick” (pages 1643–1644); “Delight in Disorder” (page 1646); “His Farewell to Sack” (pages 1646–1648); “The Vine” (pages 1645–1646); “To the Virgins, to Make Much of Time” (pages 1649–1650)

Lesson Assignment

Complete the following and submit to LSU Independent & Distance Learning for grading. Be sure to follow the guidelines under “Preparation of Lesson Assignments” in the course syllabus. This lesson assignment is worth 100 possible points.

Answer the following 40-point question.

1. Compare and contrast Herrick’s “Delight in Disorder” (1646) with Jonson’s “Still To Be Neat” (1414). What attitudes toward art and nature do the two poems share? (40 points)

Comment: The notion of decorum in poetry does not mean that all subjects are carefully sanitized for general use; in fact, some of the topics covered are quite raunchy. Decorum meant that language and imagery appropriate to the subject were to be used. The cross-overs seen in metaphysical poetry (i.e., the use of religious metaphors to describe physical pleasures, or sexual imagery to describe a relationship with God) were violations of decorum. Poems like Herrick’s “The Vine” were not indecorous, however earthly their subject matter.
Answer three of the following 20-point questions.

2. A common image of life and death was that life is a loan from God that must one day be repaid. In *1 Henry IV*, Prince Hal reminds Falstaff as they face a bitter battle that “Thou owest God a debt,” to which Falstaff replies that he does not wish to pay it any earlier than necessary. Jonson uses that idea in the epitaphs he wrote on his son and daughter. Give the lines from each poem that refer to this idea and show how the poet’s restraint still reveals the father’s heartsick grief. (20 points)

3. In contrast to the epitaphs for his son and daughter, the “Epitaph on S. P.” is an elegant praise without the sense of deep pain that shows in the other two. Who was S. P.? How old was he when he died? According to Jonson, why did the Fates take him from this world? When they realized their mistake, why did they keep him? (20 points)

4. “Song: To Celia” is one of the most famous of all lyrics. It consists of two extended metaphors, one in the first stanza and the other in the second. Explain what these metaphors are, tell which metaphor is more effective, and explain why you think this. (20 points)

5. Before you read “Farewell to Sack,” know that sack is sherry wine. Herrick is thus saying goodbye to the pleasures of the bottle. As you read, note how deep his feelings are about his drink. Explain the poem, answering the following questions as you write: How much does Herrick love his wine? To what does he compare their relationship? What does he say that wine has done for such men as Horace and Anacreon? He blames nature for this farewell; why? In the last six lines, what does he plan and hope and vow? (20 points)

6. *Carpe diem* is a Latin phrase that translates as “seize the day.” It is a call to enjoy the pleasures of the moment, to live life to its fullest because the future is uncertain. *Carpe diem* was a popular philosophy of the day, perhaps because of the uncertainties of the era, and it appeared in many forms in many works. Herrick’s “To the Virgins” is one of the best examples of that philosophy. Summarize the message of the poem, being sure to include an explanation of each of the four stanzas. (20 points)
Lesson 11: Metaphysical Poetry—John Donne, George Herbert, Andrew Marvell

Lesson Objectives

After you have completed this lesson, you should be able to do the following:

✔ Understand and discuss the nature of metaphysical conceits
✔ Understand and discuss major poems of John Donne, George Herbert, and Andrew Marvell

Lesson Introduction

Although the label “metaphysical poetry” was not in use until long after Donne and his “school” of poets wrote, critics looking backward at the poetry of the early seventeenth century identify characteristics of their poetry that are markedly different from the traits of the Cavaliers and their classical verse. A major difference was the willingness to experiment with verse and meter instead of careful adherence to traditional forms. Innovation produced verse that read more like natural human speech. (When you read Donne’s verse aloud, you can hear the conversational flow of the lines in contrast to the artistic and regular pattern of Jonson’s.) Jonson, for all his friendship and admiration for Donne, once said that Donne should be hanged for his inability to keep a regular meter!

Innovations also led poets to stretch for new ways of describing, thus producing comparisons that violated the decorum so prized by classical poets. The connections between physical objects explored in this kind of verse are not always readily apparent, creating metaphors that are intellectually demanding and (in some cases) uncomfortably obscure. Donne, for instance, compares the bites of a flea (which causes the mingling of the blood of the young lover and his intended) to the intimacy of intercourse. Such metaphors, often developed in great detail, are called conceits. If you read modern poetry, the imagery of
Lesson 11: Metaphysical Poetry—John Donne, George Herbert, Andrew Marvell

the metaphysical poets may not seem so shocking—it has often been noted that twentieth-century verse owes a great debt to Donne and his fellows—but to the audience of the early seventeenth century, such imagery was shocking to the point of obscenity.

Sexual matters were not the only subjects treated to such comparisons—Donne also explores the spiritual connection between the souls of true lovers, and both he and Herbert sing the praises of God in their verse. It is not the subjects but the manner of these poems that was startling to the age, and if you can read with the eyes and sensibilities of that period, you can easily see why.

John Donne

A common approach to Donne’s writing is to group his works into three general categories: the voice of the rake, one who considers women faithless and objects to be conquered, the voice of a faithful lover (or husband) celebrating the power of true love, and the voice of a man of God. These groups roughly correspond to different periods in his life. As you read the selections from your text, put the poems and other writings into one of these categories.

Note: You will find the footnotes extremely useful in deciphering the images and riddles Donne presents in his writing.

George Herbert

George Herbert called himself “God’s troubadour” and celebrated his love for God in his verse. He was also a master of an art form called shaped verse; in “The Altar” and “Easter Wings,” you can see the picture created by the pattern of the words on the page. As you read these two poems, note that Herbert’s lines are the appropriate length to “draw” the picture, in verse and in form. The craft is more complicated than simply typesetting the lines to form a pattern.

Andrew Marvell

Andrew Marvell has been called one of the major of the minor poets, a paradox that can be resolved by considering the vast quality yet limited quantity of his work. It would be a mistake to place his work into the neat categories we have been exploring; like classical poetry, his work is smooth and polished, graceful and witty. Yet even his lightest verse seems to have a mocking undertone, a dark thought, and an intellectual core that recalls the metaphysical turn of mind. Marvell’s use of conventional themes is somehow unconventional. In particular, look at his use of carpe diem in “To His Coy Mistress.”
Reading Assignment

Read through the discussion questions in the lesson assignment before reading the assignment.

Abrams:

“John Donne” (pages 1233–1235); “The Flea” (page 1236); “The Good Morrow” (pages 1236–1237); “Song” (pages 1237–1238); “The Sun Rising” (page 1239); “The Canonization” (pages 1240–1241); “The Bait” (page 1247); “Valediction: Forbidding Mourning” (pages 1248–1249); from Holy Sonnets #5 and 10 (pages 1268–1270); Meditation 17 (pages 1277–1278).

“George Herbert” (pages 1595–1596); “The Altar” (page 1597); “Redemption” (page 1597); “Easter Wings” (page 1599); “Man” (pages 1604–1605)

“Andrew Marvell” (pages 1684–1685); “To His Coy Mistress” (pages 1691–1692); “The Garden” (pages 1698–1700)

Lesson Assignment

Complete the following and submit to LSU Independent & Distance Learning for grading. Be sure to follow the guidelines under “Preparation of Lesson Assignments” in the course syllabus. This lesson assignment is worth 100 possible points.

Answer the following 30-point questions.

1. In a unified discussion, analyze a poem from each period in Donne’s life and show how the poem embodies his thinking at that time. You should consider three different poems. (30 points)

2. Both Marvell’s “To His Coy Mistress” and Herrick’s “To the Virgins” are celebrations of *carpe diem*, a Latin phrase that translates as “seize the day.” It is a call to enjoy the pleasures of the moment, to live life to its fullest because the future is uncertain. *Carpe diem* was a popular philosophy of the day, perhaps because of the uncertainties of the era, and it appeared in many forms in many works.

   In a thoughtful and carefully developed essay, contrast “To His Coy Mistress” with Herrick’s “To the Virgins” from the previous lesson. Use details from each poem to show how the speaker’s intent and the imagery and tone are quite different in the two works. (30 points)
Note: In Marvell’s time, “mistress” simply refers to an unmarried woman; it is not to be taken in the modern sense to suggest that a relationship between the two already exists. Rather, he desires that their relationship move on to the next level, and the imagery suggests that perhaps she too is tired of playing “hard to get.” Look for examples of such imagery.

**Answer two of the following 20-point questions.**

3. What is the occasion of the poem “A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning”? The poem employs a number of comparisons, including one of the most famous metaphysical conceits, Donne’s comparison of the lover’s souls to the legs of a drawing compass. Explain the poem, describing the imagery and giving careful detail about the final three stanzas. **(20 points)**

4. *Meditation 17* contains some classic images that you may not have associated with Donne. Read it carefully, then explain each of the following phrases, using details from Donne’s meditation: **(20 points)**
   a. “When one man dies, one chapter is not torn out of the book but translated into a better language.”
   b. “No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main.”
   c. “Never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee.”

5. *Holy Sonnets* #5 and 10 bring us back to a familiar form with unfamiliar topics. Write two thorough paragraphs, explaining the message of each sonnet and commenting on the deviation from the earlier sonnets of the Elizabethan poets covered in earlier lessons. Exploring the following questions will help you to write the paragraph (you need not send in written answers to these, but use the information in your paragraphs): **(20 points)**
   - To whom are the sonnets addressed? To whom were earlier sonnets addressed? What request does the speaker have in #5? What has ruined his “little world”? What will it take to fix it?
   - The audience of #10 is not a person, but an abstraction (see apostrophe). What message does the speaker have for that audience?
   - What comparisons are used to show the audience just how low the speaker thinks he is?
   - Review the literary device of *paradox*. What paradoxes do you see in these two sonnets?
6. The love celebrated in “The Canonization” is honored by an extensive conceit based on sacred imagery: the lovers will one day be looked upon as saints, and those who read their story will pray to them for a pattern to follow. What question does the lover ask in stanza two? How does he use the allusion to the phoenix to explain their relationship? Answer these questions in an analysis that explores the metaphysical conceit of lovers canonized as saints. (20 points)

7. “Redemption” is about the topic the title identifies, but the imagery is typically metaphysical in its mix of sacred and secular. Who is the tenant in the poem? Who is the landlord? Why does the tenant seek the landlord? Where does he finally find him? Is his request denied or granted? Discuss the poem in light of these questions. (20 points)

8. “Man” is one of the purest celebrations of Christian humanism of the day. In a thorough paragraph, using examples from Herbert’s poem, explain how the poem celebrates the dignity and potential of man. How does it define the relationship between God and man? (20 points)
Examination II

Preparation

It is now time to prepare for and take the mid-course examination. If you are not going to take your exam at LSU-Baton Rouge, notify us of your proctor by sending the completed Exam Proctor Information Form located in the appendix of this course guide to the Independent & Distance Learning office.

Please read the College Examination Information instructions located in the appendix of this course guide for further details.

About Examination II

Exam II is not comprehensive. It covers all the material studied in Lessons 6–11. Once again, you will be asked to discuss major themes and traditions as well as major writers and their works. Know specific works and writers, and understand the effect that historical events and figures have on the types of literature produced. Instead of identification of terms and characters, be ready to identify quotations from the works and to explain why they are significant.

In preparation for this exam, Lessons 6–11 are an invaluable guide. If material was not emphasized in the lessons, do not expect it on an exam. Review your graded lesson assignments, and make sure that you can answer all discussion questions—even the ones you did not write on.

You will be allowed three hours to complete each exam. Study materials and texts will not be allowed in the examination room.
Lesson 12: John Milton

Lesson Objectives

After you have completed this lesson, you should be able to do the following:

✓ Understand and discuss the importance of John Milton to English literature
✓ Understand and discuss *Paradise Lost* as epic
✓ Understand and discuss *Paradise Lost* as an example of Christian humanism

Lesson Introduction

Reading Milton’s work is, in some ways, a step back in time—even for the seventeenth century! His fondness for Renaissance writers and classical works, together with his extensive education, is reflected in his writings. Editors of the sixth *Norton* comment that “It seems likely that Milton in his time read just about everything of importance in English, Latin, Greek, and Italian. (Of course, he had the Bible by heart.)” His poetry draws on classical tradition in his odes and particularly in his great epics. The moderate, rational approach to argument in his pamphlets also echoes back to classic writings, and his use of imagery throughout his body of work calls on Greek and Roman traditions. Milton was also a deeply religious man. Although he lived and wrote after the height of Christian humanism, his body of work is the finest expression of that philosophy. The goal of *Paradise Lost*, “to justify the ways of God to man,” implies that mankind is deserving of an explanation and capable of understanding it; it can be argued, therefore, that Milton holds humankind in high regard, as creatures of worth and dignity made in the image of God. That respect for humanity is characteristic of humanism, and its centering on the individual as God’s creation places it firmly in the tradition of Christian humanism.

*Areopagitica*, Milton’s brilliant defense of free press, is his argument against censorship and as such an important document to know. Milton’s explanation of the importance of free will here is the same argument he uses in *Paradise Lost*.

Milton’s masterpiece *Paradise Lost* uses the form of classical epic, though it deals with Christian subject matter that would have been unknown to the
Greeks and Romans. Unlike the *Iliad*, *The Odyssey*, and *Beowulf* which are folk epics, *Paradise Lost* is a literary epic—composed with pen and paper, rather than transmitted orally for many generations before being set down as written text. Milton’s literary epic is a conscious imitation of the Homeric epics (Homer is considered the originator of the epic genre). First, *Paradise Lost* is written on a grand scale—its subject matter is grand in that it affects kingdoms and civilizations rather than individuals or single families; its size is grand, running thousands of lines; its language is grand, as the diction and tone are high, formal style. In the Homeric tradition, an epic begins with the invocation of the Muse, the poet’s way of expressing his humility and inability to tell such a grand story without divine inspiration. Also in the Homeric tradition is the intervention of supernatural beings and a descent into the underworld. Structurally, epics begin in the middle of the action (in *medias res*), and at some point, there is a re-telling of the great adventures that precede the opening of the poem. Homeric epics are filled with catalogues, detailed lists that itemize such subjects as the foods served at banquets, the warriors called to battle, or the step-by-step arming of the hero. As you read through the assigned sections of *Paradise Lost*, look for Milton’s interpretation of these epic conventions.

**Structure of Paradise Lost**

- **Hell**
  - Book 1: After the fall of Satan; raising of Pandemonium
  - Book 2: Convocation and plan of revenge; inverted trinity

- **Heaven**
  - Book 3: Son offers himself as ransom; discussion of justice versus grace
  - Book 4: Garden of Eden described; Satan enters; Adam and Eve introduced and defined
  - Book 5: Dream related; Raphael comes to warn them and tells them of the War in Heaven; importance of Abdiel

- **Eden Before the Fall**
  - Book 6: War in Heaven continued; Messiah sent and conquers
  - Book 7: New invocation to Urania; Raphael relates the creation of the world, created by the Son and angels in six days
  - Book 8: Adam asks of the stars’ motions; told to think of things close to earth (more worthy of knowledge); tells of own creation and nuptials with Eve
Lesson 12: John Milton

Fall

Book 9: Satan returns in a mist (uncreation), tempts Eve; Eve tempts Adam; both sin and accuse each other

Book 10: Son descends to judge; Sin and Death enter the world; Satan returns to Pandemonium; devils yearly turn into serpents and seek the tree, which gives fruit tasting like ashes; Adam and Eve bewail their Eden condition

Eden After the Fall

Book 11: God accepts Adam's and Eve's sorrow and repentance; Michael comes to dispossess them, gives Adam a vision of the future of the Flood

Book 12: Continuation of the vision to the Second Coming; Adam satisfied and comforted; Eve composed in quietness of mind after seeing the same thing in her dream; the Cherubim guard the Garden; doctrine of the felix culpa (the happy fall); Adam and Eve leave Eden with wandering steps and slow, but they are hand in hand

There is a ring structure in place here, with Books 1 and 12 mirroring each other, 2 and 11, 3 and 10, 4 and 9, 5 and 8, and 6 and 7. Milton is able to emphasize certain actions in this way and give a sense of the unity, completeness, and circularity of the whole story.

Reading Assignment

Read through the discussion questions in the lesson assignment before reading the assignment.

Abrams:

“John Milton” (pages 1771–1774); “The Revolutionary Era, 1640–60” and “Literature and Culture, 1640–60” (pages 1220–1230)

Areopagitica (pages 1801–1811)

Paradise Lost (pages 1815–1816); Book 1: lines 1–391 and 522–798; Book 2 (all); Book 4: lines 1–809; Book 9 (all); Book 10: lines 68–208 and 230–577; Book 12: lines 552–573 and 610–649
Lesson Assignment

Complete the following and submit to LSU Independent & Distance Learning for grading. Be sure to follow the guidelines under “Preparation of Lesson Assignments” in the course syllabus. This lesson assignment is worth 100 possible points.

Answer the following 50-point question.

1. There are two stories in *Paradise Lost*; each one tells of a rebellion against God, a fall, the consequences of the fall, and the reactions of the fallen. Write an essay that reviews those two stories, pointing out the similarities and the differences, particularly in the motives for the rebellions and the reactions of the fallen. Read the explorations below for some suggestions on your essay. (50 points)
   - The first book of *Paradise Lost* introduces us to the fallen angels as they realize that they have lost and are now exiled from heaven. Milton does not give the details of the great war in Heaven until Book 6; does that delay affect our ability to understand what has happened to the two former angels? Look at the speeches from the fallen angels (ll. 84–124, Satan to Beelzebub; ll. 128–155, Beelzebub’s response; ll. 157–168, Satan’s statement of their new purpose; ll. 242–263, Satan’s reaction to their new circumstances). What attitude do you see in these two? Are they sorry for what they did?
   - The final book concludes with Adam and Eve as they realize all that they have lost and begin their exile from Paradise. Review their speeches to each other (ll. 552–573, Adam to Eve; ll. 610–623, Eve’s response; ll. 624–649, their departure from Paradise). What reaction do these two have to their banishment? How does it compare to the reaction of Satan and Beelzebub?

Answer the following 20-point question.

2. Milton’s argument for free will in *Areopagitica* is the same one he uses in *Paradise Lost*. Using examples from both texts, explain Milton’s argument, and then show how Milton’s position reflects humanist ideas about the nature of man. (20 points)
Lesson 12: John Milton

**Answer two of the following 15-point questions.**

3. Study carefully the descriptions of Satan in *Book 1*: lines 192–202; 221–226; 283–298; 589–606. Condense these characteristics into a single-sentence description of him, and then explain what we, the readers, are meant to feel about Satan. *(15 points)*

4. Sin and Death are a parody of creation, with Sin’s birth an unabashed replay of the birth of Athena (sprung full blown from the head of Zeus). [Sin: 648–659 and Death: 666–673] How does meeting Satan’s offspring change our opinion of him from *Book 1*? *(15 points)*

5. In his speech admiring Adam and Eve (*Book 4*: lines 358–392), Satan almost seems regretful before he declares his intentions toward them—a declaration couched in ironic terms. Show how his speech changes tone from regretful to ironic. *(15 points)*

6. The Puritan in Milton claims that lust, as we know it, is a primary effect of eating the forbidden fruit. Could a more devastating effect be Adam’s view of Eve, or is their new relation to each other healthier? *(15 points)*
Introduction to Part V

The final three lessons in this course deal with roughly 125 years of life and literature. Not only is the period a long one, but it is also recent enough for most of its literature to have survived, not in handwritten manuscripts but in multiple printed editions. It is a literary period remarkable in its variety and in its mighty literary achievements. While neoclassicists continued to admire and emulate the literatures of Greece and Rome, many old forms found fresh new voices, and many new forms proliferated. Reading for pleasure, as opposed to reading for instruction and improvement, emerges as a pastime of the upper and middle classes. The patronage system, long the mainstay of writers and artists, dissolves, and it is the reading public who support the arts by purchasing what is published. Writers who actually earned a living by writing emerge in this age.

The breadth and texture of this period make it impossible to attempt a reasonable sampling of the literary productions. A decision has been made, then, to focus on the careers of the major literary figures of the period. Further, a significant portion of the lessons will focus on satire, a classical genre thoroughly exploited and developed by three of the four men we will study. In addition to these focal points, the lessons will lightly touch on other writings and writers, but it is fair to say that far more will be omitted than will be surveyed. With that warning, approach the Restoration and Eighteenth Century knowing that you will find here only the tiniest sampling.
Lesson 13: John Dryden and Jonathan Swift

Lesson Objectives

After you have completed this lesson, you should be able to do the following:

✓ Understand and discuss why the Restoration years from 1660 to 1700 are called the Age of Dryden
✓ Understand and discuss Dryden as perfecter of the heroic couplet
✓ Understand and discuss the impact of Jonathan Swift on his age
✓ Understand and discuss the art of satire as wielded by Dryden and Swift

Lesson Introduction

The Puritan Rebellion, which had successfully deposed and executed a king and exiled his successor, was held together largely by the personality of its most prominent leader, Oliver Cromwell. Cromwell was offered the crown by his followers, but mindful of the abuses of power that had fed the revolt, Cromwell refused a crown and instead was named Lord Protector. The period between the death of Charles I and the return of Charles II is called the interregnum; the word translates loosely as “between the reigns.”

When Oliver Cromwell died, his position went to his son Richard. Perhaps that handing down of power from father to son seemed too familiar to be totally acceptable; perhaps it was a reminder that the transfer of power had not been redefined by the revolution; perhaps it was that Richard could hardly fill the mighty shoes of his father. Whatever the reasons, the pressure from the supporters of Charles II (in exile in France) succeeded in forcing Richard to abdicate his position, and the monarchy was restored to power (thus the label Restoration for this period). Although the monarchy never again held the absolute power of government that it had held before the revolution and the beheading of Charles I, the royals and the court were once again the focal point of the country. But that center was not as strong or as well-defined as it had been in the early part of the century. The revolt and the secular reign of Oliver Cromwell had taught the people that the old absolute hierarchies were
unnecessary, and the scattering of the old carefully maintained order had shown the rulers and the ruled that the people were quite capable of living their lives without the strictly defined social and political hierarchies. The single biggest difference between pre-Civil War England and Restoration England can be seen in the loss of the belief that one truth existed. Before the war, there was a confidence that one truth could (and should) be found through science, religion, philosophy, etc. After the Restoration, the necessity, even the importance, of that one truth was lost. People had seen that diversity could exist without destroying the nation. The notion of “loyal opposition” was officially accepted (you will remember that during the Tudor reign, opposition was considered treasonous, and the death penalty was much invoked). Thus the country moved from a desire for absolute authority to a belief in tolerance.

The new attitude allowed for some interesting developments in literature. With the variety of styles and beliefs, and the more tolerant attitude toward opposition, critics of the power structure flourished. As Charles II brought with him the customs and debaucheries of the French court, and the government stumbled its way towards a functional balance of power, there was much to criticize. Satire, a literary form that holds up to critical review the failings of its subject, was a popular genre.

Not a new form, satire had its origins in the Greek and Roman classics so studied and admired by the well-educated. Its uses as a weapon against human and institutional folly were much exploited in the Restoration. Politics, religion, art, and human nature were popular targets. Depending as it does on an understanding of topical concerns, satire often loses much of its impact when it is read by a later and more distant audience. That is unfortunate because the wit and the skill that produces good satire can be a pleasure to explore. The selections here have been chosen for their accessibility—for example, the scathing descriptions of the stupid poet in MacFlecknoe might mean more to us if we know the writings of Shadwell, the man who inspired the satire; however, the flawed writings of Shadwell that made him such a target are hardly worth the effort to study; ironically, it is only through the attack on Shadwell that most readers know him at all. The attack itself is still accessible; if Shadwell has faded away, there are other stupid people to take his place in our minds. The satire on human failings, then, remains universally appropriate.

**John Dryden**

The Restoration years from 1660 to 1700 have also been called the Age of Dryden. John Dryden was a master of all forms of literature (his tragedy All for Love is a rewrite of Shakespeare’s Antony and Cleopatra, but in Dryden’s telling, the tragedy conforms to the unities of time, place, and action). He wrote excellent literary criticism, and as a clever political satirist, Dryden was responsible for popularizing the closed couplet (heroic couplet) in poetry. As you read through Dryden’s consummate satires Absalom and Achitophel and
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MacFlecknoe, you will understand why this master of the heroic couplet rightly anchors this time that is named after him.

Absalom and Achitophel

The introduction in Norton lays out the political intrigue that forms the setting of this satire. This poem has also been called an allegory, using the Biblical characters and environment in place of England in Dryden’s time. Here is the “cast” of equivalent characters:

David = King Charles II  
Michal = Katherine of Braganza—Charles’ wife, unable to have children  
Absalom = Duke of Monmouth—Charles’ oldest son (illegitimate)  
Achitophel = Earl of Shaftesbury—a leader of the Whig party  
Saul = Cromwell  
The Jews = The English  
Jerusalemites = Londoners  
Rabbins = Clergy  
Egypt = France  
Jebusite = Roman Catholic

A central issue in Absalom and Achitophel is the danger that renewed Civil War might overthrow the tenuous social order that had been established by the Restoration and leave the nation at the mercy of intolerant and power-hungry political factions. The poem is full of satiric references to the religious and political strife of the early seventeenth century. Dryden’s analogy between the English and the people of ancient Israel works on several levels, one of which is to mock parallels that the Puritans had observed between the English and the Israelites. In Dryden’s poem, the “Jews” are “a headstrong, moody, murmuring race,” never satisfied for long with their leaders, “God’s pampered [as opposed to “chosen”] people” (ll. 45–47). Dryden dismisses the widespread fear of a new Catholic persecution under a Catholic monarch as a trumped-up issue, exploited by unscrupulous politicians.

In Achitophel, Dryden draws the portrait of a clever politician without principles, interested only in personal power, “Resolved to ruin or to rule the state” (l. 174). Achitophel’s method is to arouse and to manipulate the prejudices of the majority. To accomplish his ends, he seeks to make the handsome, popular, and weak Absalom his puppet. His temptation of Absalom echoes Satan’s temptation of Eve in Paradise Lost.

MacFlecknoe

MacFlecknoe is structured as a coronation poem, marking the passing of the old king and the crowning of the new. Because we do not recognize the names of
Flecknoe and Shadwell, we must rely on footnotes and on Dryden’s characterization to know the targets of this satire. Whether Flecknoe and Shadwell were really as lacking in talent as Dryden insists here, it is Dryden’s verse that has survived and thus his opinion that we hear. Since “Mac” means “the son of,” MacFlecknoe is literally “the son of Flecknoe.” Since Flecknoe’s poetic heritage of dullness and stupidity is being passed on, he has no blood heir but does have many potential successors. On consideration, Flecknoe decides that only Shadwell (the “Sh—” is a thin disguise and also a suggestion that Shadwell’s work is being labeled) is “confirmed in full stupidity,” the true son who never makes any sense at all.

Note: As you read, notice the scatological imagery in the poem. It is typical of the period, which placed the highest value on man’s near-divine traits of reason and intellect and the lowest value on man’s bestial nature (evidenced in scatology by references to bathroom functions, bodily excretions, madness, gross sexuality, and any other physical manifestations of traits shared by man and beast). Note the suggestions that Shadwell is another form of “Sh—,” and that his prevailing winds are described as “rising fogs” (euphemistic description of flatulence).

That the work of Shadwell could be so celebrated in the streets is also a condemnation of those streets—if he is indeed the son of Flecknoe, his work can be nothing but nonsense and stupidity. Those who admire it must then be men of bad taste and vulgarity. Dryden does indeed have his weapon aimed at the admirers of second-rate writing; lines 98–102 describe the limbs of poets mangled under the crush of Shadwell’s admirers, as “loads of Sh— almost choked the way.”

Jonathan Swift

When you read Jonathan Swift’s introduction, note the contrasting elements of his life: son of English parents yet born in Ireland, both Whig and Tory, churchman and misanthrope. Two elements of his philosophy must be noted before we look at his writing: his ardent support of the Irish resistance to English oppression and his strong conviction that human nature was deeply flawed and all but incapable of living up to its potential. The first element produced A Modest Proposal, Swift’s satirical project that presented a solution to the poverty and overpopulation of the struggling Irish, limited as they were by English rule.

The second is reflected in his great satire Gulliver’s Travels. Be warned: if your exposure to Gulliver has been limited to the much-edited for children version of Gulliver among the Lilliputians, you may be in for a shock. Review the earlier comments about scatological imagery before you read the selections from Gulliver’s Travels. You will find that Swift’s imagery graphically depicts mankind as bestial rather than rational, a characterization that becomes increasingly
Lesson 13: John Dryden and Jonathan Swift

harsh as Gulliver moves through his four voyages and finally encounters the absolutely rational horse-like creatures who despise him as a “Yahoo.” Look, too, for his contemptuous portrayals of women, whose scant intellect is more than overshadowed by their physical, animalistic nature.

Reading Assignment

Read through the discussion questions in the lesson assignment before reading the assignment.

Abrams:

Introduction (pages 2045–2068)

“John Dryden” (pages 2071–2072); Absalom and Achitophel (Introduction, pages 2075–2076 and temptation scene, lines 220–476); MacFlecknoe (pages 2099–2105); “Criticism” (pages 2114–2118); The Art of Satire (pages 2120–2121)

“Jonathan Swift” (pages 2298–2299); A Modest Proposal (pages 2473–2479); Gulliver’s Travels (pages 2329–2334): Part 1, Chapters 1, 3, 5 (pages 2334–2358); Part 4, Chapters 1, 2, 4, 7, 11 (pages 2428–2469)

Lesson Assignment

Complete the following and submit to LSU Independent & Distance Learning for grading. Be sure to follow the guidelines under “Preparation of Lesson Assignments” in the course syllabus. This lesson assignment is worth 100 possible points.

Answer the following 40-point questions.

1. Using specific examples from the two poems, show how the temptation scene in Absalom and Achitophel recalls Eve’s temptation in Paradise Lost (9.532–732). (40 points)

2. In Part 4 of Gulliver’s Travels, Gulliver comes ashore in the land of Houyhnhnms (suspiciously similar to the whinnying of a horse) where he encounters a human-like creature called the Yahoo and a horse-like creature called the Houyhnhnm. Contrast the two creatures, noting the strengths and weaknesses of each. (40 points)

Note: Gulliver’s admiration of the Houyhnhnm has no limits, but are they really so wonderful? Do they get emotionally involved with friends or family? What, finally, do they do with Gulliver? Are they compassionate? Loving?
Lesson 13: John Dryden and Jonathan Swift

Answer two of the following 10-point questions.

3. Dryden’s description of The Art of Satire (2120–2121) compares good satire to a fine piece of beheading. Read that brief essay, and explain what Dryden thinks good satire is. What does he mean when he writes, “A witty man is tickled ..., and a fool feels it not”? (10 points)

4. At the coronation, Flecknoe offers a long-winded toast to his about-to-be-crowned “son.” Read lines 139–210 and summarize Flecknoe’s advice to Shadwell. Do not attempt to identify all of the references to contemporaries; look for the overall guidance offered to Shadwell. (10 points)

5. A typical argument for a proposal contains a statement of the problem, a description of the solution, a survey of the benefits of the plan, and a disclaimer that the author has a personal stake in its adoption. In a paragraph, connect A Modest Proposal to these four parts, summarizing what Swift has to say in each section. (10 points)

6. A satire usually offers a grim portrait of human failings, with the intent that man will see his failings in the “mirror” and will make corrections. To that end, the satire often contains a character whose behavior could serve as a model. Look closely at Gulliver’s Travels and consider which character might actually be a role model of sorts. Is it the Houyhnhnms? The Brobdingnagians? The Portuguese sea captain, Pedro de Mendez? Gulliver himself? Defend your answer. (“None of the above” is an acceptable answer, but you must explain it.) (10 points)
Lesson 14:
Alexander Pope, Joseph Addison, and Richard Steele

Lesson Objectives

After you have completed this lesson, you should be able to do the following:

✓ Understand and discuss Pope’s contribution to the age as satirist and literary critic
✓ Understand and discuss the nature of Pope’s satires
✓ Understand and discuss Pope as master of the mock-heroic poem
✓ Understand and discuss the art of the periodical essay

Lesson Introduction

The eighteenth century in England is, in literary terms, dominated by two great writers: Alexander Pope and Samuel Johnson. So dominant were these two that the early part of the century is labeled “The Age of Pope” and the latter part “The Age of Johnson.” Each man in his own way and time both influenced and defined the literary sentiments of his day.

As a Catholic in an age when Catholics were under great suspicion, Pope’s prospects for favor and patronage were nil. Making history out of this unfortunate circumstance, Pope translated a best-selling version of Homer’s Iliad and Odyssey, demonstrating that one could indeed make a living entirely with his pen. From his position of independent wealth, Pope was free to comment on society and personalities as he saw fit. The popular The Rape of the Lock was inspired by an actual snipping of a curl and a resulting feud; Pope’s mock epic was in answer to a request for some light-hearted mirror that would show the feuding parties how their call to arms was out of proportion.

Pope modeled his satires on the Roman Horace, though the satirical mode of which he is the undisputed master is better termed Augustan. His Epistle to Dr.
Lesson 14: Alexander Pope, Joseph Addison, and Richard Steele

*Arbuthnot* is both a satire and a vindication of the author and his mercilessly personal method of satire. Pope thought himself engaged in a moral warfare in which no quarter could be given, no retreat into bland generalities admitted.

Pope was also one of the masters of the mock-heroic, another form of Augustan satire. An earlier example is Dryden’s *MacFlecknoe*, a mock-heroic send up of a literary and political antagonist. Unlike in *MacFlecknoe* though, the characters are drawn more delicately in Pope’s *Rape of the Lock*, the textbook example of the mock-heroic genre and style. The ingenious adaptations of epic motifs include Belinda’s dressing-table ritual (the traditional “arming” scene), the card game (the battle), the Cave of Spleen (the descent to the underworld), and the metamorphosis of the lock into a constellation. Yet while all these devices satirize the heroine and her social milieu, Belinda and her world are made astonishingly concrete, alive, and for all their petty vanities, highly attractive.

Pope’s last major work *The Dunciad*, a mock-heroic poem inspired by Dryden’s *MacFlecknoe*, satirizes nothing less than the whole of his world, attacking its politics, social structure, education, and finally religion. According to Norton, *The Dunciad* concerns itself with “the undoing of God’s creation” with many passages from the fourth book echoing *Paradise Lost*.

Pope’s talent for satire and his sharp wit offended more than one of his one-time friends; a not-so-friendly nickname for him was “the Wasp of Twickenham Garden” (his estate). Physically fragile, Pope was a short man deformed by early bouts of tuberculosis of the spine and handicapped by delicate nerves; Pope was an easy target for those he offended. He once remarked that “the life of a wit is a warfare on earth.” His own blasts at the enemy are generally first-rate literary efforts and have long outlived any sallies aimed at him; nonetheless, his was not a peaceful existence.

Pope’s influence on his time, however, would not have been extensive had he been primarily a sharp-penned commentator. In addition to his satire, he created well-formed verse essays that explain and preserve the philosophies of the eighteenth century on such subjects as the nature of mankind and its relationship to God, the proper study for mankind in general and men of literature in particular, and the criteria that should be followed by those who would be literary critics.

**Periodical Essays: Joseph Addison and Sir Richard Steele**

The art of the periodical essay was refined in this era; from Dryden to Johnson, the major literary figures of the century contributed to the genre. The essays, forerunners of modern magazines, were printed and circulated by subscription; that is, patrons pledged to pay for the forthcoming works and printers then had an idea of how many to produce. The subscriptions, however, were only a small
percentage of the readership. Each edition was read and shared and much discussed in the coffeehouses.

As commentaries on religion, politics, literary standards, and other potentially controversial topics, the periodical essays were on occasion dangerous to the reputation, income, and perhaps the very existence of the authors. For that reason, the essays were released under pseudonyms such as “Isaac Bickerstaff.” When the author was identified with some certainty, the periodical disappeared; another would soon take its place, perhaps by the same hand, but perhaps not. Some of the better known series of the day were the Tatler, Spectator, Rambler, Idler, and The Bee.

**Reading Assignment**

Read through the discussion questions in the lesson assignment before reading the assignment.

Abrams:

“Joseph Addison and Sir Richard Steele” (pages 2479–2481); Introduction and any two essays

“Alexander Pope” (pages 2505–2508); An Essay on Criticism (pages 2509–2525); The Rape of the Lock (pages 2525–2544); An Essay on Man (pages 2554–2562)

**Lesson Assignment**

*Complete the following and submit to LSU Independent & Distance Learning for grading. Be sure to follow the guidelines under “Preparation of Lesson Assignments” in the course syllabus. This lesson assignment is worth 100 possible points.*

*Answer the following 40-point questions.*

1. In keeping with epic tradition, there are formal speeches in The Rape of the Lock, often boastful, delivered in elevated language. Pope provides these in the Baron’s triumphal speech (3.161-178) and in Belinda’s exaggerated lament (4.147-178). Take one of these speeches and compare it to one of Satan’s formal speeches in Paradise Lost: 1.248-263 (“Farewell, happy fields” speech wherein Satan indicates that hell is in the mind and that it is better to reign in hell than serve in heaven) or 4.358-392 (“O Hell” speech of Satan’s when he beholds Adam and Eve for the first time). *(40 points)*
Lesson 14: Alexander Pope, Joseph Addison, and Richard Steele

2. Review the notes on Addison and Steele and their writings, then select any two essays from their works and explain how the content and style are typical of the periodical essay of the day. *(40 points)*

**Answer two of the following 10-point questions.**

3. Pope’s *An Essay on Criticism* does not aim to establish new standards of taste; rather he relies on the traditional values of literature. After you have read the introduction to this work and the essay itself, define the following neoclassical terms used by Pope: wit, Nature, ancients, rules, and genius. *(A list of terms and definitions is appropriate.)* After you define these five terms, in a paragraph, explain the relationship that Pope describes between Nature, the rules, and the ancients. *(10 points)*

4. A mock epic uses the form and style of an epic poem to satirize a trivial subject by making it appear ridiculous. In *The Rape of the Lock*, Pope uses exaggeration as his major tool to show how trivial the basis was for the quarrel between the families of Arabella Fermor and Lord Petre. Another device Pope uses is *ironic juxtaposition*: in a single couplet, he juxtaposes the great with the trivial as in this example from Canto 3: Here thou, great Anna!* whom three realms obey,/Dost sometimes counsel take—and sometimes tea‖ *(3.7-8)*. [*Anna refers to Queen Anne.*] Write out five more couplets (be sure to include canto and line numbers) that exemplify ironic juxtaposition. *(10 points)*

5. The excerpts from *An Essay on Man* reflect the eighteenth-century views on the universe and the place of mankind within it. While Pope credits a friend with inspiring him to write, neither Pope nor his friend lays claim to authorship of the philosophy. In the opening passage, Pope refers to his muse (his friend, St. John) and consciously echoes the stated purpose of *Paradise Lost*, Milton’s great epic. What do the two works have in common? How are they different? The introduction to *An Essay on Man* will provide a framework for your paragraph. *(10 points)*

6. After reading *An Essay on Man*, describe Pope’s opinion of man and his place in the world. What does he mean when he calls man “The glory, jest, and riddle of the world“? Can all three labels be justified? *(10 points)*
Lesson 15: Samuel Johnson, James Boswell, and Pre-Romantics

Lesson Objectives

After you have completed this lesson, you should be able to do the following:

✓ Understand and discuss the ways Johnson influenced English language and literary criticism
✓ Understand and discuss the nature of the Pre-Romantics’ poetry of sensibility

Lesson Introduction

To study the literature of the later eighteenth century is to study Samuel Johnson; his work reflects the opinions and the interests of his age and influenced the development of the English language and literature as few other men have done single-handedly. His conversation, no less than his writings, revealed the workings of a brilliant, educated, and witty man. Although Johnson suffered from a physical malady generally called “St. Vitus Dance” that caused him to twitch and shake without warning, his observations were so compelling and so quotable that many men of the day literally hung at his arm to be able to report what Johnson had most recently observed. His close friend James Boswell practically made a career of writing about Johnson, often reporting Johnson’s conversations verbatim. Although recent discoveries of Boswell’s journals have made him a figure worthy of independent study, it was his observations on Johnson that first brought him recognition.

The Poetry of Sensibility

As you have seen repeatedly, no literary age erects barriers or toll gates to separate itself from the previous or the succeeding ages. Even as the
eighteenth century was drawing to a close, literature that previewed the concerns and styles of the Romantic period of the early nineteenth century was being produced. Review the notes on James Thomson and Thomas Gray, practitioners of the “poetry of sensibility.” While Thomson relies on the external sights of nature (compared to the Romantic poets' focus on the internal, imaginative response), his poetry whets the appetite for nature poetry. Consider how different Thomson’s verse is from the philosophical verse essays of Pope and the biting satires of Dryden. Thomson’s *Seasons* encourages an awareness of external nature as a revelation of its creator; Gray too begins with an awareness of external nature, turning it to a purpose that again pre-figures the Romantic poets by meditating not on the structures of the universe but on the lives of ordinary men. His “Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard” endures because it speaks to some perennial concern of all humanity.

**Reading Assignment**

*Read through the discussion questions in the lesson assignment before reading the assignment.*

Abrams:

“Samuel Johnson” (pages 2660–2662); “Rambler No. 60” (pages 2716–2718); *A Dictionary of the English Language* (page 2719); *Preface* (pages 2719–2723); *Dictionary Entries* (pages 2723–2725); *The Preface to Shakespeare* (pages 2725–2734); “King Lear” (pages 2734–2736)


“James Thomson” (page 2822); *The Seasons* (pages 2822–2824)

“Thomas Gray” (pages 2825–2826); “Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard” (pages 2830–2833)

**Lesson Assignment**

*Complete the following and submit to LSU Independent & Distance Learning for grading. Be sure to follow the guidelines under “Preparation of Lesson Assignments” in the course syllabus. This lesson assignment is worth 100 possible points.*

*Answer five of the following 20-point questions.*

1. Biography as a genre evolved considerably in the eighteenth century, from the earlier commentaries that buried the faults and praised the virtues of the great men to a more modern and inclusive description of a life. In “Rambler No. 60,” Johnson reviews his
principles for the writing of biography, including comments on the best choice to write about a life and the subjects to be explored in the work. Briefly summarize his comments. (20 points)

2. It is generally agreed that Johnson’s Dictionary was a major force in stabilizing the English language. Read the excerpt from the Preface and then explain why a language changes and how a dictionary affects the evolution of a language. (20 points)

3. Although modern dictionaries maintain an overall objectivity, many definitions in Johnson’s Dictionary quite pointedly indicate a bias on the author’s part. Choose two words with skewed definitions (i.e. definitions which reveal Johnson’s approval or condemnation) and explain how the definition exposes what Johnson thinks concerning the word. (20 points)

4. Johnson defends Shakespeare’s ignoring of the unities of time and place but finds other faults in Shakespeare’s plays. Summarize his complaints about Shakespeare’s flaws. Is Shakespeare’s reputation substantially diminished in Johnson’s eyes? Explain. (20 points)

5. Boswell gives a detailed report, including the context and content, of Johnson’s “Letter to Lord Chesterfield.” It has been said that the letter single-handedly ended the patronage system that had for so long provided income for writers and artists. Explain the circumstances that prompted the letter, and give a brief review of its contents. How would you expect a member of the upper class who had contributed frequently and heavily to artists to feel after reading such a letter? (20 points)

6. Thomson characterizes the Druids as poet-philosophers of nature. How might Thomson and Gray fit that description themselves? Use references to their poetry to support your answer. (20 points)
Final Examination

Preparation

It is now time to prepare for and take the final examination.

**YOU MUST EARN A PASSING AVERAGE ON THE EXAMINATIONS IN ORDER TO PASS THE COURSE.**

About the Final Examination

The final exam is not comprehensive. It will cover only the material studied in Lessons 12–15. Once again, you will be asked to discuss major themes and traditions as well as major writers and their works. Know specific works and writers, and understand the effect that historical events and figures have on the types of literature produced. Instead of identification of terms and characters, be ready to identify quotations and to explain why they are significant.

In preparation for the final exam, Lessons 12-15 are an invaluable guide. If material was not emphasized in the lessons, do not expect it on an exam. Review your graded lesson assignments, and make sure that you can answer all discussion questions—even the ones you did not write on.

You will be allowed three hours to complete each exam. Study materials and texts will not be allowed in the examination room.

Transcript Information

After you have completed this course, your grade will be filed with the Office of the University Registrar. If a transcript is needed, it is your responsibility to make a request *in writing* to:

Office of the University Registrar  
Louisiana State University  
Thomas Boyd Hall  
Baton Rouge, LA 70803  
FAX: 225-578-5991
Final Examination

To the Student

Congratulations on finishing the lesson assignments for your course. We hope you will continue your education by taking another course with us.

Our current bulletin is available online at www.outreach.lsu.edu/idl. You can also receive a copy of our latest bulletin by calling 800-234-5046. We look forward to hearing from you!
Appendix A

Contents

✓ College Examination Information
✓ Exam Proctor Information Form
✓ Electronic Submission Options
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College Examination Information

Information for All Students

Please follow these regulations:

You will only be allowed to take your examination when the IDL office has received and accepted all the assigned lessons.

You must bring a picture I.D. to your examination.

For additional rules concerning exam procedures, please refer to the Syllabus and Exam sections of this course guide.

If you change an exam proctor or address, you must notify IDL immediately so your exams can be routed correctly.

If you will take your exam at LSU-Baton Rouge, refer to the information in Section A, below.

If you cannot take your exam at LSU-Baton Rouge, refer to the information in Section B.

SECTION A

Information for Students Taking Examinations at LSU-Baton Rouge

LSU IDL tests by appointment only. We offer one morning session and one afternoon session Monday through Friday and a morning session only on select Saturdays. Visit our Web site (www.outreach.lsu.edu/idl) to see which dates and times are available. Before scheduling your exam, make sure that you will be eligible to test by your selected date (see our Web site for eligibility requirements).
SECTION B

Information for Students Who Cannot Take Their Examinations at LSU-Baton Rouge

- Make arrangements with one of the following local officials to act as your testing supervisor:

  College students  →  Testing center of an accredited college/university, college administrator or UCEA Correspondence Study Department

  Overseas students  →  American University (school) or American Embassy

  Military personnel  →  Education office at the military base, or college locations listed above

- You must submit your Exam Proctor Information using the form in the Appendix of this course guide, or if you have access to the Internet, you may submit this information through the LSU IDL Web site (www.outreach.lsu.edu/idl).

You need to submit only one proctor information form per course to the IDL office. Any subsequent exams you need to take for the same course will be sent to the same proctor.

The proctor information form should be submitted as soon as you have found a proctor and must be received by the IDL office at least three lessons before you are ready to take your exam. Receipt of this form by the IDL office does not mean your exam will be sent immediately. Your exam will be mailed to your proctor after the IDL office has received and accepted all lessons that must be completed prior to taking the exam.

Your exam proctor will hold your examination for no longer than thirty days. You should check to be certain the exam has arrived; if not, notify this office immediately. You must make arrangements for a time to take your exam, and you are responsible for any proctor fees.

If you change an exam proctor or address, please notify IDL immediately so your exams can be routed correctly.
Exam Proctor Information Form

Before you complete this form, please read the preceding examination information.

Directions:
- If you will take your exam at LSU-Baton Rouge, you do not need to complete this form.
- Do not send this form with one of your lessons; send it separately to the IDL office.
- Our office has two weeks to process proctor requests. If your proctor is denied, you will receive a notification through regular mail.
- If you have any questions concerning this form, please call the IDL office at 225-578-2500 or 800-234-5046.
- If you have access to the Internet, you may submit this information through the LSU IDL Web site (www.outreach.lsu.edu/idl).

Enrollment Number ____________________________________________________________
Course Name ________________________________________________________________
Student Name ________________________________________________________________
Address ______________________________________________________________________
City __________________________ State ________ Zip ____________
Telephone ______________________ E-mail __________________________________________
☐ Check the box if this is an address change from your original enrollment.

Complete the information below with reference to the person who will proctor your exam.

☐ This is my initial proctor request.

☐ I would like to change my proctor as indicated below.

Exam Proctor’s Name __________________________________________________________
Exam Proctor’s Title __________________________________________________________
Office Telephone (____)___________________________
E-mail ________________________________________________
Institution ____________________________________________
Department/Section ______________________________________
Building, Street, or P. O. Box ____________________________
City __________________________ State ________ Zip ____________

Mail to: LSU Independent & Distance Learning
1225 Pleasant Hall
Louisiana State University
Baton Rouge, LA 70803
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Electronic Submission Options

This LSU Independent & Distance Learning (IDL) course offers electronic submission of lesson assignments. If you have access to a computer and the Internet, you can submit lessons online instead of through the mail. Or, you may mail your lesson assignments in the traditional manner, using the U.S. Postal Service.

What is ISO?

ISO is the LSU IDL online course system that allows you to submit your lesson assignments electronically, over the Internet. Electronic submissions reduce mailing delays and speed delivery of your assignment to LSU IDL. Course guide materials are available over the Internet for many courses.

When we receive your lesson assignment, it will be forwarded to your instructor. You will receive a confirmation e-mail to let you know your assignment was received.

Most assignments will be printed and graded by an instructor on paper. Graded paper lesson assignments will be returned to you through the mail with instructor comments. If your course includes computer-graded lesson assignments, they will be scored immediately.

How do I get started?

Submitting lessons electronically is an option, not a requirement. If you would like to explore ISO, read the information below to find out what you need to begin.

You should also review the online orientation on our Web site for complete step-by-step directions on how to use ISO and submit lessons online. To locate the orientation information from the IDL main page, select >college home>online courses >orientation from the navigation menu. Most computers purchased in the past three years will have everything you need. Computers at public libraries and schools also should be sufficient.

How soon can I begin working on my online course?

Before you can submit an assignment, you need to have your textbook and any other required materials. Complete the readings assigned in the course guide, then answer essay-style and short-answer questions using Microsoft Word, Microsoft Excel, or Corel WordPerfect.

For multiple-choice and matching items, mark answers in your printed course guide then transfer them to a Word, Excel, or WordPerfect file. All questions in a lesson assignment must be answered in a single file. When you have completed a lesson assignment, you are ready to log in to the course and submit your assignment online.
Appendix A

From the IDL main page, select >enrolled students >online course login from the menu bar. If this is the first time you are accessing an online course, you may wish to review the orientation section of our Web site (select the orientation link from the online courses menu). You will be prompted for your user ID and password. Follow the on-screen instructions to submit your lesson. Most courses allow you to upload a single file that you have saved on your computer. Only one file can be uploaded for a single lesson.

How do I get my User ID and password?

User ID: Your user ID is the six-digit enrollment number that you received with your course materials and in your enrollment confirmation e-mail. The enrollment number is printed on your receipt and on your lesson submission labels.

Password: Your password is the first two letters of your last name and last four digits of your social security number. The password is case sensitive, so make sure that the first letter of your last name is upper case and the second letter is lower case.

For example: John Smith
SSN: 123-45-6789
Password: Sm6789

For each course in which you enroll, you receive a unique enrollment number that serves as your user ID for that course. However, your password will be the same for every course you take with LSU IDL.

Computer Requirements

Hardware and Software Requirements

Because LSU IDL online course materials are available through the Internet, you will need to have access to a computer and the hardware and software resources needed to access the Internet.

Computer

The computer you use to submit assignments must have enough memory and processing power to operate a recent version of a Web browser and to download files in a reasonable amount of time.

- Minimum system requirements:
  486 75 MHz personal computer (or its equivalent Apple or SUN/Unix machine) with at least 8 megabytes of RAM.

- Recommended system requirements: Pentium class personal computer (or its equivalent Apple or SUN/Unix machine) with at least 16 megabytes of RAM.
Internet Access

You will need to be able to reach the Internet, either through a network at your place of business or school or through a DSL connection, cable modem, or dial-up modem from home. If you use a dial-up modem, the speed should be at least 28.8 bps. If possible, use an Internet service provider that has a local access number, so that you can avoid long-distance connection charges.

Web Browser

Web browsers, such as Internet Explorer and Firefox, are used by a computer to navigate the Internet. To access our courses, you must use a browser that is both Java and JavaScript enabled. This option needs to be set in the preferences of your browser.

If you do not have Internet Explorer or Firefox, you can download the latest free versions to install on your computer using the links on our online orientation page.

E-mail Account

You need to have a valid e-mail address, so that we can confirm receipt of your lesson assignments. If you do not have an e-mail account as part of your Internet access, you may subscribe to one of the many free e-mail services available.
Appendix B

Contents

✓ Methods and Strategies for Writing about Literature
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Methods and Strategies for Writing about Literature

Writing About Literature

When you respond to a writing assignment based on literature, make sure that you understand what is expected of you. Some assignments ask for a personal, informal response—letters to characters, evaluations of decisions made, comparisons to your own experiences, etc. Other assignments expect a more formal response that observes the conventions of literary style.

This section is designed to help you with more formal assignments. The pages that follow will offer you numerous examples and specific advice. You should review the material carefully before you begin the course, and refer to it as needed throughout your lessons.

Whatever the assignment, following the guidelines below should improve your work:

1. Read the primary text (the piece of literature) carefully. Read until you are sure that you understand it. If you have trouble understanding the text, you cannot write about it with any confidence. Pay attention to the footnotes, the glossary, the introductory material, and any other help provided in your text. Study aids like Cliffs Notes might be helpful, but be very cautious about relying on such materials. Usually they offer predictable and superficial comments, and the discussions may include errors.

2. Unless the assignment specifies otherwise, consider the work as part of its context. That is, if it was written in medieval times, consider what you know about the expectations placed on the writer by the audience, the society, the philosophy, etc. What would the writer and the audience know about history or biology or psychology? Is it fair to judge the work entirely as a modern reader? For example, does the context explain why the work presents a glorified view of some person or event? Your analysis should reveal your understanding of the work and of the circumstances that produced it.

3. Always double check references to the text for accuracy. The author’s name, the title of the work, the characters’ names—all should be accurate and spelled properly. Mistakes tell your reader that you are either uninformed or too uninterested to get the material right.
Balancing Evidence and Interpretation

All literary analysis, for both short answers and longer essays, requires, above all, a balance between evidence, the support you find in the text, and interpretation, your ideas about the text. This balance is necessary to avoid two common and deadly errors: excessive plot summary and unsupported generalizations.

To understand the seriousness of these errors, realize that an essay that consistently falls into one or both of these traps will never make above a “C” and will most likely not make a passing grade. (Although the following examples are assuming a paper topic on Hawthorne’s “Young Goodman Brown,” familiarity with this story is not necessary to understand these concepts.)

Error 1: Too Much Evidence = Plot Summary

At the end of the story, when Young Goodman Brown goes to the church, he cannot listen to the congregation’s singing or the minister’s preaching. During the night, he shrinks from his wife. Consequently when he dies, his family is unable to put anything positive on his tombstone.

Explanation: This paragraph contains lots of examples or “evidence” from the story, but there is no attempt to “interpret” or explain what these things mean in light of a thesis. This paragraph merely summarizes the plot or retells a portion of the story; it does not analyze the story.

Error 2: Too Much Interpretation = Vague, Unsupported Generalizations

Ultimately Young Goodman Brown is unable to come to terms with human flaws and failures. He cannot accept the notion that other people may have made mistakes or even committed sins. The result of this lack of sympathy or forgiveness is a life of bitterness and isolation.

Explanation: This paragraph makes statements that may in fact be true and may be supportive of the thesis/theme, but none of these “interpretations” are supported by any example or “evidence” from the text. (This could work as a concluding paragraph.)

Correct Balance of Evidence and Interpretation

Ultimately, Young Goodman Brown is unable to come to terms with human flaws and failures. This is clear at the end of the story, when Young Goodman Brown goes to the church and he cannot listen to the congregation’s singing or the minister’s preaching. In fact, during the night, he shrinks from his wife—further evidence that Brown cannot accept the notion that other people may have made mistakes or even committed sins. The result of this lack of sympathy or
forgiveness is a life of bitterness and isolation to the degree that when Young Goodman Brown dies, his family is unable to put anything positive on his tombstone.

Explanation: Notice the almost equal distribution between interpretive ideas (in italics) and evidence from the story to support those ideas. Notice too how the paragraph’s first or topic sentence is an interpretation. In a complete essay, this sentence would be clearly tied to and supportive of the thesis. We know what the writer wants us to think about the story; we know the writer’s opinion or interpretation. We also have enough “proof” from the story that the writer’s interpretation is convincing or at least plausible.

Evidence to support your interpretation may be in the form of paraphrase (retelling the story in your own words) or direct quotations. For the above example, the author only uses paraphrase, but understand that you should also be able to incorporate direct quotations as evidence for your interpretation.

Using Sources

Examples are from Virgil’s epic poem The Aeneid.

1. An in-text notation, parentheses with line or page number inside, follows a direct quotation and tells the reader where the quotation may be found in the text. No in-text notation is needed when quoting from short poems, like sonnets.
2. Use in-text notations when quoting from prose and long poems or plays. When quoting from prose, give the page number (number only, not p. or pp.). When quoting from long poems (Beowulf, The Canterbury Tales, Paradise Lost) or plays (Everyman, Dr. Faustus, 1 Henry IV, Lear), observe one of the following rules. For long poems or plays that are not subdivided into books or acts, give the line number(s) by prefacing the line with the abbreviation 1. (indicating one line) or ll. (indicating several lines). For long poems or plays divided into acts or books, identify by book (act and scene) and line number, using Arabic numerals and separating book and line number by a period.
3. Do not use “dumped” quotes. Quotes should be “attached” to your ideas, not sandwiched in between your interpretive sentences. A quotation should explain your ideas within the same sentence.

Wrong: In retelling the story of his escape, Aeneas claims utter ignorance as to what happened to his wife. “Some unfriendly power/I know not what,/Stole my addled wits” (2.956-56).

[Note that the connection between the two sentences is not clear.]
Appendix B

Correct: In retelling the story of his escape, Aeneas claims utter ignorance as to what happened to his wife and protests that “some unfriendly power/I know what,/Stole my addled wits” (2.954-56).

[Note how the connection between the “interpretation” and the “evidence” (the quote) is clear.]

4. Your interpretation should show the reader how the quotation proves your point. Don’t depend on the reader to make the necessary connection.

5. The period or comma follows the parenthesis: “quotation” (page or line number).

6. Ellipses: To condense a quoted passage, you can use the ellipsis mark (three periods, with spaces between) to indicate that you have omitted words. The remaining words must be grammatically complete and make sense. Add one more period . . . . if a period occurs in the omitted material. Don’t use an ellipsis at the beginning and end of quotations, just for words omitted in the middle of a quotation.

Wrong: Aeneas claims that “some unfriendly power/ . . .my addled wits” (2.954-56).

[The quoted words make no sense.]

Correct: Aeneas claims that “some unfriendly power/ . . .Stole all my addled wits” (2.954-56).

Topic, Theme, Thesis

It is important to keep these terms distinct in discussing and writing about literature, especially in the formation of an argument or thesis for your essay answers. (Examples are from Hawthorne’s “Young Goodman Brown.”)

Topic

Definition: A subject treated or presented by a literary work. A work can have more than one topic; some will be more dominant than others.

Example: Human sympathy.
Theme

**Definition:** A central or dominating idea in a literary work. A work can have more than one theme. Although in an informal discussion of a work we may use interchangeably “topic” and “theme,” in actuality, a theme is a statement about the work and should be expressed as a complete sentence with a subject and verb.

**Example:** One theme found in “Young Goodman Brown” is that a lack of human sympathy results in isolation.

Thesis

**Definition:** The central idea of a piece of writing, in this case a work of literary interpretation or analysis. The thesis should make its point by relating some aspect (symbolism, setting, etc.) of the work to its theme or to the meaning of the whole.

**Example:**

(aspect of the work) Through the three stages of Young Goodman Brown’s character development, the author shows that (theme) a lack of human sympathy results in isolation.

Comparison or Contrast Essays

**About Thesis Formation**

1. You will need to decide whether you think the two works you are going to analyze are mostly similar (a comparison essay) or mostly different (a contrast essay). For our purposes, you will not have a strong argument if you try to do both.
2. In making this choice, try to go beyond the obvious. If two stories are about young boys whose dogs are killed by wild boars, try to find interesting difference(s) to focus your thesis and essay.
3. Remember, as with our other essays, the thesis should try to answer why. In doing so, you will probably tie aspects of the works to their themes. This is just the same as in our other essays, but now you need to think “double.”
About Organizing the Essay

Below are the two possible ways of organizing a comparison or contrast essay.

In the “point-by-point” method, you alternate from one aspect of the first work to the same aspect of your other work. Although this method works well for all kinds of writing, it should especially be used for essays and longer answers because it insures a comprehensive and unified discussion of both works under each point and prevents the essay from becoming two disconnected essays.

In the “block” method, you discuss everything about one work before discussing the other work. It is important to remember that in this method, the points you use to analyze one work must be used to discuss the second work as well. This method is most often used for shorter essays and answers where balance and unity can be more easily maintained.

### Point-by-Point Method

I. Depressing settings
   A. *Moby Dick*
   B. *The Scarlet Letter*

II. Heavy-duty symbolism
   A. *Moby Dick*
   B. *The Scarlet Letter*

III. Monomaniacal characters
   A. *Moby Dick*
   B. *The Scarlet Letter*

### Block Method

I. *Moby Dick*
   A. Depressing settings
   B. Heavy-duty symbolism
   C. Monomaniacal characters

II. *The Scarlet Letter*
   A. Depressing settings
   B. Heavy-duty symbolism
   C. Monomaniacal characters
MARKINGS, ABBREVIATIONS, AND SYMBOLS

agr. Agreement error, such as between subject & verb

awk. Awkward

dumped Dumped quote: not part of interpretive sentence

c.s. Comma splice

fused Fused sentence

frag. Fragment

dangling Dangling or misplaced modifier

ref. Unclear, ambiguous reference

sp. Spelling

tense Tense shift

weak Weak content

w.c. Word choice

w.w. Wrong word: using it's for its, there for their, your for you're

verb Verb form

? No sense

l Paragraph needed

 Delete
Appendix C

Contents

✓ The Battle of Maldon
✓ The Wanderer
✓ The Dream of the Rood
Appendix C

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The Battle of Maldon

Translator: Lisi Oliver

This poem relates the events taking place in the year 991, when Vikings sailed up the river Blackwater (then called ‘Pante’) and beached their ships on an island not far from the town of Maldon; this island was accessible to the mainland by a causeway which was only traversable when the tide was out. The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle entry for 991 relates the story as follows:

In this year Ipswich was harried, and very soon afterwards ealdorman Birhtnoth was slain at Maldon. In this year it was decided for the first time to pay tribute to the Danes because of the great terror they inspired along the sea coast. On this first occasion it amounted to ten thousand pounds.

This course was adopted on the advice of archbishop Sigeric.

The Old English manuscript leaves containing this poem were destroyed by fire in 1731; fortunately a man named David Casley had made a copy a few years before the fire.
... was broken.

He then commanded each of the warriors to free [his] horse drive it far away, and go forth, to think of his hands and his good thought.

When Offa’s kinsman first discovered that his lord would not suffer cowardice, he then let fly from his hands his beloved hawk towards the woods, and advanced to the battle. By that men could recognize that the lad would not weaken at the combat, when he grasped weapons.

Likewise did Eadric wish to serve his lord, his prince in the fight; he began to bear forth [his] spear to the battle. He had good resolution while he with [his] hands might hold a shield and broadsword. He fulfilled his boast that he would fight before his prince.

Then Birhtnoth began there to encourage his men, he rode and counseled, he directed the warriors how they should stand and hold their station.

And he commanded that they hold their shields right, firmly with [their] hands, and not fear anything. When he had fairly encouraged those people, he alit then amid those where he most desired, there where he knew his hearth companions to be most loyal.

Then on the shore stood, and shouted fiercely a messenger of the Vikings, he spoke in words, boastfully announced the message of the seafarers to that lord, where he stood on the bank. “Bold seamen send me to you, command me to tell you that you must quickly send rings for your defense; and it is better for you that you pay off this rush of spears with tribute, than that we so hardy should deal out battle. We need not destroy each other, if you agree to that; with that gold we will secure a truce. If you counsel that, who here are most wealthy, that you will redeem your peoples, give to the seamen according to their own judgment money for peace, and take a truce from us, we will go to the ship with those treasures, fare out on the flood, and hold a truce with you.” Birhtnoth spoke, he raised [his] shield, shook his slender ash-spear, spoke in words, angry and resolute he gave him answer: “Do you hear, seafarer, what these people say?
They want to give you spears as tribute,
poisoned point and old swords,
the battlegear which will not profit you in the combat.
Herald of the seamen, announce back to them,
50 tell your people more hateful news,
that here stands a not ignoble lord with his troop,
who wishes to protect this homeland,
Æthelred’s land, my prince,
people and earth. The heathens must
fall in combat. Too shameful it seems to me
that you with our treasures go to the ship
unfought, now that you thus far
have come into our land.
Thus easily shall you not obtain treasure;
60 point and blade must reconcile us first,
grim battle-play, before we give tribute.”
He commanded then his men to go, to bear shields,
that they all stood on that east bank.
Nor might one troop attack the other on account of the water;
65 there came flowing [the] floodtide after the ebb,
the streams locked [them in]. It seemed too long to them,
when they together should bear spears.
They then mustered display by the stream of Panta,
the vanguard of the East Saxons and the spear-army.
70 Nor might any of them injure the other
except whoever took death through the flight of an arrow,
The tide went out, the sailors stood prepared,
many Vikings eager for battle.
The lord of warriors commanded to hold the bridge
a battle-hardened warrior, he was named Wulfstan,
nimble among his men, that was Ceola’s son,
who with his spear struck the first man
who there most boldly advanced on the bridge.
There stood with Wulfstan warriors unafraid,
75 Ælfere and Maccus, two brave men,
who did not want at that ford to take flight,
but they firmly defended against the foe,
as long as they could wield weapons.
When they perceived and readily saw
80 that they found there most bitterly defenders of the bridge,
they began to use cunning, the hateful guests,
asked that they might hold sway over the causeway,
cross the ford, lead the footsoldiers.
Then the lord began for his pride,
90 to yield too much land to the hateful people.
He then began to call across the cold water
the son of Byrthelm, the men listened:
“It is now cleared for you, come quickly to us,
men to battle; God alone knows
who will rule this place of slaughter.”

The slaughter-wolfs went—they cared not for the water,
the troop of Vikings—west across Panta,
across the bright water they bore shields,
the seamen bore the lindenwood to land.

There against the fierce men ready stood
Birhtnoth with [his] men; he ordered the battle-hedge
to be made with shields and the troop to hold
fast against the foes. Then the fight was near,
glory in combat. The time was come
that men fated to die must fall.
Then tumult arose, ravens circled,
the eagle eager for carrion; uproar was on earth.
They let fly from their hands file-hardened lances,
ground spears;

bows were busy, shield received point.
Bitter was the rush of battle, men fell
on every hand, warriors lay.
Wulfmaer was wounded, he chose slaughter-rest,
Birhtnoth’s kinsman; with swords he was,
his sister’s son, quickly hewn down.

Then to the Vikings recompense was paid.
I heard that Eadweard quickly slew
one with his sword, he did not withhold the swing,
so that at his feet the fated champion fell;
for that his lord said thanks to him,
to his chamber-servant, when he had the chance.
Thus stood firm the stout-hearted
warriors in battle, they considered eagerly
who there in the vanguard first might
from a man fated to die take the life in battle,
warriors with weapons; slaughter fell on earth.
They stood steadfast; Birhtnoth urged them on,
bade that each of the fighters think of the fight
who wished to gain in battle glory from the Danes.

Then he hard in battle advanced, raised [his] weapon,
his shield to defense, and advanced towards the man.
He went thus resolute the lord to the man,
each planned evil towards the other.

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1 The son of Byrthelm is Birhtnoth.
The sea-warrior then sent a southern spear,
so that the lord of the warriors was wounded;
he shoved with the shield, so that the shaft burst,
and the spear broke, so that it sprang back.
The battle-warrior became enraged; with his spear stabbed
the proud Viking, who gave him the wound.

The fighter was experienced; he let his lance go
to the man's neck, his hand guided it
so that he touched the life of his sudden enemy.
Then he quickly thrust at another,
so that the byrnie burst; in his breast he was
wounded through the chainmail, in his heart stood
a poisoned point. The lord was the gladder,
he laughed then, the brave man, said thanks to God
for that day's work, which the Lord gave him.
Then one of the fighters let fly from his hand
a javelin from his grasp, that it went forth
through that prince, the thegn of Æthelred.
By his side stood an ungrown man,
a lad in the battle, full boldly he
drew from the man the bloody spear,
the son of Wulfstan, the young Wulfmær,
He let the hard spear go back again.
The point went in, so that on the earth lay
he who had before touched his lord grievously,
Then an armed man went to that lord;
he wanted to take the bracelets of that man,
armor and rings, and ornamented sword.
Then Birhtnoth drew his blade from the sheath,
broad and shining of edge, and struck at that byrnie.
One of the seafarers hindered him too quickly,
so that he injured the arm of the prince.
Then fell to earth the golden-hilted blade;
nor might he hold the hard sword,
wield the weapon. Then still he spoke this word
the old battle-warrior, encouraged the fighters,
bade them to go forth and achieve well;
nor could he long stand firmly on his feet.
He looked to the heavens:
"Thanks be to Thee, Ruler of peoples,
for all the joys which I experienced on earth.

Now I, gracious Lord, have the greatest need

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2 A byrnie is a tunic of chain mail.
3 thegn = thane.
that Thou shouldst grant good to my spirit,
that my soul might travel to Thee,
journey in peace unto Thy power,
Lord of angels. I beseech you

that the thieves from hell may not injure it.”

Then the heathen battlers hewed him down,
and both the men who stood by him,
Ælfnóð and Wulfmær both lay dead,
there beside their lord they gave their lives.

Those then turned from the battleplace who did not wish to be there.
Odda’s son was first in the flight,
Godric from the battle, and he abandoned the good man who often had given him a battlehorse.
He leapt on the horse which his lord had owned,
onto those trappings on which it was not right,
and his brothers with him both hastened,
Godwine and Godwig, they did not heed the fight but turned from the battle and sought out the woods.
flew to that fastness and protected their life,

and many more than was fitting
if they remembered all the rewards which he had given them for their benefit.
Thus Offa said to him on an earlier day in that meeting place, when he held assembly,

that bravely there many spoke
who later in need would not endure.
Then was felled the prince of the people, Æthelred’s nobleman; the hearthcompanions all saw that their lord lay dead.

Then went forth from there proud thegns,
uncowardly men hastened eagerly;
they all wanted one of two things,
to give up life or to avenge their lord.
Thus the son of Ælfric encouraged them

a warrior young in winters he uttered words, Ælfwine said thus he spoke nobly.
“Remember the times when we often spoke at mead,
when we on the bench raised our boast,
warriors in the hall about hard strife;

now he who is brave may put it to the test.
I wish to make known my lineage to all,
that I was from Mercia of a great race;
my old father was called Ealhelm,
a wise alderman prosperous in the world.

Nor shall among this people thegns reproach me
that I wish to depart from this troop, to seek [my] homeland, now that my prince lies hewn down in battle. This to me is the greatest harm; he was both my kinsman and my lord."

225 Then he went forth, mindful of the feud, so that he struck one with his point, a seaman among that people, that he lay on the ground, slain by his weapon. He began then to urge [his] friends and companions, that they should go forth.

230 Offa spoke, he shook his ash spear:
“You, Ælfwine, have urged all the thegns as needed, now that our lord lies, a nobleman on the ground. We all have need that each encourage the other fighters to the fight, as long as he may still have and hold weapons, hard blade, spear and good sword. Godric, cowardly son of Odda, has betrayed us all. Too many men thought, as he rode on his horse, on that bright stallion, that it was our lord; therefore here in the field the people were divided, the shieldwall broken. Damn his birth, that he here put so many men to flight!”

235 Leofsunu spoke and raised his linden shield, the board for protection; he addressed that man: “I promise you that I from here will not flee the measure of a foot, but will go further, avenge my lord in the struggle. Nor may around Sturmere steadfast warriors reproach me with words, now that my lord is dead, that I lordless might journey home, turn from the battle, but weapons must take me, point and iron.” He strode full angrily, fought steadfastly, he scorned flight.

240 Dunmere then spoke, shook his lance, a simple man, cried out over all, bade that each man should avenge Birhtnoth: “He may not waver, he who thinks to avenge the lord of the people, nor mourn for his life.”

245 Then they went forth, they did not care for life; the retainers began to fight hardily, grimly bearing spears, and entreated God that they might avenge their lord and friend and wreak death on their foes.

250 The hostage began eagerly to help;
he was from Northumbria of a stout race,  
son of Ecglaf, his name was Æscferth.  
He did not waver at the battle-play,  
but he repeatedly urged forth the dart;  

at times he shot on a shield, at times he hit a man,  
Hour after hour he dealt out wounds  
as long as he still could wield weapons.  
Then still in the vanguard stood Eadweard the long,  
ready and eager, he spoke with boasting words  
that he would not flee a foot's pace of land,  
or move back when his leader lay dead.  
He broke the boardwall and fought against those men,  
until on those seamen he worthily avenged  
his giver of treasure, before he lay in the carnage.  

Likewise did Æthelric, companion of the prince,  
eager and impetuous, he fought earnestly.  
Sibyrht's brother and very many others  
clashed boards, bravely they defended;  
split the hollow shields, and the byrnie sang  
a song of terror. Then in the battle  
Offa slew that seafarer, that he fell on the earth,  
and there the kinsman of Gadda sought the ground.  
Quickly in the combat Offa was hewn down;  
he nevertheless fulfilled that which he promised his lord,  

thus he had boasted earlier to his ring-giver  
that they should both ride to the stronghold,  
safely to home, or die in the army,  
perish of wounds in the place of slaughter;  
he lay as a thegn should at the side of his lord.  

Then there was breaking of shields. The seamen advanced  
enraged for the battle; a spear often pierced  
a body doomed to die. Wistan then went forth,  
son of Thurstan, he fought with the warriors;  
in the throng he was killer of three of them,  
before the son of Wigeline lay him out in slaughter.  
There was a stiff meeting; warriors stood  
steadfast in conflict, fighters died,  
weary with wounds. Slaughter fell on earth.  
Oswold and Eadwold the whole time,  

both the brothers, encouraged the men,  
bade their friends and kinsmen in words  
that they at this need should bear up,  
resolutely employ their weapons.  
Byrhtwold spoke, he raised his shield,  

He was an old companion, he shook his ash-spear;
he full boldly instructed the men:
“Thoughts must be harder, hearts the keener,
courage must be the greater, as our strength grows smaller.
Here lies our prince all hewn down,

315 a good man in the dust. Forever may he mourn
who from this battleplay plans to turn.
I am experienced in life; I do not wish to leave it,
but I by the side of my lord,
by a so beloved man, plan to lie.”

320 Thus the son of Æthelgar urged them all,
Godric to the battle. Often he let fly a spear,
a wrapped slaughter-spear upon the Vikings,
as he towards that people advanced foremost,
he hewed and struck down until he fell in battle.

325 That was not the Godric who fled from the battle.
The Wanderer

From the Exeter Book

Translator: C. D. H. Reynolds

The wanderer, stirring the sea with a slow hand,
worn with the care of thinking
on harsh slaughters and the death of friends,
waits for God’s kindness, and speaks:

I cry my loneliness and care to every dawn.
No man lives, now, to whom I dare
unlock the secrets in my heart;
each man must bind his breast tight,
keep his thoughts to himself — think as he will —
for the weary heart has no defense,
and no hand helps the weak spirit,
He that seeks honor buries his sorrow
deep in the coffin of his breast.

Stricken, long years ago,
when my lord was wrapped in the dark of earth,
I turned to the frost-bound waves
for a new guide, a new home,
to comfort me in my grief.
Only the lonely man can know
what a bitter close companion is sorrow —
his is the path of exile, not rich gifts:
a frost of heart, not fruits of the earth.
When sleep and sorrow together
bind the lonely wanderer, he remembers
the light days of his youth:
the hall, friends, treasure, his lord feasting him.
(But gladness is gone, and the loved counsel of comrade and king.)
In dream, he clasps his lord, renders his fealty.
Then the friendless man awakens
to the wide reaches of the fallow sea
and gray gulls bathing, fanning their feathers in the gale;
snow, mingled with hail, falls.
The wounds of his heart are reopened,
his grief for loved ones more bitter...
and his mind turns to their shades:
he welcomes them gladly, greets them with glee!
But they swim away, having spoken
no words of welcome to his heart.
He must send his weary spirit again
over the frost-cold sea.

So, must I not wonder,
a shadow not darken my heart,
when I think of the fate of men —
how, one by one, proud warriors vanish
from the halls that know them: and day by day
kings must yield their places
and the earth fail, and fall.

No man can be wise
until he has lived many winters;
the wise man must be patient,
not rush... yet not fearful... or too greedy...
or too eager to boast before he is certain.
Before he speaks haughtily, a man must wait
until he knows his heart surely.

The wise man must ponder how dreadful it is
when the world’s wealth lies waste,
as now the town walls stand
swept by the wind and coated thick with frost.
There, joyless and still, the proud host is fallen.
Some, battle took; one, a bird bore away
over the high cold sea;
one, the gray wolf slew;
one, a sad-faced earl granted to the grave’s embrace.
Man’s Maker laid waste this world,
the ancient work of titans stand idle.
Appendix C

He, then, who has thought wisely
on these wasted ruins and has pondered deeply this dark life,
must brood on old tales
recalling well a multitude of cruel slaughters,
must cry out for past splendor, for some guide,
must cry out for the strength of old kings!
Heavy the wood that burdens his heart:
Where now is the warrior? Where is the war-horse?
Bestowal of gifts, and comradeship at the feast?
O, the golden cup, the mailed friend, the proud chieftain!
Where has time gone, covered by darkness
as though it had never been?
The only reminder now of that loved host
is one wondrous wall with serpent carvings —
the tales of their might — fate has destroyed all else.

Storms hammer down upon rocky cliffs,
the snow-drift settles, binds the earth fast —
the terror of winter when it comes dismal!
Night’s shadow darkens,
sends from the north cruel hail-storms
for harm to mankind.
All the earth under heaven is changed
to hardship by fate’s decree.
Mere wealth is fleeting, man is fleeting,
and the foundations of earth shall be idle!

So speaks a wise man, thinking in solitude.
The good man holds to his faith.
He must not loosen his breast of its sorrow
until he himself knows the cure;
and happy is the man who seeks solace
from his Father in Heaven, our defense and our might.
The Dream of the Rood

From the Vercelli Book

Translator: Lisi Oliver

1 Lo! The best of dreams I wish to recount
which came to me in the middle of the night,
after those bearing speech occupied their resting place.
I thought that I saw a wondrous tree

5 lifted into the air, wound round with light,
the brightest of beams. That beacon was all
covered with gold. Gems stood
fair at the regions of the earth, likewise there were five
up on the crossbeam. All the angels of the Lord beheld it there,

10 fair by eternal decree. Certainly it was not the gallows of criminals there,
but holy spirits there gazed upon it,
men throughout the earth and all this glorious creation.
Wondrous was the beam of victory, and I stained with sins,
sorely wounded by evil deeds. I saw the tree of glory,

15 adorned with garments shine with delights,
decked with gold; gems had
covered worthily the Ruler’s tree.
Nonetheless through that gold I was able to discern
the ancient hostility of wretched ones, in that it at once began

20 to bleed on the right side. I was altogether oppressed with sorrows,
I was fearful in the presence of that fair sight. I saw that brilliant beacon
change in coverings and colors; at times it was drenched with moisture,
soaked with the flow of blood, at times adorned with treasure.
Nonetheless I lying there for a long time

25 gazed sorrowful in spirit upon the Savior’s tree,
until I heard that it was speaking.
It began to speak these words, the most noble of trees:
“That was years ago, I remember it still,
that I was hewn from the edge of the forest,

30 cut off from my stump. Strong enemies took me there,
fashioned me as a spectacle for themselves, commanded me to lift their criminals.
Appendix C

Men carried me there on their shoulders, until they set me on a mound, enemies enough secured me there. I saw the Lord of mankind hasten with great zeal, that He wished to climb upon me.

35 I did not dare then against the word of the Lord to turn away or to break, when I saw the corners of the earth tremble. I could have felled all the enemies, nonetheless I stood firm.

Then the young warrior stripped Himself —that was God Almighty!— strong and firm of purpose. He climbed upon the despised gallows, brave in the sight of many, he wished then to redeem mankind. I shuddered as the man embraced me. Nonetheless I did not dare bend to the ground, fall to the corners of the earth, but I had to stand firm.

I was reared up as a cross. I raised the powerful King,

40 the Lord of the heavens, I did not dare bend.
The wounds are visible on me, open, malicious gashes. Nor dared I harm any of them.

They mocked us both together. I was completely drenched with blood, begotten from the man’s side, after he had sent on his spirit.

50 Many cruel fates have I experienced on that mound. I saw the God of Hosts violently stretched out. Darkness had covered with clouds the corpse of the Ruler, a gloomy light, shadows went forth dark under the clouds. All creation wept, lamented the fall of the King. Christ was on the cross. Nonetheless there eager ones came from afar to that Prince. I beheld all that.

Sorely I was drenched with sorrows, nonetheless I bowed to those warriors’ hands,

60 humble with great zeal. They then took Almighty God, lifted Him up from that grievous torment. Then the battle-warriors left me to stand soaked with blood; I was thoroughly wounded with sharp points. There they laid down the limb-weary one, took place at his body’s head, they there gazed upon the Lord of Heaven, and He rested there a while, exhausted after the great struggle. They began then to build a sepulcher for Him, men in the sight of the killer; they carved it of bright stone, therein they placed the Ruler of Victories. They then began to sing a lament, pitiful in the evening hour, as they were about to depart exhausted from that Illustrious Prince. He remained there with little company.

65 Nonetheless we weeping there for a goodly while remained in our positions, until the voices departed of the battle-warriors. The corpse grew cold, fair dwelling of the soul. Then they began to fell us all to the earth. That was a fearful fate!

70 We were buried in a deep pit. Nonetheless the thegns of the Lord,
friends, found me there . . .
and adorned me with gold and silver.
Now you can hear, my beloved champion,
that I have experienced the work of evildoers,
of grievous sorrows. Now the time has come
that men throughout earth honor me
far and wide, and all this illustrious creation,
pray to this tree. On me the Son of God
suffered for a time. For that reason I now rise up
80 glorious under the heavens, and I can heal
evory one who is in awe of me.
Once I was made the cruelest of tortures,
most hateful to men, before I cleared for them,
for speech-bearers the path of life.
90 Lo, the Prince of Glory there honored me
over the trees of the forest, the Guardian of Heaven.
Likewise he honored his mother also,
Mary Herself, Almighty God,
in the sight of all men, above all the race of woman.
95 Now I command you, my beloved hero,
that you proclaim this vision to men,
reveal in words that this is the tree of glory,
on which Almighty God suffered
for the many sins of mankind
and Adam’s ancient deeds.
There he tasted death, nonetheless the Lord arose afterwards
with his great might to aid mankind.
He then ascended into the heavens. He will hasten back here
to this middle earth to seek mankind
100 on the day of judgment the Lord Himself,
Almighty God, and His angels with Him,
as He then will want to judge, He who has power of judgment,
each of men as to what he has earned
earlier here in this transitory life.
105 Nor can any man then be unafraid
of that word which the Ruler may speak.
He will inquire before the multitude where that man may be,
who in the name of the Lord is willing to taste
bitter death as He before did on that cross.
110 Rather they will be fearful, and have little notion
what they will begin to say to Christ.
But none there need be frightened
who beforehand carries in his breast the noblest of beacons,
but through that cross shall each soul
115 seek out the kingdom from the earthly path,
who intends to dwell with the Ruler."
I then prayed to that cross with happy heart,
with great zeal, there where I was alone
with little company. My spirit was longing
for the journey forth, and experienced
many longings. It is now the hopeful joy of my life
that I may seek out that tree of victory
alone more often than all men,
to honor it well. My desire for that
is great in my heart, and my protection is
directed towards that cross.

I have not many powerful
friends on the earth, but they forth from here
have departed from the joys of the world, sought for themselves the
King of Glory live now in the heavens with the High Father,
live in glory, and I look forward
every day to when the cross of the Lord,
which I here on earth gazed upon before,
shall fetch me from this transitory life
and bring me to where there is great bliss,
joy in the heavens, where the people of the Lord
are set down to the feast, where there is everlasting bliss,
and will then set me where I afterwards can
live in glory, fully enjoy bliss
with the Holy Ones. May the Lord be my friend,

He who here on earth suffered earlier
on that gallows-tree for the sins of men.
He redeemed us and granted us life,
a heavenly home. Hope was restored
with blessings and with bliss, for those who then endured the fire.
The Son was firm in victory on that expedition,
mighty and successful, when He came with many,
the troop of spirits, into the realm of God,
the Almighty Ruler, to the delight of the angels
and all the Holy Ones who before in the heavens
lived in glory, when their Ruler came,

Almighty God, to where his homeland was.