English 2120 Sample Syllabus 3

Course Description: English 2120 is a historical survey of literature from the British Isles. Topics to be considered include literary genres, conventions, and modes. Additionally, issues such as language change, periodization, canon formation, national identity, and interrelationships between literature and other elements of culture inform the choice of selections and should guide discussions. Since the history of literature in English is long and rich, our choices represent highlights rather than a complete survey.


Learning Outcomes:

General Outcomes –
· identify and explain the fundamental features of the genres of poetry, fiction, non-fiction, and drama
· define key literary terms/concepts and implement these in oral/written discussion as well as in literary interpretation
· describe, examine, and evaluate their own reading practices and oral/written critical analyses
· analyze literature and explain how various components of literature work together to create meaning.
· apply writing and revision as tools for understanding literature and its interpretation

Specific Outcome(s) –
· recognize and describe British literary history as chronological, developmental (moving through time periods), and generic/thematic
· recognize and interpret relationships between British literature and its literary history and culture

Course requirements: The first requirement for succeeding in this course is to read the material carefully and thoughtfully. Students will be able to demonstrate their mastery of the material in responsible, collegial class participation, and on three (3) “study question” papers, a “discussion question” assignment, a midterm examination and a final examination.

I. Each study question paper will consist of three parts:

1. Vocabulary list—choose 5-10 words to look up in a full dictionary, preferably the OED. Write you definitions in your own complete sentences, locate your word in your reading exactly (act, scene, line, or page number), and indicate how knowing what the word means makes the
passage in which it appears clearer, more interesting, or adds more depth to the work. (20 points)

2. Make up five study questions. For example, you might look to queries that highlight important relationships between characters; portray important themes; or illustrates literary techniques. Anchor your questions to specific places in the text. Otherwise, your questions will be too broad to develop in the next part of the assignment (30 points)

3. Write a one-to-two page essay in response to one of your questions. (50 points)

These tasks will greatly enhance your development as a scholarly reader if you will try to make them dovetail. If, for example, you were reading Act III, Scene 2, l. 71 of *Henry IV* and decided you needed to confirm your understanding of the word *surfeit*, you might see how understanding its meaning could help you see how harshly the King is taking Hal to task. That realization might bring you to pose the following study question, “What are the chief complaints that the King has with regard to the Prince of Wales’s behavior?” You might very well write your short paper in response to this question.

II. Once during the course, you will be responsible to bring two well-considered and well-supported questions regarding the day’s reading as a prompt for class discussion. “Well-supported” doesn’t necessarily mean you know the answer; it means that you have an open-ended question for which the text provides some evidence that confirms or contradicts what you think the answer could be. These can be fairly broad questions or ones that focus on a particular passage. You’ll be expected to ask them aloud to the class as a whole or in small groups and to hand in a copy of the questions to me.

III. The midterm and final examinations will consist of two parts:

3. Identification. You’ll be expected to demonstrate your knowledge of terminology introduced and discussed in class in a few sentences.

4. Comparisons. You’ll be asked to identify two passages from the works read and discussed in class and to write a short discussion of the similarities and differences in the passages and/or works. You’ll demonstrate your mastery of the material by explaining why the two passages were paired. (The exam will be open book.)

Course grades will be weighted in this way:

Paper #1 15%
Paper #2 20%
Paper #3 25%

Discussion question assignment 10%

Midterm 15%

Final examination 15%

**Attendance:** Attendance is required and will be monitored. Any student who is absent 5 (5) or more times will be dropped from the course. Arriving more than fifteen (15) minutes late or leaving fifteen (15) minutes early will count an absence.
Accommodations for Students with Special Needs: Students who need accommodations are asked to arrange a meeting with the instructor at a mutually convenient time during the first week of classes, or as soon as possible if accommodations are needed immediately. Bring a copy of your Student Accommodation Form to the meeting. If you do not have such a form, but need accommodations, make an appointment with the Office of Disability Services (Suite 230 New Student Center, ext. 3-9044) to arrange for accommodations.

Portfolio Requirement for English Majors: All English majors must submit, as part of their graduation requirements, individual portfolios of their work as English majors. Students should collect several assignments each term to include in the portfolio. The main office of the Department of English can supply specific requirements for individual concentrations. Instructors and advisors can counsel students about portfolio inclusions.

Academic Honesty: Students are expected to abide by the University’s policy on academic honesty, which is summarized on pages 54-57 in the current undergraduate catalog. Any plagiarized or otherwise academically dishonest work will receive a grade of zero, with no chance for revision. The instructors will assign a failing grade for the course to any student who submits academically dishonest work.

Reading Assignments
(Generic Format)

Week One: Introductions; Intro to Middle Ages

Week Two: Beowulf

Week Three: Paradise Lost

Week Four: The Rape of the Lock

Week Five: The Canterbury Tales, “General Prologue”; “Wife of Bath’s Prologue and Tale”

Week Six: Selected sonnets from Wyatt, Spencer, Sidney, Shakespeare

Week Seven: Selected poems from Blake, Wordsworth, Coleridge

Week Eight: Selected poems from Keats, Shelley, Byron, Hemens

Week Nine: Swift, “A Modest Proposal”; Johnson, Rambler No. 4; “Milton” from Lives of the Poets; The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano

Week Ten: Wollstonecraft, A Vindication of the Rights of Woman; Coleridge, Biographia Literaria

Week Eleven: Shakespeare, Macbeth

Week Twelve: Gay, Beggar’s Opera (handout or obtain online)

Week Thirteen: Wilde, The Importance of Being Earnest
Week Fourteen: Joyce, “The Dead”; Rushdie, “The Prophet’s Hair”

Week Fifteen: Achebe, “The Things Fall Apart”

Week Sixteen: Review and catch-up