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2021

Fall 8-15-2021

ENG 2950-001: Transatlantic Literary History Culture, Literacies, and Technologies I

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Wharram, Charles, "ENG 2950-001: Transatlantic Literary History Culture, Literacies, and Technologies I" (2021). *Fall 2021*. 63.

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IN.TRANS.MISSION.

Transatlantic Literary History: Culture, Literacies, and Technologies I

English 2950 (93048) / 3 credit hours
Fall 2021 / MWF 14:00 – 14:50 / Coleman 3150

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Map of the North Atlantic, ca. 1565, Venice

IN.TRANS.MISSION.

This course introduces students to the study of the ways that words move from place to place, in and through history.

It will offer an overview of transatlantic literary history from the Anglo-Saxon period to the beginning of the eighteenth century. By examining a number of key cultural movements and genres during this roughly 1000-year timespan, we will aim to familiarize students with the varying means by which literature is transmitted from person to person, from place to place, and from one historical moment to another.

The purpose of the course is to equip students with an historical foundation for contextualizing the literature they read: what it means to have a *canon* of literature; what it means to *resist* that canon; what it means to have (or not to have) *cultural capital*. We will be

reading canonical authors (e.g., Chaucer and Shakespeare) alongside more recent additions to the canon and texts that have never been considered “canonical.” We want to avoid the pitfalls of the typical (or, at least, it used to be “typical”) survey course that determines in advance that certain authors and works are important or “great,” while others are not.

In reading texts translated from predominantly oral cultures, we will consider the central problems of orality and literacy, and how these “texts” are transmitted to our own time. Our starting point, on both sides of the Atlantic, will be to consider the oral cultures that produced the earliest literatures we will examine in this class—the Anglo-Saxons of England, who spoke a now-extinct language called “Old English,” and the various indigenous cultures of North America, who spoke approximately 300 different languages, some of which are now extinct, and many of which are still spoken. In reading texts translated from these languages arising from predominantly oral cultures, we will consider the central problems of the history of orality and literacy, and how these “texts” are transmitted to our own time.

Texts

The Broadview Anthology of British Literature: Concise Edition, Volume A.

Morrison, Toni. *A Mercy*.

Ong, Walter. *Orality and Literacy*. (excerpt will be provided in class)

Shakespeare, William. *The Tempest*. Eds. Graff and Phelan.

Other texts will be distributed in class, and/or made available electronically, through D2L.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

The primary aim of this course is to introduce you—through reading, writing, and discussion—to the study of literary history. In this course, I expect that you will:

- introduce yourselves to some important writers and movements from the history of the Anglophone world—and beyond—on both sides of the Atlantic from the early medieval period to the end of the eighteenth century;
- gain an awareness of some of the major historical events and figures, social and political forces, and economic and scientific insights that were represented and fashioned by a selection of texts of these periods;
- communicate effectively in both oral and written transmissions;
- reflect upon your own considerations about “literature” and “history,” “media” and “culture” while considering the viewpoints and arguments of others;
- develop basic strategies used by literary scholars such as attentive reading practices, acknowledgement of previous analyses, and effective argument;
- collaborate with others in order to synthesize their ideas and insights with your own toward the goal of mutual improvement.

A Note about Readings: Assigned texts should be read by the date on the reading schedule (or changes made to the schedule).

I would like to comment on how you should read in this course. We all know *how* to read, but how to read *well* is a different beast. **I encourage you to read everything at least twice for this class.** Also, when you are not using textbooks from TRS, mark in the text while you read, underlining what seems like important sentences and noting where you have questions. Sometimes students feel that this sort of marking is disrespectful to the text, but it is common practice in college and aids you in comprehension. Granted, if you are using a rental book, you can't mark in them. You can, however, use post-it notes to highlight key points. And you can take notes in a separate notebook. It is also a good idea to *come prepared with a comment or question regarding each of our readings* so that you are fully engaged in the class discussion. Finally, you must always have the reading in front of you—not on your laptop, printed out. If you arrive without your reading in print, you are not fully participating in class.

Requirements

Tests and other short assignments	0%
Participation	10%
Explication Papers	50%
Final Writing Project	25%
Final Exam	15%



Tests and Final Exam

One of the goals of this course is to provide an historical foundation for the study of literatures, cultures, and technologies that will serve you as you progress through your university studies and as contributing agents for the advancement of a better world. Having a solid background in key cultural moments and movements will assist you in these endeavors. For this reason, I will ask you to develop an historical sensibility through a modicum of “factual recall.” That is, I will test you occasionally throughout the semester on your ability to remember facts, such as the year certain events happened (“When did the Normans conquer England?”), the general timeframe of significant cultural signposts (“When was the Elizabethan period?”), and the names of important historical figures (“Who was Gustavus Vassa?”). The questions will be written to let you know the facts I think you should retain in order to learn well in this course and in the future (both as an English major and generally as an educated citizen).

I will “mark” each of these tests, but they will not count toward your course grade. The final exam will gather these questions (and maybe a few similar ones) and will account for 15% of your course grade. The Final Exam will take place on **Wednesday, December 15, 2021 at 14:45**; therefore, you should not plan to leave Charleston early for the winter holidays!

Required, but ungraded assignments

There will be a number of assignments during the semester that I will expect you to complete. They are intended to enhance your appreciation for and enjoyment of the course material, and offer some creative outlet. Assignments early in the semester will focus on orality. For example, I will ask you to tell me (or the entire class) a story about your family history as far back in time as you are able. I will ask you to read, aloud, in a forum of your choice (as long as there is a minimal constitution of one reader and one listener), Marie de France's *Lanval*. As we move into the more graphic-centered parts of the course, I will ask you to complete shorter writing tasks, such as tweeting a sonnet or two and sharing these

with others in the course. While these individual assignments are, again, ungraded, they will influence your Course Participation marks, which comprise 10% of your final grade.

That being written, please do come to class. Students who miss class usually have great difficulty passing this or any other university course. If you find yourself in a situation that is causing you to miss classes, please discuss the situation with me as soon as possible, and we will work on finding ways for you to remain in the course, if we can.

Explication Papers

During the semester, I will ask you to write three short “explication” papers, which simply involves your offering a close reading of a brief passage of text, and tying your insights to the larger work, and other course materials and readings. These papers should be minimally 350-words in length, but have no upper limit (i.e., your paper may be 10-pages long, if you wish). Each is worth 25% of your final grade.

I expect no “research” component to these papers involving secondary sources. I encourage, however, research involving dictionaries (or other forms of lexicon) and other resources that help you delve into meaning, into cultural and historical references, resonances and issues, or other allusions and indications embedded in the language of the text.

Final Writing Project

For your final writing project, you will work in groups of three or four to revise, expand, synthesize, and resubmit one of your explication papers. Your grade for this writing project will replace the lowest grade you received on the explication papers during the semester. That is, it will be worth 25% of your final grade. Further guidance will be offered in the course of the semester. The purpose of working in tandem on the final project is to provide you the opportunity to develop or hone your skills in *collaboration*.

***From the EIU Course Catalog:** ENG 2950. Transatlantic Literary History: Culture, Literacies, and Technologies I. An introduction to the key cultural movements and genres in Transatlantic literary history aimed at familiarizing students with the history of orality, literacy, and print technology in textual production from the Anglo-Saxon period to the beginning of the eighteenth century. Prerequisite: Grade of “C” or better in ENG 1002G. WI [writing intensive]*

COURSE POLICIES

LATE POLICY

Written papers are due at the beginning of class. Late essays will be marked a full grade lower for every day late. Essays turned in a week past the deadline will be given a “zero.” In-class writing assignments and quizzes must be turned in by the end of class, and cannot be “made up” at a later date. If you have reason to believe you will be incapable of completing an assignment on time, please speak to me as soon as possible.

EMAILING POLICY

I want to get to know you and your work this semester. Thus I ask that you stop by my office during office hours (or other scheduled times) so that we can talk. Don’t be afraid to talk to me after class about setting up a time to discuss the readings, the assignments, or anything else you ‘d like to talk about. However, please don’t email me to ask for an “update” on missed classes or assignments (that’s one thing friends and acquaintances are for), or to explain an absence. These things are best done in person. Perhaps outdoors? Go to get fresh air, and there is (still) a pandemic, after all.

ESSAY FORMAT

Your paper should be paper-clipped. It must include page numbers. Format: 12-point Garamond font (or similar), double-spaced, with one-inch margins. Always submit your papers using a consistent documentation format.

PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism will not be tolerated and will result in a failing grade on the assignment, if not for the course. I follow the departmental policy on plagiarism:

“Any teacher who discovers an act of plagiarism—“The appropriation or imitation of the language, ideas, and/or thoughts of another author, and representation of them as one’s own original work’ (*Random House Dictionary of the English Language*)—has the right and the responsibility to impose upon the guilty student an appropriate penalty, up to and including immediate assignments, of a grade of F for the assigned essay and a grade of F for the course, and to report the incident to the Judicial Affairs Office.”

ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

If you have a documented disability and wish to receive academic accommodations, please contact the Office of Disability Services (581-6583) as soon as possible.

UNIVERSITY-WIDE POLICIES

Academic integrity

Students are expected to maintain principles of academic integrity and conduct as de-fined in EIU’s Code of Conduct (<http://www.eiu.edu/judicial/studentconductcode.php>). Violations are reported to the Office of Student Standards.

Students with disabilities

If you are a student with a documented disability in need of accommodations to fully participate in this class, please contact the Office of Student Disability Services (SDS). All accommodations must be approved through SDS. Please stop by McAfee Gym, Room 1210, or call 217-581-6583 to make an appointment.

The Student Success Center

Students who are having difficulty achieving their academic goals are encouraged to contact the Student Success Center (www.eiu.edu/~success) for assistance with time management, text taking, note taking, avoiding procrastination, setting goals, and other skills to support academic achievement. The Student Success Center provides individualized consultations. To make an appointment, call 217-581-6696, or go to McAfee Gym, Room 1301.

Using the Writing Center

I encourage you to use our wonderful Writing Center located at 3110 Coleman Hall. This free resource provides one-to-one conferences with writing consultants who can help you with brainstorming, organizing, developing support, documenting, and revising your papers.

To schedule an appointment, you can drop by the center (3110 Coleman Hall) or you can call 581-5929.

Wharram / English 2950-001: *Schedule of Classes*—subject to revision

A General Overview:

Module I: The Distant Past, Pre-literate Culture, and The Medieval (4 wks)

Hashtags: #genre&poetics #identity&culture #media&tech

Module II: The Sonnet, A Genre in/through History (2.5 wks)

Hashtags: #genre&poetics #media&tech #law&justice

Module III: First Contact and The Early Modern (2 wks)

Hashtags: #genre&poetics #identity&culture #media&tech #science&environment

Bridge Module: Politics and Society, 1620-1720 (0.5 wk)

Module IV: The Slave Trade and The Novel (3 wks)

Hashtags: #genre&poetics #identity&culture #media&tech #law&justice

Module V: Culture & Science, The Story of Inoculation (2 wks)

Hashtags: #science&environment #identity&culture #media&tech

Reading & Assignment Schedule

BA = *Broadview Anthology of British Literature*.

For each class period, you need to have carefully read and be prepared to discuss the assigned selections in their entirety.

WEEK ONE

M 8/23 **INTRODUCTION: “IN.TRANS.MISSION.”**

Module I: The Distant Past, Pre-literate Culture, and The Medieval

W 8/25 William Wordsworth, “Lines” (handout)

F 8/27 White River Sioux [Lakota], “Rabbit Boy” (*takuskanskan*) (handout)

WEEK TWO

M 8/30 “The Medieval Period” (BA 1-12);
“The Wanderer” (BA 52-54); “The Ruin” (BA 57);

W 9/1 Micmac, “Glooscap fights the Water Monster” (handout)
from *Beowulf* (BA 65-66)

F 9/3 *Orality and Literacy* (Ong 5-15; 27-43)

Friday 9/3—Deadline to drop course without charge/grade

WEEK THREE

M 9/6 **No Class (Labour Day)**

W 9/8 "Robyn Hood and the Potter" (handout);
"England after the Norman Conquest" (BA 12-29);
Herder, *Outlines of a Philosophy of the History of Man* (handout)
"Language and Prosody" (BA 30-34)

F 9/10 Chaucer, "The Wife of Bath's Tale" (BA 300-319)

WEEK FOUR

M 9/14 Chaucer, "The Wife of Bath's Tale," con't (BA 300-319)

W 9/16 Marie de France, *Lamval* (BA 111); Middle English lyric, "I have..." (BA 131)

Module II: The Sonnet, A Genre in/through History (2.5 wks)

F 9/18 Petrarchan sonnet (BA 546), #140 (BA 547) and Chaucer translation (handout);
The Ghazal, Asha Bhosle, "Dil Cheez Kya Hai"

WEEK FIVE

M 9/20 "The Renaissance" and "Humanism" (BA 465-68);
Sir Thomas Wyatt, "Sonnet 10" (533); Earl of Surrey, "Love, that doth" (542);
"The Elizabethan Sonnet" (546);
Wyatt, "My galley chargèd" (547); "Whoso list to hunt" (548)

W 9/22 "The Reformation" (BA 470-75);
Sir Philip Sidney, *Astrophil and Stella*, Sonnets 1, 2, 7, 18, 31, 52 (BA 656ff.)
John Donne, "Sonnet: Batter my heart, three-person'd God" (BA 848)

F 9/24 Queen Elizabeth, *To the troops at Tilbury* (BA 688)
William Shakespeare, Sonnets 1, 2, 12, 15, 18, 19, 20, 29, 35, 36, 55, 71, 73, 94,
110, 116 (BA 797ff.)

WEEK SIX

M 9/27 Lady Mary Wroth, Introduction and *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus* 1, 6, 7, 13, 14, 15,
22 (BA 851ff.); John Milton, "When I consider how my light is spent" (BA 909)

W 9/29 Charlotte Smith, from *Elegaic Sonnets* (handout)

F 10/1 Explication #1 due

WEEK SEVEN

Module III: First Contact and The Early Modern (2 wks)

M 10/4 Christopher Columbus, diary entries (keynote);
Shakespeare, *The Tempest*

W 10/6 Shakespeare, *The Tempest*

F 10/8 Shakespeare, *The Tempest* (con't)

WEEK EIGHT

- M 10/11 Shakespeare, *The Tempest* (con't)
- W 10/13 Shakespeare, *The Tempest* (con't)
Excerpt from Michel de Montaigne, "Of Cannibals"
- F 10/15 **FALL BREAK (no class)**

WEEK NINE

- M 10/18 Lakota, "The Coming of Wasichu" (handout)
Excerpts from Césaire, *A Tempest* (Graff, p. 309-319)
- W 10/20 Shakespeare, *The Tempest* (con't)
- F 10/22 **Explication #2 due, no later than Friday, October 22 @ 15:00**

WEEK TEN

- M 10/25 John Locke, from *Two Treatises on Government* (handout)

Module IV: The Slave Trade and The Novel (3 wks)

- W 10/27 Locke, *Two Treatises* (con't)
Brief excerpt from Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe* (BA 1214-1234)

REBOOT, Module IV: The Slave Trade and The Novel
Telling Stories that "can't be told"

- W 10/27 Behn, *Oronoko*

WEEK ELEVEN

- M 11/1 Behn, *Oronoko*
- W 11/3 Behn, *Oronoko*; Toni Morrison, *A Mercy*
- F 11/5 Toni Morrison, *A Mercy*

WEEK TWELVE

- M 11/8 Toni Morrison, *A Mercy*
- W 11/10 Toni Morrison, *A Mercy*
- F 11/12 Toni Morrison, *A Mercy*

WEEK THIRTEEN

- M 11/15 Olaudah Equiano, *The Interesting Narrative* (BA 1579ff.)

Explication #3 due, no later than Monday, November 15 @ 15:00

W 11/17 Olaudah Equiano, *The Interesting Narrative* (con't)

F 11/19 Olaudah Equiano, *The Interesting Narrative* (con't)

WEEK FOURTEEN M 11/22 – F 11/28 Thanksgiving Recess—NO CLASS

WEEK FIFTEEN

Module V: Culture Science, The Story of Inoculation (2 wks)

M 11/29 Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, “Saturday: The Small Pox” (BA 1424)
Cotton Mather, “Sentiments on the Small Pox Inoculated” (D2L/handout)
Various excerpts on inoculation incl. Samuel Boylston (D2L/handout)

W 12/1 Selected Writings on the Smallpox and Inoculation (con't)

WEEK SIXTEEN

M 12/6 John Milton, *Areopagitica* (excerpts BA 910)

W 12/8 TBA

F 12/10 TBA

Wednesday, December 15, 2021 at 14:45 – 16:45 FINAL EXAM, Final Explications Due

Eastern Illinois University Learning Goals (<http://www.eiu.edu/learninggoals/revisedgoals.php>)

EIU graduates reason and communicate clearly as responsible citizens and leaders in diverse personal, professional, and civic contexts.

Critical Thinking

EIU graduates question, examine, evaluate, and respond to problems or arguments by:

1. Asking essential questions and engaging diverse perspectives.
2. Seeking and gathering data, information, and knowledge from experience, texts, graphics, and media.
3. Understanding, interpreting, and critiquing relevant data, information, and knowledge.
4. Synthesizing and integrating data, information, and knowledge to infer and create new insights
5. Anticipating, reflecting upon, and evaluating implications of assumptions, arguments, hypotheses, and conclusions.
6. Creating and presenting defensible expressions, arguments, positions, hypotheses, and proposals.

Writing and Critical Reading

EIU graduates write critically and evaluate varied sources by:

1. Creating documents appropriate for specific audiences, purposes, genres, disciplines, and professions.
2. Crafting cogent and defensible applications, analyses, evaluations, and arguments about problems, ideas, and issues.
3. Producing documents that are well-organized, focused, and cohesive.
4. Using appropriate vocabulary, mechanics, grammar, diction, and sentence structure.
5. Understanding, questioning, analyzing, and synthesizing complex textual, numeric, and graphical sources.
6. Evaluating evidence, issues, ideas, and problems from multiple perspectives.
7. Collecting and employing source materials ethically and understanding their strengths and limitations.

Speaking and Listening

EIU graduates prepare, deliver, and critically evaluate presentations and other formal speaking activities by:

1. Collecting, comprehending, analyzing, synthesizing and ethically incorporating source material.
2. Adapting formal and impromptu presentations, debates, and discussions to their audience and purpose.
3. Developing and organizing ideas and supporting them with appropriate details and evidence.
4. Using effective language skills adapted for oral delivery, including appropriate vocabulary, grammar, and sentence structure.
5. Using effective vocal delivery skills, including volume, pitch, rate of speech, articulation, pronunciation, and fluency.

6. Employing effective physical delivery skills, including eye contact, gestures, and movement.
7. Using active and critical listening skills to understand and evaluate oral communication.

Quantitative Reasoning

EIU graduates produce, analyze, interpret, and evaluate quantitative material by:

1. Performing basic calculations and measurements.
2. Applying quantitative methods and using the resulting evidence to solve problems.
3. Reading, interpreting, and constructing tables, graphs, charts, and other representations of quantitative material.
4. Critically evaluating quantitative methodologies and data.
5. Constructing cogent arguments utilizing quantitative material.
6. Using appropriate technology to collect, analyze, and produce quantitative materials.

Responsible Citizenship

EIU graduates make informed decisions based on knowledge of the physical and natural world and human history and culture by:

1. Engaging with diverse ideas, individuals, groups, and cultures.
2. Applying ethical reasoning and standards in personal, professional, disciplinary, and civic contexts.
3. Participating formally and informally in civic life to better the public good.
4. Applying knowledge and skills to new and changing contexts within and beyond the classroom.