

Spring 1-15-2015

ENG 3803-001: Dark and Illicit Love: Sex and Sexuality in Renaissance Literature

Melissa Caldwell
Eastern Illinois University

Follow this and additional works at: http://thekeep.eiu.edu/english_syllabi_spring2015



Part of the [English Language and Literature Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Caldwell, Melissa, "ENG 3803-001: Dark and Illicit Love: Sex and Sexuality in Renaissance Literature" (2015). *Spring 2015*. 66.
http://thekeep.eiu.edu/english_syllabi_spring2015/66

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the 2015 at The Keep. It has been accepted for inclusion in Spring 2015 by an authorized administrator of The Keep. For more information, please contact tabruns@eiu.edu.

Dark Desires and Illicit Love: Sex and Sexuality in Renaissance Literature
English 3803: Renaissance and Seventeenth-Century British Literature

TR 12:30-1:45; CH 3609

Professor Caldwell

Office: Coleman 3050

Office Hours: T 1:45-3, R 10:45-12:30, 1:45-4 and by appointment

Email: mcaldwell@eiu.edu

"At last it seems to me I have come to understand why man is the most fortunate of creatures and consequently worthy of all admiration and what precisely is that rank which is his lot in the universal chain of Being -- a rank to be envied not only by brutes but even by the stars and by minds beyond this world. It is a matter past faith and a wondrous one. Why should it not be? For it is on this very account that man is rightly called and judged a great miracle and a wonderful creature indeed"

[In the Garden of Eden, God made] man as a creature of indeterminate nature and, assigning him a place in the middle of the world, addressed him thus: "Neither a fixed abode nor a form that is thine alone nor any function peculiar to thyself have we given thee, Adam, to the end that according to thy longing and according to thy judgment thou mayest have and possess what abode, what form, and what functions thou thyself shalt desire. The nature of all other beings is limited and constrained within the bounds of laws prescribed by Us. Thou, constrained by no limits, in accordance with thine own free will, in whose hand We have placed thee, shalt ordain for thyself the limits of thy nature. We have set thee at the world's center that thou mayest from thence more easily observe whatever is in the world. We have made thee neither of heaven nor of earth, neither mortal nor immortal, so that with freedom of choice and with honor, as though the maker and molder of thyself, thou mayest fashion thyself in whatever shape thou shalt prefer. Thou shalt have the power to degenerate into the lower forms of life, which are brutish. Thou shalt have the power, out of thy soul's judgment, to be reborn into the higher forms, which are divine."

~ Pico Della Mirandula, *Oration on the Dignity of Man* (1486)

Course Texts

Margaret Cavendish, *Convent of Pleasure* (electronic handout)

John Donne, *Works*

John Ford, *'Tis a Pity She's a Whore*

Christopher Marlowe, *Hero and Leander*

John Milton, *Comus*

Katherine Philips, selected poetry (electronic handout)

William Shakespeare, *Measure for Measure* and *Complete Poetry*

Philip Sidney, *Works*

Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, Book 3

John Webster, *Duchess of Malfi*

Course Purpose and Expectations

English 3803: Renaissance and Seventeenth-Century British Literature (3-0-3). An overview of humanism and ensuing literary, political, religious, and scientific revolutions in British literature, 1500-1660.

This course is designed to introduce you to several major British writers of the era known as the Renaissance or the Early Modern period. In particular, this semester we will read sixteenth- and seventeenth-century literature that gives us a greater understanding of Renaissance notions of emotion, desire, and sexuality. This semester, you will

- Develop your ability to read, analyze, and research early modern prose, poetry, and drama
- Hone your writing skills by developing papers and substantially revising them based on instructor feedback

- Develop your speaking and listening skills by engaging in lively and thought-provoking classroom discussion and debate
- Develop your understanding of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century history, culture, and science by learning about and researching historical and cultural context
- Familiarize yourself with the variety of electronic resources that scholars use to research early modern literature, e.g., *Early English Books Online* and the *Oxford English Dictionary*

While intellectually very rewarding, Early Modern literature is rarely easy for the twenty-first century reader. I advise you to give yourself ample time to do the reading carefully and not to flinch when confronted by difficulty—and rest assured, you *will* be confronted by difficulty. In order to rise above this challenge, you should be a proactive reader: when you don't understand something, re-read; consult textual notes, handbooks and online resources such as the *Oxford English Dictionary* (available through Booth Library's webpage); pose questions in class; and by all means come talk to me during office hours. Class time will be devoted to discussing the political, religious, and intellectual context of our readings and to addressing both their inherent complexities and our own confusion.

Be advised: in order to succeed in this class, it is *absolutely essential* for you do the reading, attend class with your text in hand, be actively engaged in class discussion, and take notes. Much of the material on the exams will come from class lectures and class discussion. Please use my office hours whenever you would like to discuss your papers or the works we are reading in the course.

Due to the thematic focus of this class, some of you may find the material difficult to read because of its content. While these texts will more than likely not seem graphic or overly explicit to our modern sensibilities, please be forewarned that at times we will be dealing with topics that are disturbing. If you have any concerns about the reading, please come talk to me about them.

Attendance and Class Participation

My attendance policy is simple: I expect you to attend every class. By attend, I mean not merely showing up as a warm body, but being intellectually present in the class. Bring your book; take notes; come with something to say and/or be prepared to respond thoughtfully to the matters that we discuss in class. After your 3rd absence, I will lower your final grade by 1/3 a letter grade for each subsequent attendance. If there is a reason why you must miss class for an extended period of time, you should consult with me early about your absences. I reserve the right to count you absent for behavior inappropriate and unbecoming a college classroom including, but not limited to, texting, chatting, or any irrelevant use of technology in class, reading materials irrelevant to class, consistent tardiness, sleeping, or any other behavior that is disrespectful to your peers.

If you miss class on the day of the mid-term or final exam, you will not be permitted to make up the exam unless you can document an excused absence.

Academic Integrity and Plagiarism

Students are expected to maintain principles of academic integrity and conduct as defined in EIU's Code of Conduct (<http://www.eiu.edu/judicial/studentconductcode.php>). The English Department's policy on plagiarism states the following:

“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 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 Office of Student Standards.”

To put this another way: plagiarism absolutely will not be tolerated in this class. Plagiarists will be reported to the Office of Student Standards and will fail the course. If you are confused about

plagiarism at any point in the semester, it is your responsibility to ask me about it before you turn in an assignment.

Information for 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 (OSDS). All accommodations must be approved through OSDS. Please stop by Ninth Street Hall, Room 2006, or call 217-581-6583.

Other Resources

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, test 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 9th Street Hall, Room 1302.

The Writing Center

You are always welcome to meet with me during office hours to discuss any writing issues. However, I also encourage you to use EIU's Writing Center located at 3110 Coleman Hall. This free service provides one-to-one conferences with writing center consultants who can help you with brainstorming, organizing, developing support, documenting your papers, and working with sentence-level concerns. The writing center is open to help any student from any major at any stage of his or her writing process, and its system of one-to-one conferences demonstrates value and respect for individual writers, all of whom can benefit from feedback about their works in progress. To schedule an appointment, you can drop by the center (3110 Coleman Hall) or you can call 581-5929.

EIU Writing Portfolio

If you wish to do so, you may submit any essay longer than 750 words to your Electronic Writing Portfolio by the end of the semester. Please see me for advise on revising your essay before submitting it.

Assignments, Grade Distribution and Scale

Assignment	Weight	Final Grading Scale	
Paper 1	10%	90-100	A
Biographical Exercise	5%	80-89	B
MLA Exercise	5%	70-79	C
Historical exercise	5%	60-69	D
Research paper (draft 1)	10%	59 and below	F
Research paper final draft	30%		
Midterm	10%		
Final Exam	25%		

****Enrollment in this course constitutes your agreement to the state of affairs outlined in this course policy and in the schedule of readings below. ****

Course Calendar

T Jan 13	Introduction: "Amphibian man" and Renaissance Humanism
R Jan 15	Sidney, <i>Astrophil and Stella</i>
T Jan 20	Sidney, <i>Astrophil and Stella</i> , Burton, <i>Anatomy of Melancholy</i> (e-handout)
R Jan 22	Marlowe, <i>Hero and Leander</i> (e-handout)
T Jan 27	Shakespeare, <i>Venus and Adonis</i>
R Jan 29	Shakespeare, <i>Rape of Lucrece</i>
T Feb 3	Donne, love poetry
R Feb 5	Donne, love poetry
T Feb 10	Philips, poetry (handout)
R Feb 12	Webster, <i>Duchess of Malfi</i> , Acts 1-2
T Feb 17	Webster, <i>Duchess of Malfi</i> Acts 3-4, Paper I due
R Feb 19	Webster, <i>Duchess of Malfi</i> , Act 5
T Feb 24	Ford, <i>'Tis a Pity She's a Whore</i> , Acts 1-3
R Feb 26	Ford, <i>'Tis a Pity</i> , Acts 4-5
T Mar 3	Shakespeare, <i>Measure for Measure</i> , Acts 1-2
R Mar 5	Shakespeare, <i>Measure for Measure</i> , Act 3
T Mar 10	Shakespeare, <i>Measure for Measure</i> , Acts 4-5, prospectus, biographical and historical exercise due
R Mar 12	Midterm exam
March 16-20	Spring Break
T Mar 24	Elizabeth I speeches (handout), Edmund Spenser, Introduction (p. vii-xxvii), "Letter to Raleigh" (p. 451-454), Proem to Book 3 (p. 3-5), and <i>FQ</i> , <i>canto I</i>
R Mar 26	<i>FQ</i> , cantos 2-3
T Mar 31	<i>FQ</i> , cantos 4-5
R Apr 2	<i>FQ</i> , <i>canto 6</i> , research paper (draft 1) due
T Apr 7	Conferences
R Apr 9	<i>FQ</i> , <i>canto 7-8</i>
Friday, April 10, English Studies Conference	
T Apr 14	<i>FQ</i> , <i>canto 9-10</i> , MLA exercise due
R Apr 16	<i>FQ</i> , <i>canto 11-12</i>
T Apr 21	Milton, <i>Comus</i> (e-handout)
R Apr 23	Milton, <i>Comus</i>
T Apr 28	Cavendish, <i>Convent of Pleasure</i> (e-handout)
R Apr 30	Cavendish, <i>Convent of Pleasure</i> , final paper due

Final Exam: Wednesday, May 6, 8:00 – 10:00 a.m.