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ENG 5003-001: Studies in Seventeenth-Century English Literature

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5003-001—Studies in Seventeenth-Century English Literature
Spring 2009

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T. 3:30-6:00
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Texts
Cerasano & Wynne-Davies, *Renaissance Drama by Women*
Tasso, *Aminta*
Andreini, *La Mirtilla*
Shakespeare, *As You Like It*
Sidney, *Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia*
Wroth, *Countess of Montgomery's Urania* (electronic text)

E-Reserves Packet

Note on Articles: If an article listed below for a report has an asterisk (*) beside it, it is available in full text form from MLA International Bibliography via Booth Library. Access and print these articles to add to your E-Reserves Packet.

Course Focus
This seminar, *Renaissance Forms and Reformation Concerns: Ritual and Resistance in English Literature*, will focus on a selection of texts from the English Renaissance through the Civil Wars, with emphasis on the earlier part of the period. We will be especially interested in literature produced from the beginning of the century through the reign of Charles I.

An overview of rule in the century is as follows:

The historical backdrop to the literature of this period involves the death of Queen Elizabeth (1533-1603, ruled 1558-1603), whose forty-five year reign continued to resonate; the accession of King James I (1566-1625, ruled 1603-1625); the accession and beheading of his son Charles I (1600-1649, ruled 1625-1649); two civil wars (1642-1645 and 1648-1649). This period is followed by the Interregnum (1649-1660), which was divided as follows: Commonwealth (1649-1653), Protectorate under Oliver Cromwell (1599-1658; ruled 1653-1658), Protectorate under his son Richard Cromwell (1626-1712, ruled 1658-abdicated 1659), and Commonwealth (1659-1660). The next part of the century includes the accession of King Charles II (1630-1685, ruled 1660-1685); the accession of his brother James II (1633-1701, ruled 1685-abdicated 1688); and, finally, the accession of James II's daughter Mary II (1662-1694, ruled 1689-1694) and her husband/first cousin William III (1650-1702, ruled 1689-1702).
Familiarity with key facets of these chaotic periods of rule is critical to understanding the literary climate of the times. Broadly considered, issues of religion and fears of tyranny served as catalysts for England’s instability and figured largely in the literature of writers who wrote to please patrons of particular religious and political persuasions. The conflicts between Catholic and Protestant Reform thought of the sixteenth century intensified during the seventeenth century as Puritans pressed for further reformation of the English Church that they feared was growing ever more Catholic. Moreover, issues of gender in general and the ways in which gender was performed by nobles and royals were intensely debated in society and duly appeared in the literature of the times. Finally, court cultures and the systems of patronage inherent to each were matrices for much literary production.

We find that writers during this tumultuous period both cling to ritual of various kinds (including forms and styles of the earlier Renaissance period) and resist traditions with equal vehemence. During the semester, we will explore this pattern of ritual and resistance in poetry, prose, drama, and masques from the period.

Policies
--The English Department statement on plagiarism stipulates that 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 assignment of a grade of F for the assigned essay and a grade of NC for the course, and to report the incident to the Judicial Affairs Office.
--Hand papers in on time. If you're having problems, let me know. Papers a week or more late will not be accepted at all. Also plan to show up for exams. Again, if you have problems, let me know. You will have no more than one week to make up an exam, and the make-up exam will be different from the one given during class.
--If you have a documented disability and wish to receive academic accommodations, please contact the Coordinator of the Office of Disability Services (581-6583) as soon as possible.
--Be prepared for class. You'll get a lot more out of class discussions if you are participating in them, and I'll notice if you do not seem prepared to participate.

Requirements

2 exams: 20% each of final grade 40%
2 presentations with reports: 10% each of final grade 20%
1 seminar paper: 30% of final grade 30%
1 seminar paper presentation: 10% of final grade 10%

The exams will be short answer and essay, written outside of class. They are to be word-processed.
The report presentations will be approximately 10 minutes long; the reports will be word-processed. These assignments will be based on your reading of secondary materials pertaining to our course topics.

The paper topic will be chosen from subjects that arise in class, regarding the assigned authors and texts. You will use MLA Parenthetical Style with Works Cited. It will be a 15-20 page study that utilizes well-researched secondary sources and demonstrates good understanding of your primary sources. A strong reliance on internet sites is discouraged.

For your paper presentation, you will have approximately 15 minutes; thus, you may have to edit your paper to a length suitable for a conference paper.

**Tentative Schedule**

**Note:** Readings may be shifted around during the semester to accommodate the class discussion.

**Jan. 13**—Introduction to the course: background on the period. Discuss and assign reports. For more background, read “The Early Seventeenth Century” in *Norton* (1209).

**Note:** Sonnet handouts and emailed copies of Wroth’s *Urania*.

**Poetry: Sixteenth-Century Influence/Seventeenth-Century Incarnations/Innovations**

**Jan. 20**—Sonnet handouts; in *Norton*, Shakespeare (1028-1043); background on Philip Sidney (909-911) and a few sonnets (917-919); Mary Wroth (1422-1423; 1428-1432). Here we are interested in beginning to observe Renaissance style and content adapted in the early seventeenth century.

**Reports:**


**Jan. 27**—Poetry, Patronage, and Religion: Mary Sidney Herbert (957-964); Aemilia Lanyer (1281-1292); Ben Jonson (1397-1402, 1408); John Donne (1236, 1240-1248, 1254-1256, 1271); Rachel Speght (1556-1560); George Herbert (1597-1599); Henry Vaughan (1622-1623).

**Reports:**

Drama: The Pastoral Influence

Feb. 3—Tasso’s *Aminta*, Andreini’s *La Mirtilla*, and Shakespeare’s *As You Like It*. 
Note: We want to be able to trace influences of the pastoral in these plays, leading up to Wroth’s *Love’s Victory* (Cerasano and Wynne-Davies) for next time. We also want to be aware that *Aminta* was performed well into the 17th century, as was *La Mirtilla*.

Reports:

Feb. 10—Wroth’s *Love’s Victory* (Cerasano and Wynne-Davies) and Shakespeare’s *Twelfth Night* (1601) *(Norton)*. Here, with Wroth, we finish our consideration of the pastoral in drama and move on to echoes of the 17th-Century religious controversy in Shakespeare’s play. *Twelfth Night* also sets the scene, so to speak for the controversies of gender in the up-coming pamphlets we will read.

Reports:

Feb. 17—*Twelfth Night*—film.

Pamphlets: A Look at Gender Wars in Popular Culture

Reports:


Mar. 3—Exam One (due at next meeting).

Fiction: The Romance Revisited

Mar. 10—Sidney’s Arcadia as the groundwork for Urania and Anna Weamys’ Continuation.

Reports:


Mar. 17—Spring Break

Mar. 24—Mary Wroth’s Urania (You have been sent this text electronically).

Report:


Mar. 31—Wrap up Arcadia, Urania, and briefly look at Weamys’ Continuation (E-Reserves Packet)

Report:

*--Elizabeth A. Spiller, “Speaking for the Dead: King Charles, Anna Weamys, and the Commemorations of Sir Philip Sidney’s Arcadia,” Criticism 42.2 (2000): 229--.

The Seventeenth-Century Court Scene

Apr. 7—The court of Queen Anne and Ben Jonson’s Masque of Blackness (Norton)

Report:

Apr. 14—The court of Henrietta Maria and John Milton’s *Arcades* and *Comus / A Maske* (E-Reserves Packet).  
Report:  

Apr. 21—Seminar Paper Presentations  
Apr. 28—Seminar Paper Presentation; Exam Two (note—due at final exam meeting)  
Final: Thurs., May 7, 12:30-2:30