

English 2273. X1 - Sixteenth-century Literature

Utopia, The Book of Martyrs, A Defence of Poesie, The Tragicall History of Doctor Faustus, The Faerie Queene

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Course website: <http://socrates.acadiau.ca/courses/engl/rcunningham/2273/index.php>

COURSE DESCRIPTION

In this course students will read Thomas More's political satire *Utopia*, selections from John Foxe's Protestant martyrology *Actes and Monuments of Matters Most Speciall and Memorable*, Sir Philip Sidney's critical statement *A Defence of Poesie*, the first three books of Edmund Spenser's epic poem *The Faerie Queene*, and Christopher Marlowe's drama *The Tragicall History of Doctor Faustus*.

TEXTS

Foxe, John. *The On-line Variorum Edition of the Book of Martyrs*.

Marlowe, Christopher. *The Tragicall History of Doctor Faustus*. Any edition, or use the e-text linked from the course website.

More, Sir Thomas. *Utopia*. Any edition, or use the e-texts provided through the course website.

Sidney, Sir Philip. *Defence of Poesie*. Any edition, or use the e-texts provided through the course website.

Spenser, Edmund. *The Faerie Queene*. Penguin Classics ed. sold in Acadia University Book Store.

Whether you use electronic or paper text, you are required to have a copy of the text with you in every class.

GRADES

A course grade of 0% will be recorded for any student who fails to submit any required assignment.

1 short essay intended to provoke class discussion	20%	as assigned
1 paper on any of the course texts	40%	April 1
Attendance	15%	Daily
1 final exam	25%	TBD
Total	100%	

Essay:

In *The Observing Self: Rediscovering the Essay* Graham Good writes "The essay presupposes an independent observer, a specific object, and a sympathetic reader" (4). You be the independent observer, one of the assigned texts for class will be your specific object, and if you write as though you care about yourself, your subject, and your reader I and your classmates will be your sympathetic readers.

Good also writes that "The essay offers personal experience, not disciplinary expertise" (5), and

this is what I will be looking for in your essay. “The essayist’s authority is not [her or] his learning, but [her or] his experience. . . . Reading and thinking are themselves felt as experiences mixed in with other experiences” (7). The essay, in other words, is a record of the essayist’s (i.e. your) experience. In this case, I want to see a record of your experience of reading, thinking about, and making sense of your subject.

As an essayist, you should display a fascination with particularities. Attend to details.

Submit your essay electronically in rich text format (rtf). Upon submission it will be posted—before it is marked and graded—to the class website where everyone will be able to read it. Weak efforts should embarrass you, so be sure to submit polished, corrected, fully revised work.

Research Paper:

The length of your research paper is not particularly important. A long poorly argued paper will earn a lower grade than a shorter paper with a clear thesis, strong evidence, and convincing reasoning. Having said that, I suspect any topic you can discuss fully in fewer than six pages is probably too insignificant a topic to earn a high grade. Let the topic determine the paper's length for you. If you try to add extraneous material to make the paper longer, it will read like a two (or more) part paper and its lack of coherence will annoy your reader and when you know your reader is assigning a grade to the paper you do not want to annoy her or him.

The topic should address one of the term's major works, or one of the authors those works. You should generate a topic of some interest to yourself because writing on a topic that bores you will cause you to write a boring paper that bores your reader too. (See above re: annoying your reader.) The topic should not be trivial (e.g. an example of allegory in *The Faerie Queene*) but neither should it be too ambitious (e.g. Christopher Marlowe is a better dramatist than William Shakespeare) nor impossible to prove (e.g. More was thinking about Plato's *Republic* when he wrote *Utopia*). By contrast, you could write a paper about Spenser's use of allegory to demonstrate a Christian virtue, Marlowe's Faustus as an attempt to subvert (or to endorse) Protestantism, or the influence of the *Republic* on *Utopia*.

In addition to the literary text (also referred to as the primary text) you are required to read, consider, and incorporate into your paper work (these works are referred to as secondary texts) by critics and/or theorists who have written on the primary text or on your topic. Use the MLA Bibliography, accessible through the Vaughan Memorial Library website, to find secondary sources. You can also find secondary sources on the Luminarium website. You can also use the library catalogue to find relevant books and journals here at Acadia. Just as there is no page count required for this assignment, so there is no firm number of secondary sources required. I would suggest you use the MLA Bibliography to find out where the critical conversation on the work or topic you find most interesting has been most lively and most interesting in the past five to ten years, then read a couple of articles from within that sample of secondary texts to help you refine your paper topic. Once you've determined a topic (e.g. Faustus and Protestantism) then you can develop a thesis (e.g. Faustus presents an argument in favour of Protestantism by offering a refutation of Catholicism). At that point, you can refine your search and use secondary sources both as evidence themselves, and as directions toward evidence within the primary text.

At that point you are ready to write, and you should get started as early as possible in order to revise the paper as many times as you can before you submit it on April 1. English 2273 is a literature class, not a writing class; therefore I will not waste time trying to make sense of poorly constructed sentences or paragraphs when I am reading your research paper. You should catch your own mistakes before submission. If you don't feel confident you can do so, then make arrangements with someone else to

trade papers long enough before April 1 to enable you to correct the mistakes they find in your paper and to allow them to do likewise with their own paper. But bear in mind that your grade is more important to you than it is to them, so the final, extremely careful reader should be you.

To write a good paper you must write at least two introductions. As a writer, you need to write an introduction to get yourself going. But your reader should never see that, writer's, introduction. You should write the reader's introduction after you have finished the paper. You can't possibly know what your conclusion will be before you list and then reason your way through the evidence, and you can't possibly predict that conclusion in the writer's introduction. So you'll have to write a second introduction, the reader's introduction, after—and it can be written only after—you have written the rest of the paper, especially the conclusion. I recommend cutting and pasting from the conclusion into the reader's introduction.

Final Exam:

The final exam will test your knowledge of everything we cover this term. You will be responsible for what we discuss in class, but also for everything assigned for reading beyond class. The best way to study for the exam is to attend class every day, pay close attention, and ask a lot of questions.

Attendance:

ATTENDANCE IS REQUIRED, not because you might miss something if you're not in class (you will) but more importantly because your insight might help others realize something important about the work being discussed and your ignorance might help others realize that reading for comprehension is hard work, and reading and understanding sixteenth-century literature is really hard work.

“Attendance is required” means that missing three classes will reduce your 15% attendance grade to 8%, and missing more than 3 classes will reduce it to 0.

Attendance includes bringing a copy of the text with you for every class.

SYLLABUS

Monday	Wednesday
Jan. 5: Intro to course	Jan. 7: Intro to c16th literature & history
Jan. 11: <i>Utopia</i>	Jan. 13: <i>Utopia</i>
Jan. 18: <i>Utopia</i>	Jan. 20: Foxe's <i>Book of Martyrs</i>
Jan. 25: Foxe's <i>Book of Martyrs</i>	Jan. 27: Foxe's <i>Book of Martyrs</i>
Feb. 2: Foxe's <i>Book of Martyrs</i>	Feb. 4: Foxe's <i>Book of Martyrs</i>
Feb. 9: Sidney's <i>Defense</i>	Feb. 11: Sidney's <i>Defense</i>
Feb. 23: Intro to drama; Marlowe; <i>Faust</i>	Feb. 25: <i>The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus</i>
Mar. 2: <i>The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus</i>	Mar. 4: Intro to <i>The Faerie Queene</i> and allegory
Mar. 9: <i>The Faerie Queene</i> , Book 1	Mar. 11: <i>The Faerie Queene</i> , Book 1

Mar. 16: <i>The Faerie Queene</i> , Book 1	Mar. 18: <i>The Faerie Queene</i> , Book 2
Mar. 23: <i>The Faerie Queene</i> , Book 2	Mar. 25: <i>The Faerie Queene</i> , Book 2
Mar. 30: <i>The Faerie Queene</i> , Book 3	April 1: <i>The Faerie Queene</i> , Book 3
April 6: <i>The Faerie Queene</i> , Book 3	April 8: Exam planning