# UVU UTAH VALLEY UNIVERSITY™

# Master Course Syllabus

*yzFor additional course information, including prerequisites, corequisites, and course fees, please refer to the Catalog: https://catalog.uvu.edu/*

**Semester:** Spring
**Course Prefix:** ENGL
**Course Title:** British Literature Before 1800

**Year:** 2025
**Course and Section #:** 2610-01
**Credits:** 3

## Course Description

Presents a survey of British literature with emphasis on the most important works of the best writers from 450-1800 A.D. Introduces Old English, Middle English, Renaissance, and Neo-Classical British literature. Uses discussion, lecture, films, videos, tests, and papers.

## Course Attributes

This course has the following attributes:
☐ General Education Requirements
☐ Global/Intercultural Graduation Requirements
☐ Writing Enriched Graduation Requirements
☐ Discipline Core Requirements in Program
☒ Elective Core Requirements in Program
☐ Open Elective
Other:

## Instructor Information

**Instructor Name:** Dr. Stephen Fullmer

## Student Learning Outcomes

1. **Historical Contextualization**
   Students will identify and explain the historical, social, and cultural developments that influenced British literature from the Anglo-Saxon period to the 18th century.

2. **Genre and Form**
   Students will recognize and differentiate major literary genres, styles, and forms such as epic poetry, lyric poetry, drama, and prose within the historical timeline.

3. **Canonical Knowledge**
   Students will demonstrate knowledge of key authors, texts, and movements, including works by Chaucer, Shakespeare, Milton, Swift, and other significant figures in British literature.

4. **Thematic Exploration**
   Students will analyze recurring themes and motifs, such as heroism, religion, gender, class, and human nature, in texts spanning the surveyed periods.

5. **Language Development**
   Students will evaluate the evolution of the English language from Old English through Middle English to Early Modern English and its impact on literary expression.

6. **Critical Thinking and Interpretation**
   Students will apply critical approaches to interpret texts, engaging with historical, philosophical, and aesthetic dimensions of British literature.

7. **Research and Argumentation**
   Students will conduct scholarly research and produce clear, well-supported written and oral arguments that engage with primary texts and relevant secondary sources.

8. **Contemporary Connections**
   Students will assess the relevance of early British literature to contemporary issues, recognizing its influence on modern literature, culture, and thought.

## *Course Materials and Texts*
- *Norton Anthology of English Literature: The Middle Ages*
- *Norton Anthology of English Literature: The Sixteenth Century and Early Seventeenth Century*
- *Norton Anthology of English Literature: The Restoration and the Eighteenth Century*

## *Course Requirements*

**Course Assignments, Assessments, and Grading Policy**
- Major Writing Assignments:
  - Analysis Paper on *Beowulf* (50 points)
  - Analysis Paper on *The Canterbury Tales* (50 points)
  - Analysis Paper on *Macbeth* (50 points)
  - Analysis Paper on *Paradise Lost* (50 points)
  - Analysis Paper on *Gulliver's Travels* (50 points)
  - Research Paper (100 points)
- Various Reading Responses: Short responses to assigned readings (5 points each)
- Various Pop Quizzes (5 points each)
- Group Work: Essence Project #1 *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* (20 points)
- Group Work: Essence Project #2 *Doctor Faustus* (20 points)
- Group Work: Essence Project #3 *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (20 points)
- Casting Project: Any work from the Middle Ages
- Casting Project: Any character from *The Canterbury Tales*
- Unit One Examination #1 (100 points)
- Unit Two Examination #2 (100 points)
- Unit Three Examination #3 (200 points)

A = 93-100    B- = 80-82.9    D+ = 67-69.9
A- = 90-92.9   C+ = 77-79.9   D = 63-66.9
B+ = 87-89.9  C = 73-76.9     D- = 60-62.9
B = 83-86.9   C- = 70-72.9    E = 0-59.9

**Required or Recommended Reading Assignments**
All required readings use chapters from the course text that align with the lectures below.

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**General Description of the Subject Matter of Each Lecture or Discussion**
Week 1: The Middle Ages
- Introduction to Bede and Old English
- Read *Beowulf* = what makes an Epic Poem?
- Read *The Dream of the Rood* = The elements of a Heroic Quest
- Introduction to the Heroic Tradition in Old English Literature
- Explore the historical and cultural context of *Beowulf*, focusing on the epic's reflection of Anglo-Saxon values, the heroic code, and oral storytelling traditions.
- Pagan and Christian Interplay
- Investigate the fusion of pagan traditions and Christian themes, focusing on how they shape the narrative and characters.

Week 2: The first major English text: *Beowulf*
- *Beowulf*: a heroic quest or epic quest
- The various elements of an epic poem
- How to read an Old English Text
- Explore various themes of Heroism, Honor, and Mortality
- Examine the key themes of *Beowulf*, such as heroism, loyalty, fate, and the tension between pagan and Christian elements in the text
- Epic Heroism and the Warrior Code
- Examine *Beowulf* exploring themes of heroism, loyalty, and the warrior code.
- Monsters and the Supernatural.
- Casting #1 Due

Week 3: *Beowulf* and *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*
- *Beowulf*: Why Grendel and Why Grendel's Mother = the nameless matriarch
- Examining the process of hybris
- Discuss the significance of Grendel, Grendel's mother, and the dragon, analyzing their symbolic roles in the epic
- Old English vs. Middle English
- The Chivalric Ideal
- Explore the chivalric code and its challenges through Sir Gawain's trials and encounters with the Green Knight.
- Response #1 Due

Week 4: *Beowulf* and *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*
- So many battles and so many wins: Beowulf as anti-hero
- How Sir Gawain is like Beowulf, but how Beowulf is not like Sir Gawain: will the real epic hero please stand…exploring various aspects of the epic quest
- *The Hobbit* is taken directly from *Beowulf*. Talk about AI generated Tolkien?
- Analysis Paper Due *Beowulf*
- Nature, Magic, and the Supernatural

- Examine the interplay of natural and supernatural elements, reflecting medieval perceptions of the unknown.

Week 5: The Final Touches on an Epic Poem: *Beowulf* vs. *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*
- The Chivalric Code and Arthurian Romance
- Investigate the ideals of chivalry and the representation of knighthood, courtly behavior, and loyalty in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*.
- Tests, Temptation, and Moral Complexity
- Essence #1 Due
- Analyze the trials faced by Sir Gawain, including the themes of temptation, truth, and human imperfection, with a focus on the symbolism of the Green Knight and the girdle.
- Unit One Examination Due

Week 6: England Mythology: *Beowulf, Sir Gawain, The Canterbury Tales*
- *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* and the duties of the Prince analogy
- The movement from Old English to Middle English
- Symbolism and Moral Complexity
- Analyze the symbolic significance of the Green Knight, the girdle, and Gawain's moral struggles.
- The super-supernatural.
- The extreme use of the supernatural in Middle English texts.
- Introduce Geoffrey Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales* as a social and literary snapshot of late 14th-century England, focusing on the significance of the pilgrimage and the variety of tales and characters.
- Response #2 Due

Week 7: Faith in Conflict: Examining *The Canterbury Tales*: Yes, a Rooster can talk
- The structure of the Tales
- Pilgrimage as a Narrative Framework
- Storytelling as a Social Lens
- Explore the pilgrimage as a narrative framework, examining how Chaucer portrays medieval society through his characters.
- Satire and Social Critique
- Discuss Chaucer's use of humor and irony to critique social norms, the Church, and human flaws.
- Thematic Diversity
- Analyze the variety of themes, such as love, power, and morality, within individual tales like "The Wife of Bath's Tale" and "The Pardoner's Tale."
- Religious Tension
- The Knight's Tale versus the Miller's Tale: Exploring Chaucer's Bawdy
- Casting #2 Due

Week 8: Women and Power; Men and Corruption; then there is *Everyman*
- Analysis Paper Due *The Canterbury Tales*
- The Wife of Bath Tale
- The Morality Play Tradition

- Introduce *Everyman* as a morality play, focusing on its allegorical representation of spiritual life and death.
- Death and Judgment
- Examine the inevitability of death and the play's call for repentance and preparation for the afterlife.
- Good Deeds and Redemption
- Analyze the central role of Good Deeds and the message of salvation through righteous living
- Satire, Social Critique, and Storytelling
- Explore Chaucer's use of satire and humor to critique societal norms, the Church, and human behavior, using key tales such as "The Miller's Tale" or "The Wife of Bath's Tale" as case studies.
- Examining Mary Tudor, Lady Jane Grey, Mary Queen of Scots, Elizabeth the I

Week 9: The Rise and Fall of Elizabethan Witches and Witchcraft
- Why does every Shakespeare play have the word "witch" "witches" or "witchcraft" in it?
- The Elizabethan 5 act structure of a play versus the Greeks 3 act structure of a play.
- King James and his *Daemonologie*
- Ambition, Power, and Tragic Downfall
- Renaissance Individualism and Overreach
- Analyze Faustus as a tragic figure embodying Renaissance ambition and the pursuit of forbidden knowledge.
- Theological Themes of Sin and Damnation
- Explore the Christian moral lessons about sin, repentance, and salvation in Marlowe's play.
- The Supernatural and the Faustian Bargain
- Essence #2 Due
- Discuss the role of Mephistopheles, magic, and Faustus's pact with the devil.
- Analysis Paper Due *Macbeth*

Week 10: Witchcraft and Science
- *Macbeth, Daemonologie, Doctor Faustus, Paradise Lost*
- Exploring the Nature of Evil
- Explore the role of the supernatural in *Macbeth*, including the witches, prophecy, and the theme of fate versus free will in determining human destiny.
- How imagery and symbolism work together to create unity
- Analyze Shakespeare's *Macbeth* as a tragedy of unchecked ambition, focusing on Macbeth's descent into tyranny and the moral and psychological consequences of his actions.
- Supernatural Forces and Fate in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*
- Love, Transformation, and the Supernatural
- Discuss the interplay of love, magic, and identity in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, focusing on the themes of transformation and the blurred boundaries between reality and illusion.
- Comedy, Chaos, and Resolution
- Examine Shakespeare's comedic structure, including the use of mistaken identities, the role of the fairies, and the resolution of conflicts in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.
- Unit Two Examination Due

Week 11: Introduce the Sixteenth Century

- Doctor Faustus versus Macbeth
- Renaissance Ambition and the Faustian Bargain
- Delve into Christopher Marlowe's Doctor Faustus, focusing on the tension between Renaissance ideals of human potential and the moral consequences of overreaching ambition as well as the text's exploration of damnation and redemption.
- John Milton
- The Epic Tradition and Milton's Vision of Creation and Fall
- Discuss John Milton's *Paradise Lost* as a reimagining of the classical epic, emphasizing its portrayal of the Biblical story of creation, rebellion, and humanity's fall.
- Examine the complexity of Satan's character in *Paradise Lost*, debating whether he serves as a tragic antihero, a villain, or both, while considering Milton's theological intentions.
- Analysis Paper Due *Paradise Lost*

Week 12: The Early Seventeenth Century…Tensions between Rationalism and Religion
- The Fall of Man and Free Will
- Analyze Milton's portrayal of Adam and Eve's fall and its theological implications about human free will.
- Satan's Character and the Nature of Evil
- Examine Satan's role as a complex and charismatic figure, debating his portrayal as hero or villain.
- Milton's Epic Style and Vision
- Perspective, Power, and the Human Condition
- Explore how Swift uses Gulliver's shifting perspectives to question notions of power, civilization, and the flaws of human nature.
- Explore the relationship between Enlightenment rationalism and traditional religious beliefs, including debates over deism and atheism.

Week 13: Satire and Social Critique
- Discuss Milton's use of epic conventions and his poetic ambition to "justify the ways of God to men."
- Analyze Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* as a satirical critique of politics, society, and human folly, focusing on key episodes such as the Lilliputians and Houyhnhnms.
- Satirical Critique of Society
- Explore themes of perspective and cultural relativism, focusing on key episodes like Lilliput and Brobdingnag.
- Analyze Swift's satire of politics, human nature, and Enlightenment ideals through Gulliver's adventures.
- Perspectives on Power and Civilization

Week 14: The Role of Print Culture and Public Discourse
- The Human Condition and Misanthropy
- Discuss the rise of coffeehouses, periodicals, and other public spaces as hubs for intellectual exchange and debate.
- Examine the influence of print culture, including newspapers and pamphlets, in spreading Enlightenment ideas to a growing literate public.
- Highlight examples such as Joseph Addison and Richard Steele's *The Spectator* which brought Enlightenment thought to the middle class.

- Discuss Swift's critique of humanity through the Houyhnhnms and Yahoos, debating his ultimate view of human potential.

Week 15: The Seventeenth Century and Early Eighteenth Century
- Analyze how literature of the period incorporated Enlightenment ideals, focusing on clarity, logic, and order in style and structure.
- Explore works that emphasize rational discourse, such as Alexander Pope's *An Essay on Man*, which seeks to reconcile reason and faith.
- Investigate how authors used literature to discuss human nature, ethics, and the role of reason in addressing life's challenges.
- Analyze how authors navigated these tensions, with works that sought to harmonize faith and reason or critique religious orthodoxy.
- Use examples like John Locke's *Letter Concerning Toleration* or the debates surrounding scientific discoveries and their theological implications.
- Research Paper Due
- Analysis Paper Due *Gulliver's Travels*


Week 16: Philosophical Foundations of Enlightenment Thought
- Examine the key philosophical ideas of Enlightenment thinkers such as John Locke, Isaac Newton, and David Hume.
- Discuss the emphasis on reason, empiricism, and the scientific method as alternatives to tradition and religious dogma.
- Highlight how these intellectual movements shaped societal views on knowledge, governance, and morality.
- Essence #3 Due
- Final Exam… Unit Three Examination Due

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# *Required Course Syllabus Statements*

**Generative AI**
The UVU English department is also keeping up with artificial intelligence chat bots such as ChatGPT (and many other stand-alone programs or plug-ins). Believing the technology is here to stay, and will only grow, we feel it's important to understand both its strengths and limitations. AI is already proving its usefulness in brainstorming writing ideas, simplifying complex topics, and assisting with research. We believe AI is a tool with potential usefulness for writers. However, AI is also fraught with serious issues. It possesses accuracy problems while simultaneously sounding very confident about its incorrectness. It also frequently generates fake citations and quotations. It cannot understand the complexities and contexts of human communication. Finally, the way AI is trained on other texts poses several ethical questions about copyright and intellectual theft of property (along with uncritically inheriting the biases of the texts it's trained on).

To be clear, copying the exact wording of an AI chatbot is considered plagiarism and means that a student will be held accountable for violating academic integrity.

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**Using Remote Testing Software**
☒ This course does not use remote testing software.

☐ This course uses remote testing software. Remote test-takers may choose their remote testing locations. Please note, however, that the testing software used for this may conduct a brief scan of remote test-takers' immediate surroundings, may require use of a webcam while taking an exam, may require the microphone be on while taking an exam, or may require other practices to confirm academic honesty. Test-takers therefore shall have no expectation of privacy in their test-taking location during, or immediately preceding, remote testing. If a student strongly objects to using test-taking software, the student should contact the instructor at the beginning of the semester to determine whether alternative testing arrangements are feasible. Alternatives are not guaranteed.

## *Required University Syllabus Statements*

### Accommodations/Students with Disabilities

Students needing accommodations due to a permanent or temporary disability, pregnancy or pregnancy-related conditions may contact UVU [Accessibility Services](#) at [accessibilityservices@uvu.edu](#) or 801-863-8747.

Accessibility Services is located on the Orem Campus in BA 110.

Deaf/Hard of Hearing students requesting ASL interpreters or transcribers can contact Accessibility Services to set up accommodations. Deaf/Hard of Hearing services can be contacted at [DHHservices@uvu.edu](#)

DHH is located on the Orem Campus in BA 112.

### Academic Integrity

At Utah Valley University, faculty and students operate in an atmosphere of mutual trust. Maintaining an atmosphere of academic integrity allows for free exchange of ideas and enables all members of the community to achieve their highest potential. Our goal is to foster an intellectual atmosphere that produces scholars of integrity and imaginative thought. In all academic work, the ideas and contributions of others must be appropriately acknowledged and UVU students are expected to produce their own original academic work.

Faculty and students share the responsibility of ensuring the honesty and fairness of the intellectual environment at UVU. Students have a responsibility to promote academic integrity at the university by not participating in or facilitating others' participation in any act of academic dishonesty. As members of the academic community, students must become familiar with their [rights and responsibilities](#). In each course, they are responsible for knowing the requirements and restrictions regarding research and writing, assessments, collaborative work, the use of study aids, the appropriateness of assistance, and other issues. Likewise, instructors are responsible to clearly state expectations and model best practices.

Further information on what constitutes academic dishonesty is detailed in [UVU Policy 541: *Student Code of Conduct*](#).

**Equity and Title IX**

Utah Valley University does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age (40 and over), disability, veteran status, pregnancy, childbirth, or pregnancy-related conditions, citizenship, genetic information, or other basis protected by applicable law, including Title IX and 34 C.F.R. Part 106, in employment, treatment, admission, access to educational programs and activities, or other University benefits or services. Inquiries about nondiscrimination at UVU may be directed to the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights or UVU's Title IX Coordinator at 801-863-7999 – TitleIX@uvu.edu – 800 W University Pkwy, Orem, 84058, Suite BA 203.

**Religious Accommodation**

UVU values and acknowledges the array of worldviews, faiths, and religions represented in our student body, and as such provides supportive accommodations for students. Religious belief or conscience broadly includes religious, non-religious, theistic, or non-theistic moral or ethical beliefs as well as participation in religious holidays, observances, or activities. Accommodations may include scheduling or due-date modifications or make-up assignments for missed class work.

To seek a religious accommodation, a student must provide written notice to the instructor and the Director of Accessibility Services at accessibilityservices@uvu.edu. If the accommodation relates to a scheduling conflict, the notice should include the date, time, and brief description of the difficulty posed by the conflict. Such requests should be made as soon as the student is aware of the prospective scheduling conflict.

While religious expression is welcome throughout campus, UVU also has a specially dedicated space for meditation, prayer, reflection, or other forms of religious expression.