

ENGL 43A: SURVEY OF BRITISH LITERATURE I: BEOWULF TO THE LATE 18TH CENTURY

Foothill College Course Outline of Record

Heading	Value
Effective Term:	Fall 2025
Units:	5
Hours:	5 lecture per week (60 total per quarter)
Prerequisite:	Eligibility for college-level composition (ENGL C1000 or C1000H or ESLL 26), as determined by college assessment or other appropriate method.
Advisory:	Successful completion of college-level composition (ENGL C1000 or C1000H or ESLL 26) or equivalent; not open to students with credit in ENGL 43AH, 46A or 46B.
Degree & Credit Status:	Degree-Applicable Credit Course
Foothill GE:	Area 3: Arts & Humanities
Transferable:	CSU/UC
Grade Type:	Letter Grade (Request for Pass/No Pass)
Repeatability:	Not Repeatable

Student Learning Outcomes

- Students will be able to demonstrate knowledge of major writers, key texts, and documents of British literature from Beowulf to the late 18th century.
- Students will be able to identify major literary genres and explain the development of literary forms during these periods.
- Students will demonstrate, in writing, application of relevant critical and theoretical frameworks to evaluate the literature.

Description

A survey of literature spanning the earliest Old English texts, Middle English period, Early Modern period, through Neoclassicism, including early writers of the British colonies. Texts discussed and analyzed within historical, sociocultural, philosophical, political, legal, and aesthetic contexts, integrating theories of race and ethnicity, gender and sexuality, socioeconomic class and labor, slavery, colonialism and immigration, religion/spirituality, and ability.

Course Objectives

The student will be able to:

1. Demonstrate knowledge of major writers, key texts, and documents of British literature from the Old English period through the late 18th century

2. Identify major literary genres, and trace the emergence and development of literary forms during these periods
3. Apply relevant critical and theoretical frameworks to evaluate the literature within historical, (multi/inter)cultural, and philosophical contexts
4. Demonstrate orally and in college-level writing an analytical understanding of the literary texts
5. Demonstrate appropriate formatting and documentation

Course Content

1. Major writers and texts
 - a. Old English texts (e.g., *Caedmon's Hymn*, *Beowulf*)
 - b. Middle English period (e.g., Chaucer, the Gawain poet, de France, Kempe)
 - c. Early Modern period (e.g., Shakespeare, Spenser)
 - d. Neoclassical writers
 - i. Restoration (e.g., Milton, Dryden, Behn)
 - ii. Augustan Age (e.g., Swift, Pope, Defoe)
 - iii. Age of Reason (e.g., Burney, Cugoano, Equiano, Johnson, Sancho)
2. Literary genres and forms
 - a. Old English forms, including elegies, heroic narratives, alliterative verse
 - b. Middle English forms, e.g., the lyric, verse romance
 - c. Early modern sonnet and drama, blank verse
 - d. Early British slave narratives
 - e. Metaphysical poetry
 - f. Heroic couplet
 - g. Rise of the novel
3. Relevant critical and theoretical frameworks
 - a. Historical contexts, including dominant and marginalized ethical, philosophical, political, religious, social, and aesthetic perspectives in the literature of this period, including issues around immigration, colonization, and British national and ethnic identities
 - b. Gender studies
 - c. Queer theories; sexuality studies
 - d. Psychological theories (Freudian, Jungian)
 - e. Marxian and other socioeconomic frameworks, including those around early British slavery
 - f. Theories of race and ethnicity, including critical race theory
 - g. Postcolonial, anticolonial, neocolonial studies
 - h. Formalist theories
4. Analytical understanding of the literary texts
 - a. Class discussion regarding analytical reading of literary texts
 - b. Composition of literary analysis essays on the literary texts
 - c. Recognition of linguistic differences between Old, Middle, and Early Modern English
5. Formatting and documentation
 - a. Modern Language Association (MLA)
 - b. American Psychological Association (APA)

Lab Content

Not applicable.

Special Facilities and/or Equipment

1. When taught on campus, no special facility or equipment needed.
2. When taught online, ongoing access to computer with email and basic software capabilities, including relevant Learning Management Systems.

Method(s) of Evaluation

Methods of Evaluation may include but are not limited to the following:

Examinations as determined by instructor
Composition of at least one formal literary analysis
Informal assignments as determined by instructor
Class discussion
Formal presentations (at instructor's discretion)

Method(s) of Instruction

Methods of Instruction may include but are not limited to the following:

Reading and discussion of British literary texts
Lectures on the literature and its historical, social, and theoretical contexts
Group projects and presentations
Literary analysis, oral and written

Representative Text(s) and Other Materials

Black, Joseph, et al., editors. [The Broadview Anthology of British Literature, Volumes 1-3](#). 2021.

Abbott, Jean, Elaine Treharne, and Mateusz Fafinski, editors. [Beowulf for All](#). 2021.

Robinson, Bonnie J.. [British Literature I: Middle Ages to the Eighteenth Century and Neoclassicism \(available as OER\)](#). 2018.

Greenblatt, Stephen, editor. [The Norton Anthology of English Literature, 10th ed., Volumes A-C](#). 2018.

Ferrante, Joan M.. [To the Glory of Her Sex: Women's Roles in the Composition of Medieval Texts](#). 1997.

Overing, Gillian R.. [Language, Sign, and Gender in Beowulf](#). 1990.

Equiano, Olaudah. [The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, Or Gustavus Vassa, the African](#). 1789.

Cuogoano, Quobna Ottobah. [Thoughts and Sentiments on the Evil and Wicked Traffic of the Slavery and Commerce of the Human Species](#). 1787.

Sancho, Ignatius. [Letters of the Late Ignatius Sancho, an African](#). 1784.

As this course spans roughly the years AD 700-1789, many of the texts are contemporaneous with this time period (therefore older than five years); anthologies and theoretical texts are updated.

Robinson text available as OER: <https://oer.galileo.usg.edu/english-textbooks/17/>

Types and/or Examples of Required Reading, Writing, and Outside of Class Assignments

1. Reading from representative literary texts as assigned by instructor
2. Quizzes on reading comprehension of assigned literary texts
3. Individual and small group presentations on the literature and its historical, cultural, and theoretical contexts
4. Analytical and reader response journal assignments on readings
5. Formal literary analysis essay demonstrating comprehension and critical thinking

Discipline(s)

English