

Humanities University Readings

LIT 513 Early Modern Literature

Bedford Anthology of World Literature, Books 1-6. Boston: Bedford-St. Martins, 2004.

UNIT	WEEKS	TOPICS	READINGS
I		Overview	
	1	The Early Modern World Africa Europe: Renaissance and Reformation The Americas China India 18 th Century Europe: Enlightenment America: The Colonial Period India: Mughal Empire Japan: The Takagawa Era China: The Early Qing Dynasty	Book 3, 1-16 Book 3, 17-20 Book 3, 49-66 Book 3, 695-707 Book 3, 821-831 Book 3, 913-920 Book 4, 1-10 Book 4, 11-16 Book 4, 471-476 Book 4, 607-611 Book 4, 625-630 Book 4, 765-771
II		Renaissance and Reformation	
	2	Italian Renaissance Francesco Petrarch (1304-1374)	Book 3, 67-84
	Author	Please write a brief author biography.	
	Literary Analysis	Please provide a brief description for each poem: poetic form, subject, figurative language, and impression on the reader. For the "Ascent of Mount Ventoux," please describe the main idea and a key scene.	
	Literary Terms	Please briefly define the following literary terms: sonnet	
	Essay Topics	E1. How does "Ascent of Mount Ventoux" reflect Renaissance ideas about the nature of man. E2. Discuss the structure of the sonnet form developed by Petrarch and explain its significance. Please use examples. E3. What is the role of love in "Ascent of Mount Ventoux" and the sonnets in Canzoniere. E4. How are elements of nature related to strong emotions in Canzoniere?	
	Note	It is very useful to recognize the way that technology and world exploration affected the way that people saw themselves and their world. The printing press (developed in 1454) along with paper (adopted from the Chinese in the 14 th century) made it possible to disseminate ideas and information (including maps of discovered territories, records of ships' cargoes, copies of joint stock agreements) very easily and quickly, especially when compared with the medieval techniques of using parchment and hand-lettered script for documents.	
	3	French Renaissance Marguerite de Navarre (1492-1549) The Heptameron	Book 3, 180-184 Book 3, 185-208
	Author	Please write a brief author biography.	

Literary Analysis	Please provide a brief description of key stories and include any ideas and themes.	
Literary Terms	Please briefly define the following literary terms: story, chivalric romance, romance	
Essay Topics	E1: In Story Nine, how do the travelers view women and women's virtue? E2: In Story Ten, how do stories and romances from the past influence people in the present time? E3: In Story Ten, what are the views of male honor? E4: In Story Ten, what are the views of female honor?	
4	Michel de Montaigne (1533-1592) Essais	Book 3, 209-213 Book 3, 214-224
Author	Please write a brief author biography.	
Literary Analysis	Please provide a brief description of the main ideas found in the essay.	
Literary Terms	Please briefly define the following literary terms: essay, travel narrative, noble savage	
Essay Topics	E1: How did popular narratives about journeying to the Americas affect the world view of Montaigne and others? E2: Describe the structure of the essays written by Montaigne. E3: How does the "Noble Savage" concept appear in "On Cannibals"? E4: Describe Montaigne's humanistic and individualistic view of ethics and morality.	
Note	Montaigne's essay, "On Cannibals," is a reflection upon European expansion in the Americas and other parts of the world. As he looks at the reports of savagery and barbarism that were supposedly exhibited by the inhabitants of the other continents, he compares their behavior to the supposedly refined and civilized ways of the Europeans. Montaigne concludes that the truly barbaric are the Europeans because their aggression and warfare is motivated by greed and colonial expansion. He questions the idea that one culture could be superior over another, and examines the values that a society holds. Montaigne's essays are an example of rational inquiry, and represent excellence in the French Renaissance. The premier satirist of the French Renaissance was Rabelais, whose work, Gargantua and Pantagruel, ridicules and makes absurd the preoccupations of French society: the obsession with war, the corruption in the fields of law and medicine, and the failures of scholastic education, which is portrayed as overly rigid. Rabelais suggests that education should be open and tailored to the individual.	
5-6	Spanish Renaissance Miguel de Cervantes (1547-1616) Don Quixote	Book 3, 257-261 Book 3, 262-383
Author	Please write a brief author biography.	
Literary Analysis	Please provide a brief description of plot, themes, main characters, character analysis of Don Quixote, critical scene.	

Literary Terms	Please briefly define the following literary terms: melodrama, tragedy	
Essay Topics	E1. Why is Don Quixote considered to be the first novel? E2. Where does Don Quixote take place, and how does Cervantes ironize the Crusades through the setting? E3. How does Cervantes explore a tension between the echoes of values of the past (chivalric code, courtly love, and the present)? E4. Which, in the final analysis, is more attractive: a world with medieval codes, or one of chaos and disarray? Note: Satire was widely popular during the Renaissance because it allowed authors to criticize society and to do so in the vernacular (the national language rather than Latin). Satires were popular (Erasmus and Rabelais wrote very influential satires). One long, complex satire, which was one of the first novels in a European language, was Cervantes' Don Quixote, which pokes fun at the threadbare values of the Middle Ages such as chivalry and romance.	
7	English Renaissance Christopher Marlowe (1564-1593) Dr. Faustus	Book 3, 384-388 Book 3, 389-451
Author	Please write a brief author biography.	
Literary Analysis	Please provide a brief description of plot, themes, main characters, character analysis of Dr. Faustus, critical scene.	
Literary Terms	Please briefly define the following literary terms: blank verse, tragedy	
Essay Topics	E1. What does Dr. Faustus want more than anything? E2. What are the roles of the good angel and the bad angel? What do they represent? E3. What does Mephistophilis offer Dr. Faustus, and why is it attractive? E4. How does Marlowe portray in Dr. Faustus conflicting human emotions and desires?	
8-9	William Shakespeare (1564-1616) The Tempest	Book 3, 489-494 Book 3, 495-564
Author	Please write a brief author biography.	
Literary Analysis	Please provide a brief description of plot, themes, main characters, character analysis of Miranda and of Prospero, critical scene.	
Literary Terms	Please briefly define the following literary terms: comedy	
Essay Topics	E1. What does the fact that The Tempest takes place on an island signify? E2. What does Prospero do with his books? E3. How does The Tempest explore the primitive vs the civilized, and what role does Caliban play? E4. What is Ariel? Why is Ariel important in the play?	
Note	The Tempest contains echoes of other works: Dr. Faustus (the danger of obsession with books; the dark magic that books possess); Montaigne – "Of Cannibals" (the idea of people in nature, vs. in civilization – the ones who are	

“civilized” often prove to be the truly barbaric); Bartolome de las Cases (the “noble savage”) and incidents of encounter with other cultures. The encounters with the powerful speech of the primitives (cursing) that can, in some ways, trump or defuse the magic, spells, and promises of power contained in books. (One might question why books might be dangerous. Perhaps to fall under their spell is what is dangerous?)

Why is Shakespeare considered a genius? Let’s review his work. He wrote 37 plays, most of which are considered to be of the highest possible order of literary excellence. His poetry is superb. His coining of words and phrases also led to an evolutionary leap in the development of the English language. Shakespeare was aided by the fact that Queen Elizabeth loved the theatre, and supported it wholeheartedly. Drama hit on hard times after Elizabeth I, and during the time of the Commonwealth, when the theatre was closed.

10 John Milton (1608-1674) Book 3, 565-574
Paradise Lost Book 3, 575-660

Author Please write a brief author biography.

Literary Analysis Please provide a brief description for the plot, main characters, and key scenes.

Literary Terms Please briefly define the following literary terms: allegory

Essay Topics E1. How does Paradise Lost reflect a profound questioning of the Renaissance notion of the perfectibility of man?
E2. How does Satan style himself as a hero (or anti-hero) vis-à-vis God?
E3. How is a thirst for infinite knowledge Adam’s fatal flaw?
E4. How is vanity Eve’s fatal flaw?

III Enlightenment

11 French Enlightenment Book 4, 17-21
Moliere (1622-1673) Book 4, 22-87
Tartuffe

Author Please write a brief author biography.

Literary Analysis Please provide a brief description of plot, themes, main characters, character analysis of Tartuffe, critical scene.

Literary Terms Please briefly define the following literary terms: comedy of manners

Essay Topics E1: Where does Tartuffe take place? What is the significance?
E2: How does Tartuffe criticize the church, clergy, and laity?
E3: How does Tartuffe explore the nature of human relations, appearance vs. reality, and human weakness?
E4: List some of the characters in Tartuffe Moliere lampoons for being pretentious, arrogant, or hypocritical.

Note Moliere was heavily influenced by commedia dell’arte, a form of improvised Italian street theater that depended on buffoonery, slapstick humor, and pantomime. Moliere’s plot lines are simple. They exist to bring to illustrate human absurdities and weaknesses. He uses stock characters, and the result is a very amusing farce. Individuals could

	identify with the characters, and they resonated with France's emerging class structure.	
12	Voltaire (1694-1778) Candide	Book 4, 269-274 Book 4, 275-338
Author	Please write a brief author biography.	
Literary Analysis	Please provide a brief description of plot, themes, main characters, character analysis of Candide, critical scene.	
Literary Terms	Please briefly define the following literary terms: satire, novella	
Essay Topics	E1: Describe how Candide is an innocent, a naïf. Of what benefit is Candide's innocence to him? E2: Where does Candide travel? E3: How does Candide offer a critique of religion of the time? E4: What kind of commentary is Candide making about governments and politics?	
13	Rousseau (1712-1778) Confessions	Book 4, 367-371 Book 4, 372-399
Author	Please write a brief author biography.	
Literary Analysis	Please provide an overview of key ideas.	
Literary Terms	Please briefly define the following literary terms: confession, creative non-fiction	
Essay Topics	E1: What is the structure of Rousseau's Confessions? E2: What is the structure of Rousseau's Confessions? E3: What kind of family life did Rousseau have as he was growing up? E4: What do the Confessions suggest about human nature, the role of rules and laws, and a kind of natural law?	
14	English Enlightenment Jonathan Swift (1667-1745) Gulliver's Travels	Book 4, 141-146 Book 4, 147-198
Author	Please write a brief author biography.	
Literary Analysis	Please provide a brief description of plot, themes, main characters, character analysis of Gulliver, critical scene.	
Literary Terms	Please briefly define the following literary terms: satire, travel narrative	
Essay Topics	E1: What were some of the key ideas about human nature, governance, and natural "laws" during the Enlightenment? E2: How is Gulliver's Travels a satire? E3: What are the attributes of the Yahoos? What are the attributes of the Houyhnhnms? E4: What comment does Gulliver's Travels make on the nature of human beings and on relationships between those with power and those without?	
15	Alexander Pope (1688-1744) The Rape of the Lock An Essay on Man	Book 4, 232-237 Book 4, 238-259 Book 4, 260-268

Author	Please write a brief author biography.
Literary Analysis	For "The Rape of the Lock," please describe the plot, main characters, and a key scene. For "An Essay on Man," please list the key ideas.
Literary Terms	Please briefly define the following literary terms: mock epic
Essay Topics	<p>E1. How is Alexander Pope's work considered Neoclassical?</p> <p>E2. How does The Rape of the Lock satirize the life of the elite?</p> <p>E3. Describe how Pope uses elements from the classics in The Rape of the Lock.</p> <p>E4. Discuss how Pope's Essay On Man reflects neoclassical ideas about human nature and potential, and the hierarchies of nature.</p>

V

Finals

16 Review, Essay, Exam