

## ***The Stomach of a King: Consumption and Material Culture in Pre-1800 English Literature***

English 261: British Literature I, section 001

Spring 2015, MWF 9:30-10:20 AM

Clark Hall 320

Instructor: Phillip Zapkin

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Office: Colson Hall G07

Office Hours: MWF 10:30-11:15 AM

As a survey course, this class will explore a variety of texts crucial to the development of English literature before 1800. We will cover three historical periods—the medieval era, Renaissance, and Restoration/18<sup>th</sup> century. These eras saw invasions, wars, political turmoil, religious shifts and conflicts, changes in the role of women and social class structure, philosophical and scientific developments, and the beginnings of a British Empire.

While we will discuss all of these issues, our particular focus this semester will be consumption, and the socio-political implications of eating. Eating and drinking are an aspect of material culture, which is one theoretical approach to literary studies. We will begin from the premise that how we eat, what we eat, with whom we eat, and why we eat all signify something about our culture. We will examine the status implications of feasting, the role of fish in a maritime island nation, and philosophies of excess and abstinence. All of this will tell us something about what it means to be English, and how English identity changes through time.

### **Course Objectives**

Following the guidelines the English department has established for the BA program, this course will help you learn to:

1. Interpret texts within diverse, literary, cultural, and historical contexts
  - a. by identifying genre conventions and analyzing their effects
  - b. by identifying and analyzing effects of complexity or ambiguity
  - c. by locating texts in social/economic/political/literary histories
  - d. by connecting texts to other literary or cultural texts
2. Demonstrate a general knowledge of the social and structural aspects of the English language
3. Demonstrate a range of contextually effective strategies

### **Required Texts and Resources**

Please make sure you get the required edition of the Norton anthologies because literature prior to 1800 can have wide variations in the editing and presentation of texts, and it will be important that we all read the same editions of edited or translated works.

- *The Norton Anthology of English Literature* 9<sup>th</sup> ed. Package 1: A, B, C. ISBN 978-0-393-91300-2
  - Volume A: *The Middle Ages*
  - Volume B: *The Sixteenth Century/Early Seventeenth Century*
  - Volume C: *The Restoration and the Eighteenth Century*
- A Hulu.com account
- A Twitter.com account

### **Recommended Text**

- Lunsford, Andrea. *Easy Writer (EW)*, 5<sup>th</sup> Custom ed. for WVU. 2014.

## Grading and Assignments

I do not believe in exams for literature classes, so graded materials will consist of a mix of short and medium length papers and participation. The grade breakdown is:

Three Period Themes	10 points each, for 30 total
One Close Reading	15 points
One Research Paper	30 points
In-class Participation	10 points
Twitter Responses	10 points
Theatre Performance	5 points

Total Point Value=100

On eCampus I will post assignment sheets for the Period Themes, Close Reading, Theatre Performance, and Research Paper, which will explain these assignments in more detail.

## Participation and Attendance

I am a firm believer in the discussion of literature, so participation counts into your grade and attendance is mandatory. I will lecture occasionally, but the majority of our class time should be spent critically discussing the challenging texts of early English literature.

The attendance policy allows three absences (one week) with no penalty to your grade; the fourth and fifth absence will cost one letter grade from your overall course score, and a sixth absence means automatic failure for the course.

This course is part of your professional career, so all behavior in the classroom (and on Twitter) should be professional and courteous to your classmates, myself, and the class at large.

## Twitter Responses

In lieu of something like reading quizzes or exams, you will tweet responses to the literature we read for every class period. I have set up a Twitter account dedicated to this class: @Zapkin261, to which you will address your tweets. Tweet a response to the day's reading(s) by the beginning of every class period.

You may miss up to four tweets, then each additional missed tweet decreases your Twitter Response grade by one point.

## Hulu.com

As part of our course focus on consumption and the socio-politics of eating, you will watch three episodes of the television show *The Supersizers Go*. This show is available with a free subscription to Hulu.com.

In this show Giles Coren and Sue Perkins eat their way through the cultural history of British cuisine. We will watch the episodes: *Medieval* (2.2), *Elizabethan* (1.5), and *Restoration* (1.2).

## Theatre Performance

In this course we will read a lot of drama and poetry, which are both performance genres—meant to be seen and/or heard, rather than read silently. These genres have a strong kinesthetic component, both for listeners and performers, so we will experience both sides of that coin. In the last full week of class, you will work with a small group to perform a roughly 10 minute section of one of the four plays we're reading this semester. Participating in the performance will earn the full five points; not participating will earn zero—I am not grading your acting abilities.

### **eCampus and Late Work Policy**

All written assignments will be turned in through eCampus. Please remember, assignments will be due before 9:30 AM (the beginning of our class).

Because late work is unprofessional and due dates for assignments are listed on the schedule, I will not accept late work. If a paper is not turned in on time it will receive no credit.

### **Office Hours and Email**

The material we will read this semester is challenging and the assignments will push you to think about literature in new ways, so I strongly encourage you to take advantage of my office hours, which are MWF from 10:30-11:15 in Colson Hall G07. This time is available for you to come ask questions, get clarification, get assistance on assignments, etc.

You can also email me at [pzapkin@mix.wvu.edu](mailto:pzapkin@mix.wvu.edu). This is the best way to get a hold of me outside class or office hours. I will always respond to emails within 24 hours, so if you do not get a response from me by the next evening, please resend your email.

If the answer to your question is in the syllabus or an assignment sheet it is your responsibility to know where that info is located.

### **Academic Integrity**

The English department and I assume that you will approach academic work honestly, and you will turn in your own original work. Failure to do so will result in a failing grade for the assignment, for the course, or more serious penalties.

It is your responsibility to become fully familiar with the Student Conduct Code, which is linked on eCampus or in *Easy Writer* pages WVU5-WVU7 (near the beginning).

If you are at all confused about what counts as plagiarism, please ask.

### **Eberly Writing Studio (formerly the Writing Center)**

The Eberly Writing Studio is a service your tuition dollars have already paid for. The tutors are your fellow students, and they are trained to help with all aspects of the writing process.

The Studio is in Colson Hall G02, near my office. Their website is <http://speakwrite.wvu.edu/writing-studio>, which includes a link to sign up for an appointment online, or you can stop by. Their hours are 10-5 MTWR, and 10-3 F.

### **Social Justice and Accessibility Services**

West Virginia University and I are committed to creating and fostering a positive learning and working environment based on open communication, mutual respect, and inclusion.

If you are a person with a disability and anticipate needing any type of accommodation in order to participate in this class, please advise me and make appropriate arrangements with the Office of Accessibility Services (304-293-6700). For more information on West Virginia University's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion initiatives, please see <http://diversity.sandbox.wvu.edu/ddei>.

### **University Counseling Services**

The Carruth Center provides resources to help manage stress, improve relationships, make healthy lifestyle choices, and face new challenges and transitions. The Center is in the newly constructed Health and Education Building, 390 Birch Street, located on the Evansdale campus adjacent to the Student Recreation Center. Its website is <http://well.wvu.edu/ccpps>, and its phone number (answered 24 hours) is 304-293-4431.

## Schedule

This schedule is subject to change by me. I will inform you by email and if possible in class of any changes as early as possible.

Please Note: All readings must be done by the class period in which we will discuss them. This includes reading introductory material provided by the Norton editors.

### ► Week 1

◇M 12 Jan: Introduction to the course, syllabus and policy information

◇W 14 Jan: Early history of England, introduction to the medieval period

◇F 16 Jan<sup>1</sup>: Celtic Literature: “Cúchulainn’s Boyhood Deeds”

HW: Watch *The Supersizers Go Medieval*, season 2 episode 2

### ► Week 2

◇M 19 Jan: *No Class, Martin Luther King Day*

◇W 21 Jan: Anglo-Saxon Epic Poetry: *Beowulf*: lines 1-490

◇F 23 Jan: Anglo-Saxon Epic Poetry: *Beowulf*: lines 491-835

HW: Read “Critical Writing in English” handout on eCampus, print a copy and bring it to class

### ► Week 3

◇M 26 Jan: Critical Writing in English—Thesis statements, MLA citations, Essay Formatting; Period Response Themes Introduced

◇W 28 Jan: Geoffrey Chaucer: *The Canterbury Tales*, “The General Prologue”: lines 1-207 and 446-478

◇F 30 Jan: Chaucer: *The Canterbury Tales*, “The Wife of Bath’s Prologue”: lines 1-262

### ► Week 4

◇M 2 Feb: Chivalric Romance: *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*: lines 1-810

◇W 4 Feb: Chivalric Romance: *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*: lines 811-1689

◇F 6 Feb: Chivalric Romance: *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*: lines 1690-2530

### ► Week 5

◇M 9 Feb: Mystery Plays: *The York Play of the Crucifixion*

◇W 11 Feb: Mystery Plays: *The York Play of the Crucifixion*

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<sup>1</sup> End of Add/Drop Period

◇F 13 Feb: Margery Kempe: Book 1.11 [Margery and Her Husband Reach a Settlement] and 1.20 [Margery Sees the Host Flutter at Mass]; Close Reading Assignment Introduced  
HW: **Medieval Period Theme**

► Week 6

◇M 16 Feb: History and Cultural Context for the Renaissance and Protectorate  
**Due: Medieval Period Theme**  
HW: Watch *The Supersizers Go Elizabethan*, season 1 episode 5

◇W 18 Feb: The Renaissance Stage: Performance and Social Context

◇F 20 Feb: *No Class, Phillip is Out of Town*

► Week 7

◇M 23 Feb: Renaissance Comedy: William Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*: Acts I-II

◇W 25 Feb: Renaissance Comedy: Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*: Acts III-IV

◇F 27 Feb: *Midterm*. Renaissance Comedy: Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*: Act V  
HW: **Close Reading**

► Week 8

◇M 2 Mar: Faith in Conflict: "1 Corinthians 13" four versions  
**Due: Close Reading**

◇W 4 Mar: Queen Elizabeth I: "Speech to the House of Commons, January 28, 1563," "Speech to the Troops at Tilbury," and "The 'Golden Speech'"

◇F 6 Mar<sup>2</sup>: Sonnets: Edmund Spenser's "Sonnet 75," Sir Philip Sidney's "Sonnet 27," and Shakespeare's "Sonnet 29"

HW: Read "Aristotelian Tragedy" handout on eCampus, print a copy and bring it to class

► Week 9

◇M 9 Mar: Revenge Tragedy: John Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi*: Acts I-II

◇W 11 Mar: Revenge Tragedy: Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi*: Acts III-IV

◇F 13 Mar: Revenge Tragedy: Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi*: Act V

► Week 10

◇M 16 Mar: Crisis of Authority: *The Moderate*, No. 28, and Milton's "The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates"

◇W 18 Mar: John Milton: "On Shakespeare" and "When I Consider How My Light Is Spent"

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<sup>2</sup> Midterm Reports Due

◇F 20 Mar<sup>3</sup>: John Donne: “The Flea” and “The Bait”  
HW: **Renaissance Period Theme**

▶ Week 11

◇M 23 Mar: *No Class, Spring Recess*

◇W 25 Mar: *No Class, Spring Recess*

◇F 27 Mar: *No Class, Spring Recess*

▶ Week 12

◇M 30 Mar: History and Cultural Context for the Restoration and 18<sup>th</sup> Century  
**Due: Renaissance Period Theme**

HW: Watch *The Supersizers Go Restoration*, season 1 episode 2

◇W 1 Apr: Libertine Poetry: John Wilmot’s “The Disabled Debauchee,” “The Imperfect Enjoyment,” and “Upon Nothing”

◇F 3 Apr: *No Class, Good Friday*

▶ Week 13

◇M 6 Apr: Restoration Comedy: William Congreve’s *The Way of the World*: Prologue and Acts I-II

◇W 8 Apr: Restoration Comedy: Congreve’s *The Way of the World*: Acts III-IV

◇F 10 Apr: Restoration Comedy: Congreve’s *The Way of the World*: Act V and Epilogue

▶ Week 14

◇M 13 Apr: Satire: Jonathan Swift’s *A Modest Proposal*

◇W 15 Apr: Leading Literary Lights I: Alexander Pope’s “An Essay on Criticism”; Research Paper Introduced

◇F 17 Apr: Scholarly Research using the Library Databases

▶ Week 15

◇M 20 Apr: Debates on Liberty: John Locke’s “Two Treatises on Government,” David Hume’s “Of the Liberty of the Press,” and Edmund Burke’s “Speech on the Conciliation of the American Colonies”

◇W 22 Apr: Slavery and England’s Global Ambitions: Olaudah Equiano’s *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African, Written by Himself*

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<sup>3</sup> Last Day to Drop a Class

◇F 24 Apr: Leading Literary Lights II: Samuel Johnson's "A Dictionary of the English Language"

HW: **Restoration/18<sup>th</sup> Century Period Theme**

▶ Week 16

◇M 27 Apr: Performance Rehearsal Day

**Due: Restoration/18<sup>th</sup> Century Period Theme**

◇W 29 Apr: Theatre Performances Day 1

◇F 1 May: Theatre Performances Day 2; Looking ahead to British Literature II; Course Evaluations

HW: **Research Paper**

▶ Week 17

◇M 4 May: *Research Paper due; No Class.*

**Due: Research Paper**