ENGL 2000: Reading Women in Medieval and Early Modern Literature

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Course Description

This course examines representations of women in literary and religious texts from the medieval to the early modern period. We will look at how women are written, read, and interpreted in texts that include Chaucer's *Wife of Bath's Tale* and *Troilus and Criseyde*, selections from *Paradise Lost*, and in books of instruction for women. We will consider how the representation of women in each of these
texts relates to ideas about women’s social and religious experiences. How do these texts endorse, critique, and resist such ideas? What can they say to our ideas about gender today?

Course Objectives

In this course, you will learn to
- Articulate intelligent responses to the literary texts we read
- Analyze quotations and other textual details to support an argument about any given text
- Generate critical insights and questions about the texts we read
- Situate the texts and your arguments about them within larger social, literary, and historical contexts
- Engage constructively with the ideas of your peers
- Support your argument with research

Office Non-Hours

Since this is an online course, I will not be available for in-person meetings or office hours. I will respond to your emails and forum posts in a timely manner. I encourage you to be in touch with me about any questions or concerns at fbaynes@fordham.edu

Requirements

- Read the assigned materials in each Module. You will need to read both primary and secondary texts I have assigned since these will form the basis of our discussions and assignments.
- Complete all content quizzes.
- Participate in four VoiceThread discussions.
- Write and submit 3 essays.
- Submit all required Discussion Board posts.
- Actively participate in every task and assignment.
- Turn in ALL required assignments by their deadlines. Turn in your assignment on the day the assignment is due.

NOTE: Your attendance in this course will be measured by your participation, and this counts for a significant portion of your grade. Therefore, you must plan wisely to complete all of your assignments and to submit them on time.

NOTE: Any instance of plagiarism or cheating on the written assignments will be reported to the Class Dean. You will fail the relevant assignment, and you may also fail the entire course. If this is not your first plagiarism, you may be suspended or expelled from the College. If you are not sure what constitutes plagiarism, please contact me as soon as possible by email.
Essay Format
- All essays must follow MLA formatting guidelines
- Include your name, my name, course name and section, date, and a title at the top of each essay (see MLA guidelines for specific format)
- Essays must be double-spaced, 12-point standard font (Times New Roman, Arial, or Calibri), standard margins, with numbered pages
- Email your essays to fbaynes@fordham.edu and please attach your essay in a Microsoft Word (.doc) file
- Failure to abide by these requirements will result in a lowered grade

Discussion Board Posts
Each of your posts to the Discussion Board must meet the following criteria:
- At least 100 words in length
- Formulates a specific claim in response to the prompt and supports this claim with well-chosen examples and quotes from the assigned reading
- Well-written and well-edited, with few to no grammar or punctuation errors and sound logic and rhetoric
- Posts should not simply summarize the week’s reading. You need to draw larger conclusions based on your reading.

VoiceThread Discussions
Each Module will feature a video presentation by your instructor. You will be required to participate in at least 4 VoiceThread discussions based upon these presentations.
- After you view the video presentation, post a question or a comment in response. (Please keep your questions and comments under two minutes.)
- You must post in the form of a video or audio recording, which will create a more personal and interactive form of communication in our online group.

Required Texts:
Please purchase only these editions of the texts.

*All other required readings will be made available to you on Blackboard.*
Grading

Participation in online discussions & other non-essay assignments: 30%
Content quizzes: 20%
Papers/essays: 50%

CALENDAR OF READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS

SCHEDULING NOTE: Most due dates for readings, discussion posts, and papers, as well as Module opening dates will fall on Tuesdays and Fridays throughout the semester. This schedule will give you a sense of regularity throughout the course and allow you the freedom to complete the work in your own time.

Orientation (opens Tuesday, May 31st)
• Read through the course syllabus
• Watch my introductory video
• Complete all hardware & software tests listed on the course Orientation page under “Technology Resources and Services”
• By Friday, June 3 post a self-introduction with a photograph to the Discussion Board.

*Start reading Troilus and Criseyde

MODULE 1:
(Opens May 31)

Unit 1

Work through the “View” and “Read” sections of Module One in the order in which the tasks are listed.

By June 7 read Troilus and Criseyde Introduction & Book 1; Post a response to the Discussion board found under “Discuss & Reflect.”
MODULE 2:

Unit 1 (Opens June 7)  
(Women and Literary Representation)  
Watch my presentation under “View” and post a question or comment using VoiceThread.

By June 10, read Troilus and Criseyde Book 2 and Richard F. Green’s “Troilus and the Game of Love”  
By June 14 read *Troilus and Criseyde* Book 3 and other materials posted under “Read.” Take a brief content quiz and post your response to the discussion board under “Discuss & Reflect”

Unit 2 (Women and Exchange)  
By June 17 read *Troilus and Criseyde* Book 4.  
Review MLA Style basics (link to Perdue OWL site) and Writing Help videos and complete Academic Integrity exercise.  
Practice close reading and writing claims using the exercises posted.

**June 21 Essay # 1 due (2 pages)**  
In 2 pages, respond to one of the questions I have provided. Please use relevant details and quotations from the text to support your response. Your essay should have a clearly stated major claim that you will support with close-reading of the text.

MODULE 3  
(Opens June 21)

Unit 1 (Women and Male Literary Authority)  
By June 24 Read *Troilus and Criseyde* V  
Post a response to the discussion board under “Discuss and Reflect”

By June 28 Read Chaucer’s *Wife of Bath’s Prologue*  
Watch the materials posted under “View” and post a response using VoiceThread

By July 1 Read Chaucer’s *Wife of Bath’s Tale* and “The Problem of Defining Sovereynetee”  
Post a response to my question under “Discuss & Reflect” and take a brief content quiz.

Unit 2 (Women and Religion)  
By July 5 read the selection from *Paradise Lost* Book 9 and the excerpt from Genesis.  
Watch my presentation under “View” and post a response using VoiceThread
By July 8 read the excerpt from *Ancrene Wisse* and the excerpt from the poem, *Pearl*
Post a response to my question under “Discuss & Reflect”
*July 12 Essay # 2 due (3 Pages)*

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**MODULE 4**
Unit 1 (Women and Writing)
(Opens July 12)

By July 15 Read selected tales from *The Lais of Marie de France*;
Read the selected materials under “Read.”
Watch my presentation under “View.”
Post a response to my presentation using VoiceThread and post a response to the
discussion board under “Discuss & Reflect.”

By July 19 Read selections from *The Lais of Marie de France* and other selected readings
under “Read”
Post a response to the discussion under “Discuss & Reflect” and take a content quiz.

**Unit 2 (Negotiating Gender Roles)**

By July 22 read Antony and Cleopatra Acts I-III and selected readings;
Watch my presentation under “View” and post a response using VoiceThread
Post a response to the discussion under “Discuss & Reflect.”

By July 26 READ Antony and Cleopatra Acts IV & V and selected readings;
Post a response to the Discussion board under “Discuss and Reflect” and take a brief
content quiz.

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**MODULE 5**
Unit 1 (Final Essay)
(Opens July 26)

By July 29 Post 3-4 sentences of your major claim for the final essay on Blackboard and
comment on at least one person’s claim. Ask questions and / or make suggestions for
improvement.

By August 2 Post a rough draft of your essay (about a page long) to the discussion board.
Workshop each other’s drafts using the questions provided. You will find these under the
“Read” section. Review my guidelines for the essay also posted under “Read.”
*August 4 Final Essay Due (3-4 Pages)*

*There will not be a formal final exam for this class*