

# Beginnings to the American Experiment

## Section 01

### ENGL 50

Fall 2024 3 Unit(s) 08/21/2024 to 12/09/2024 Modified 08/26/2024

## Contact Information

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Instructor: Dr. Mark Dowdy

Office Location: Faculty Offices 215

Telephone: (408) 924-5063

Email: mark.dowdy@sjsu.edu

Meeting days/times: T/Th 10:30 - 11:45 a.m.

Classroom: Boccardo Business Center 122

#### Office Hours:

**Time:** Mondays and Wednesdays, 12 - 1 p.m.

**Place:** Online (Zoom link: <https://sjsu.zoom.us/j/84580572292?pwd=vaNWa77kXGIBaP9xJwc7FE3jb9cdDO.1>)

I am also available for **both in-person and online appointments.**

## Course Information

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Welcome to English 50! In this course we will be reading English language texts from the early and late Middle Ages and the Renaissance in England, as well as the Early Colonial Period of the United States. We will be reading some of the most significant prose, poetry, and dramatic texts from this roughly 1000-year era, paying particular attention to the political, religious, cultural, and historical influences that shaped them.

## Course Description and Requisites

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Exploration of Anglo-Saxon, Medieval, Renaissance, and Early Colonial

Writings in Britain, Europe, and America. Class engages literary text, literary history, and historical events that shape the literature and social constructs of the period.

Prerequisite(s): ENGL 1A.

Letter Graded

## \* Classroom Protocols

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### Digital Distractions

Cell phones, laptops, and mobile devices should be stowed and kept out of sight during class in *almost all circumstances*. The only exceptions to this policy apply to those students who require special accommodations and who have contacted the Accessible Education Center and, in the event of a textbook shortage, those students who need to rely on digital editions. **Otherwise, use of any electronic device during class will result in a lowering of your course grade by one full letter.**

### Classroom Etiquette

In order to create a productive and supportive learning community, it is imperative that we treat one another with appropriate respect and consideration. To promote this value, I will create a Discussion thread on Canvas where you will be encouraged to post suggestions on how we can all, students and professor alike, make this the class a welcoming and comfortable learning space. This Discussion thread will be open throughout the semester.

If you have any concerns about the class that you would prefer to share with me privately, please do not hesitate to contact me.

### Late Policy

In this course, you are expected to submit your essays on the due date. However, if you experience illness, an emergency, or have a necessary religious obligation, you may submit your essay up to one week late without penalty, provided you document the reason. If you do not have a compelling reason for submitting your essay late, your grade will be reduced by one letter grade for each class period it is late. To avoid any penalties, please contact me as soon as possible if you cannot submit an essay by the posted deadline.

### "Ghosting" the Class

The instruction mode for this class is designated as "in person." This means that, despite our use of Canvas, Google, and other online platforms, this is not an "online" or a "hybrid" course. Consequently, classroom activities cannot be made up online at a later time and date.

If you are unable to attend class due to illness, injury, or other circumstances, please contact me as soon as possible.

# Program Information

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The following statement has been adopted by the Department of English for inclusion in all syllabi: In English Department Courses, instructors will comment on and grade the quality of student writing as well as the quality of ideas being conveyed. All student writing should be distinguished by correct grammar and punctuation, appropriate diction and syntax, and well-organized paragraphs. The Department of English reaffirms its commitment to the differential grading scale as defined in the SJSU Catalog ("The Grading System").

Grades issued must represent a full range of student performance:

- A = excellent;
- B = above average;
- C = average;
- D = below average;
- F = failure.

Within any of the letter grade ranges (e.g. B+/B/B-), the assignment of a +(plus) or -(minus) grade will reflect stronger (+) or weaker (-) completion of the goals of the assignment.

## **Program Learning Outcomes (PLO)**

Upon successful completion of an undergraduate degree program in the Department of English and Comparative Literature, students will be able to:

1. Read closely in a variety of forms, styles, structures, and modes, and articulate the value of close reading in the study of literature, creative writing, or rhetoric.
2. Show familiarity with major literary works, genres, periods, and critical approaches to British, American, and World Literature.
3. Write clearly, effectively, and creatively, and adjust writing style appropriately to the content, the context, and nature of the subject.
4. Develop and carry out research projects, and locate, evaluate, organize, and incorporate information effectively.
5. Articulate the relations among culture, history, and texts, including structures of power.

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## **Department Information:**

**Department Name:** English and Comparative Literature

**Department Office:** FO 102

**Department Website:** [www.sjsu.edu/english](http://www.sjsu.edu/english) (<https://www.sjsu.edu/english>)

**Department email:** [english@sjsu.edu](mailto:english@sjsu.edu) (<mailto:english@sjsu.edu>)

**Department phone number:** 408-924-4425

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## Course Goals

1. Develop proficiency in reading and understanding older English texts, with attention to linguistic, syntactical, and stylistic features.
2. Enhance close-reading skills by analyzing and interpreting poems with a focus on poetic meter, form, and other formal elements.
3. Explore and articulate the connections between literary texts and their historical, cultural, and religious contexts, fostering a deeper understanding of literature's place in society.
4. Conduct effective literary research, utilizing both primary and secondary sources, to support literary analysis and argumentation.
5. Adhere to MLA guidelines in the citation of sources, ensuring academic integrity and professionalism in written work.

## Course Materials

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### Required Materials

- *Broadview Anthology of British Literature*, Volumes 1 and 2 Package: This includes both volumes for a publisher's discount from the Spartan Bookstore. ISBN 978-1488102820
- Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, Folger Shakespeare Library. ISBN 978-0743482837

## Broadview Anthology of British Literature, vols 1 and 2

**Author:** Joseph Black (ed.)

**Publisher:** Broadview Press

**Edition:** 3rd

**ISBN:** 9781488102820

**Availability:** Spartan Bookstore

**Price:** \$72.75 (used; Spartan Bookstore); \$ 97 (new)

## The Tempest (Folger Shakespeare Library)

**Author:** William Shakespeare

**Publisher:** Simon & Schuster

**Edition:** 94

**ISBN:** 9780743482837

**Availability:** Spartan Bookstore (and online)

**Price:** \$3.80 used; \$5.30 new

## Course Requirements and Assignments

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Major assignments and activities for this course include the following:

- Research essay (1500 words)
- Critical essay (1500 words)
- Midterm (in-class)
- Final Exam (in-class)

- Group Presentation
- Sonnet/Speech Performance
- Canvas Discussion Posts
- Participation

## Major Essays

- **Research Essay:** This research-based writing assignment requires you to select one of the readings from our class and analyze its textual history. You will explore how the text has been transmitted, edited, and interpreted over time, considering factors such as different manuscript versions, editions, translations, and the impact of historical and cultural contexts on the text's evolution.
- **Critical Essay:** This writing assignment requires both research and close reading. You are asked to take a position in a critical discussion concerning one or more of the poems or plays we have studied in class. I will provide a list of potential topics for you to choose from. If you wish to explore a different topic, please seek my approval beforehand.

For both the **Research** and **Critical** essays, I will post writing guidelines and a scoring rubric on Canvas (see Tentative Schedule below). Both essays must be formatted according to MLA guidelines.

## Midterm and Final Exam

The **Midterm** will be administered during class on Thursday, October 3rd.

The **Final Exam** will be administered during Final Exams Week on Friday, December 13th.

You are expected to attend both the Midterm and the Final Exam. Make-up exams should only be scheduled in the event of emergency, illness, religious observation, or scheduled SJSU activity.

If you cannot class on either of the above dates due to religious observances, please contact me by September 6th in order to schedule a make-up exam.

## Group Presentations

Early in the semester, the class will form into presentation groups. Each group will be tasked with producing a multimedia presentation that introduces the class to one of the readings. I will provide the class with written guidelines on Canvas for this activity.

## Sonnet/Speech Performance

For this assignment you may choose between one of the following options:

- **Option 1: Memorize and Recite a Poem or Speech.** This option gives you the opportunity to engage with a literary text on a deeper level by memorizing and performing a poem or a speech from a play. This exercise will help you appreciate the sounds and rhythms of language and how they interact with the nuances of emotion and meaning.
- **Option 2: Write a Contemporary Sonnet in Traditional Form.** For this assignment, you will write your own sonnet in a specific form. You can choose to write a Shakespearean (English),

Petrarchan (Italian), or Spenserian sonnet. Your sonnet should adhere to the traditional structure and rhyme scheme of the chosen form and explore a theme or subject of your choice.

I will provide the class with written guidelines on Canvas for this assignment.

## Canvas Discussion Posts

Before each class, submit a substantive post on Canvas in which you respond to the assigned reading for that day. Your post should identify anything that you feel would be worthy of discussion during class. For example, you may find a particular passage striking for its content, or you may find another one difficult to interpret. By posting your reading responses before class, you help the entire class deepen its comprehension of the text at hand.

I will provide written guidelines for how to complete this activity on Canvas.

## Participation

Class sessions will include activities that address the assigned readings. These will include lectures; group presentations; weekly reading quizzes, and small group/whole class activities based on Canvas Discussion Posts. Full credit for participation will require active in-class engagement in all of these activities.

## ✓ Grading Information

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Assignments for the course will each count towards a specific percentage of your final grade.

## Criteria

Your grade for English 50 will be determined by the following criteria:

Assignment/Activity	Percentage of Course Grade
Research Essay (1500 words)	20%
Critical Essay (1500 words)	20%
Midterm (in-class)	20%
Final Exam (in-class)	20%
Group Presentation	5%

Sonnet/Speech Performance	5%
Canvas Discussion Posts	5%
Class Participation	5%

## Breakdown

A	94% - 100%
A-	90% - 93%
B+	87% - 89%
B	84% - 86%
B-	80% - 83%
C+	77% - 79%
C	74% - 76%
C-	70% - 73%
D+	67% - 69%
D	64% - 66%
D-	60% - 63%
F	≤59%

## University Policies

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Per [University Policy S16-9 \(PDF\)](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf) (<http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf>), relevant university policy concerning all courses, such as student responsibilities, academic integrity, accommodations, dropping and adding, consent for recording of class, etc. and available student services (e.g. learning assistance, counseling, and other resources) are listed on the [Syllabus Information](https://www.sjsu.edu/curriculum/courses/syllabus-info.php) (<https://www.sjsu.edu/curriculum/courses/syllabus-info.php>) web page. Make sure to visit this page to review and be aware of these university policies and resources.

# Course Schedule

Below are the due dates for the major assignments and readings for this semester. This does not include homework due on Canvas, for which you will be notified through the Canvas LMS. This schedule is subject to change with fair notice via the Canvas messaging system.

When	Topic	Notes
Week 1: Thursday, 8/22	Overview of Course	
Week 2: Tuesday, 8/27	Introduction to the Medieval Period	Before class, read excerpts from Bede's <i>Ecclesiastical History of the English People</i> (16-30)
Week 2: Thursday, 8/29	Language and Prosody of the Medieval Period	Before class, read:  Introduction to the Medieval Period (LXV - LXXI)  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cædmon's Hymn (30)</li> <li>• The Wanderer (41-2)</li> <li>• The Dream of the Rood (49-52)</li> <li>• Exeter Book Riddles (55-9)</li> </ul>
Week 3: Tuesday, 9/3	Beowulf	Before class, read <i>Beowulf</i> , lines 1 - 1650 (pages 65-90).
Week 3: Thursday, 9/5	Beowulf	Before class, read <i>Beowulf</i> , lines 1251 - 3180 (pages 91-111).
Week 4: Tuesday, 9/10	Anglo-Norman Poetry	Before class, read the following poems from Marie de France:  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "The Werewolf" (210)</li> <li>• "The Nightingale" (234)</li> <li>• "The Honeysuckle" (237)</li> </ul>
Week 4: Thursday, 9/12	Sir Gawain and the Green Knight	Before class, read <i>Sir Gawain and the Green Knight</i> , parts 1 and 2 (288-317).
Week 5: Tuesday, 9/17	Sir Gawain and the Green Knight	Before class, read <i>Sir Gawain and the Green Knight</i> , parts 3 and 4 (317-352)
Week 5: Thursday, 9/19	Geoffrey Chaucer's Canterbury Tales	Before class read lines 1-18 from <i>The General Prologue</i> (430) and the <i>Wife of Bath's Prologue and Tale</i> (492).
Week 6: Tuesday, 9/24	Geoffrey Chaucer's Canterbury Tales	Before class read <i>The Prioress's Prologue and Tale</i> (562).



When	Topic	Notes
Week 6: Thursday, 9/26	Geoffrey Chaucer's Canterbury Tales	Before class read <i>The Nun's Priest's Prologue and Tale</i> (569).
Week 7: Tuesday, 10/1	Medieval Cycle Plays	Before class, read the York Corpus Christi Play: <i>The Crucifixion</i> (700)
Week 7: Thursday, 10/3	Review of First Half of Semester: Anglo-Saxon & Medieval Periods	In-class Review session
Week 8: Tuesday, 10/8	Review of First Half of Semester: Anglo-Saxon & Medieval Periods	<b>Midterm exam administered during class</b>
Week 8: Thursday, 10/10	Thomas More	Before class, read Thomas More's <i>Utopia</i> , Book 2, Chapters 1-5 (32-44)
Week 9: Tuesday, 10/15	Thomas More/Religious Contexts	Before class, read Thomas More's <i>Utopia</i> , Book 2, Chapters 5-9 (45-68)  Before class, read excerpts from John Foxe's <i>Acts and Monuments of These Latter and Perilous Days</i> (96-99)  <b>Research Essay (hard copy) due by class time</b>
Week 9: Thursday, 10/17	Elizabethan Sonnet and Lyric	selections from Petrarch, Spenser, Sidney, Shakespeare, Drayton, and David.
Week 10: Tuesday, 10/22	Elizabethan Sonnet and Lyric	selections from Petrarch, Spenser, Sidney, Shakespeare, Drayton, and David.
Week 10: Thursday, 10/24	Sir Philip Sidney	Before class read excerpt from <i>Defense of Poesy</i>
Week 11: Tuesday, 10/29	Christopher Marlowe	Before class, read Christopher Marlowe's <i>Doctor Faustus</i>
Week 11: Thursday, 10/31	Christopher Marlowe	Before class, read Christopher Marlowe's <i>Doctor Faustus</i>
Week 12: Tuesday, 11/5	William Shakespeare	Before class, read <i>The Tempest</i>
Week 12: Thursday, 11/7	William Shakespeare	Before class, read <i>The Tempest</i> .

When	Topic	Notes
Week 13: Tuesday, 11/12	17th Century Lyric Poetry	Before class, read: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ben Jonson, "To Penshurst."</li> <li>• John Donne, "The Good-Morrow," "The Sun Rising," "A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning," "To His Mistress Going to Bed," and Holy Sonnets 6 and 7.</li> </ul>
Week 13: Thursday, 11/14	17th Century Lyric Poetry	Before class, read excerpts from Mary Wroth, <i>Pamphilia to Amphilanthus</i> .
Week 14: Tuesday, 11/19	John Milton	Before class, read the following selections from <i>Paradise Lost</i> : "The Verse" (992), Argument to Book 1 (992), and Book 1 (992-1005).
Week 14: Thursday, 11/21	John Milton	Before class, read the following selections from <i>Paradise Lost</i> : Argument to Book 4 (1025) and Book 4 (1025-1039).
Week 15: Tuesday, 11/26	John Milton	Before class, read the following selections from <i>Paradise Lost</i> : Argument to Book 9 (1046) and Book 9 (1046-1061).
Week 15: Thursday, 11/28		<i>Class not held due to the Thanksgiving holiday.</i>
Week 16: Tuesday, 12/3	Anne Bradstreet	Before class, read selections from Anne Bradstreet's <i>The Tenth Muse, Lately Sprung Up in America</i> (available on Canvas).
Week 16: Thursday, 12/5	Final Exam Review	<b>Critical Essay (hard copy) due by class time</b>
<b>Finals Week</b>	Course Review	<b>Final Exam will be administered during class on Friday, December 13th.</b>