

Literatures on the British Isles: Poetry and Drama from Renaissance to Restoration

Selections from 16th- and 17th-century literature

Aims and objectives

This course should introduce students to the development of early modern English poetry (especially the sonnet form) and drama (focusing on the transformations of the genre of comedy (Shakespeare's comedies, satire in Ben Jonson's comedy of humours and the comedy of manners).

Procedure and assessment

The seminar will combine Moodle forum with class sessions.

To make the discussion of the texts more streamlined, students will be divided into groups, each group focusing closely on a given section of the text while everybody should be broadly acquainted with the whole material.

The forum is designed to serve as a preparation for class discussion. Members of the group will take turns introducing the respective passage to their colleagues through a brief interpretative reading, explaining unfamiliar terms and "opening" the text. There will also be questions for discussion posted in the forum, which the members of the group should consider and respond to briefly (picking one problem and commenting on it in the space of 1-2 sentences), while everybody is invited to join in. The class session will expand on this initial debate, allowing all participants to interrogate, compare and combine their individual insights and conclusions.

Further details will be discussed during the first introductory session. Please watch for updated information in the course account on Moodle.

Credit (Z):

The requirements include active participation in seminar work and satisfactory written work. You are expected to be prepared for class, i.e. to keep up with the reading schedule, and contribute to class discussions. (Moodle forum discussion – contributions in at least 6 sessions required; class meetings – the general allowance of 3 absences applies, with potential allowances for unpredicted developments; should this happen, individual arrangements will be made).

Credit assignments include:

- a brief 10 min oral presentation (or ca 300-word abstract in case the presentation schedule is full) of a literary critical work; see the list below. The presentation should be accompanied by a slideshow or a handout – these will afterwards be posted in Moodle for students' convenience.
- 1 test based on the texts and facts covered in class. Pass limit: 60 points (max. 100). If a student fails, s/he must write an extra essay of 1,000-1,200 words on a given topic. Topic and deadline in January will be specified by the instructor. (If unsatisfactory, this essay is subject to only one rewriting.) Not writing the test will be considered as failing. Make-ups will not be given.

Failing to fulfill any single one of the above requirements will result in not obtaining credit.

Examination (Zk):

Takes the form of a 2,000-word essay on a given topic provided by the instructor. Essays will be judged on depth of thought, originality, strength of example, clarity and articulateness. Referencing must comply with Chicago guidelines (see Essay guidelines at <https://ualk.ff.cuni.cz/wp-content/uploads/sites/159/2020/11/essay-guidelines.pdf>). Pass limit: C max. Subject to two rewritings according to study regulations for an exam. Resubmitted essays should be handed in together with the commented first version. Students submit their papers by 9.00 a.m. on the examination date they have signed up for in the SIS. E-mail submission on prior arrangement. There are 3 dates after each semester. The examination paper must be completed by the date required by the study regulations, i.e. the end of the academic year following the one in which the student registered for the course.

Material

- a reader of early modern English poetry (available online at <http://dl1.cuni.cz/file.php/1416>)
- William Shakespeare, *The Sonnets* (recommended edition: Torst, Praha, 1997, or Brno: Atlantis, 2nd ed. 2005, with translation by M.Hilský); if unavailable, any scholarly edition with commentary (e.g. Penguin)
- William Shakespeare, *The Merchant of Venice* (recommended edition: Torst, Praha, 1999, or 2nd edition from Brno: Atlantis, with translation by M.Hilský); if unavailable, a good edition with introduction and critical commentary is e.g. Arden, New Penguin, etc.
- Ben Jonson, *Volpone* (e.g. in Ben Jonson's *Three Comedies*, available in dept. library, or reprint in *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, vol.1)
- George Etherege, *The Man of Mode* or William Wycherley, *The Country Wife* (recommended edition Penguin Classics)
- a selection of literary criticism - hand-outs for presentations (available online at <http://dl1.cuni.cz/file.php/1416>)

Oral presentation assignment

Each class member will select ONE item from the list below for a 10-minutes presentation or written abstract of 300 words.

1. Michel Foucault, "The Prose of the World", *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*, New York: Pantheon, 1970 **wk 3**
2. Eliot, T.S., review of *Metaphysical Lyrics and Poems of the Seventeenth Century: Donne to Butler*, Times Literary Supplement, 20 October 1921 **wk 3**
3. Alexander Shurbanov, "Shakespeare's Sonnet 126 as Envoi: The Test of Imagery", *The University of Sophia English Papers*, Sophia: University of Sophia, 1986 **wk 5**
4. Michael McCanles, "Some Themes of Shakespeare's Sonnets", in *Texas Studies in Literature and Language*, 1971 **wk 5**
5. Frances A. Yates, "The London Theatres", in *Theatre of the World*. London: 1989 **wk 6**
6. David Cecil, "Shakespearean Comedy", in *Shakespeare's Romantic Comedy*, ed. by Herbert Weil, Jr., 1966 **wk 7**
7. "The Sources" and "Stage History", in Shakespeare: *The Merchant of Venice*, Arden edition **wk 7**
8. Hermann Sinsheimer, "Shylock's Medieval Elements, or Reality versus Myth", in *Shylock, The History of a Character, or the Myth of the Jew*, London: Victor Gollanz, 1947 **wk 8**
9. Jean E.Howard, "Crossdressing, the Theatre and Gender Struggle in Early Modern England", *Shakespeare Quarterly*, vol.39, Winter 1988 **wk 9**
10. Milan Lukeš, "Jonsonova teorie komedie", *Alžbětinské divadlo II*. Praha: Odeon, 1978. **wk 10**
11. Roy Daniels, "Mannerist Perspective", *Milton, Mannerism and Baroque*, Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press, 1963 **wk 11**

NOTE: Abstracts should be submitted **on the day of the respective session**. Abstracts must conform to usual requirements.

Programme with reading schedule

week 1	4.10. Introductory session: themes, approaches, procedure
week 2	11.10. The sonnet I: evolution of form R: Moodle topic 1 – "sonnet form"; article "Miniature poems" and/or read introduction to Hilsky's translation of Shakespeare's <i>Sonnets</i> ;
week 3	18.10. The sonnet II: conceit R: Moodle topic 2 – "sonnet conceit" P1, P2
week 4	25.10. The sonnet III: conventions (themes, imagery, sonnet sequence) R: Moodle topic 3 – "sonnet themes"
week 5	1.11. The sonnet IV: Shakespeare's sonnets. R: Moodle topic 4 – "Shakespeare's sonnets" P3, P4
week 6	8.11. Introduction to drama. <i>The Merchant of Venice</i> R: Merchant of Venice, cursory reading of the whole play; Act I, close reading P5
week 7	15.11. <i>The Merchant of Venice</i> (cont.) R: II.1, II.7, II.9, III.2, close reading P6, P7
week 8	22.11. <i>The Merchant of Venice</i> (cont.) R: II.8, III.1, close reading P8
week 9	29.11. <i>The Merchant of Venice</i> (cont.) R: IV.1, V, close reading P9
week 10	6.12. From the comedy of humours to comedy of manners 1: <i>Volpone</i> R: Volpone P10
week 11	13.12. Metaphysical poets to Restoration R: Moodle topic 10 – "survey Donne to Restoration" P11
week 12	20.12. in reserve
week 13	3. 1. From the comedy of humours to comedy of manners 2: <i>The Country Wife</i> R: The Country Wife
week 14	10. 1. Test