

ENGL 211: Renaissance and Restoration: *The Voices of Epic*

Dr. David Currell

MWF 10:00-10:50 Fisk 339

Office Hours: W 3:00-5:00 and by appointment, Fisk 203

Email: dc13@aub.edu.lb

Ext: 4092

Overview

This course studies the literature of the period 1590-1728 with special attention to English epic writing. The rebirth of classical learning (implied in the word “Renaissance”) and the contests over monarchical authority (implied in the word “Restoration”) find their most complex expression in this period in epic writing: the self-conscious imitative recreation of the most prestigious Greek and Roman genre to make political art relevant to the modern world. The final section of the course will address the “death” of epic verse in English and the parallel rise of mock-epic.

You will study the works independently in preparation for seminars in which your responses to these texts will direct our collective inquiry in partnership with the professor.

Student Learning Outcomes

After completing this course, students will be able to:

- Recall and articulate information about character, language, and plot in major English epics
- Analyze the creative reception of classical epic in English writing of the period
- Analyze the ways in which poetry addresses the political context in which it is produced
- Analyze epic as a genre, delineate its techniques and attributes, and contrast these to the genre of mock-epic
- Apply elements of contemporary criticism and theory in the written analysis of English epic

Outcomes achieved in this course will also be broadly applicable within literary studies and beyond.

Textbook

There is a single required textbook, available at the AUB Bookstore:

Stephen Greenblatt, gen. ed., *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, vol. 1, 9th edition (New York: Norton, 2012).

Please bring this textbook to every class following the introductory sessions.

Assessment

Assessed work will take the form two 50-minute tests and a final paper. There is also a participation component to your final grade.

The tests will be conducted in class and comprise 5 multiple-choice questions, 5 identifications and commentary on short excerpts, and 2 mini-essay (single-page) responses to prompts.

The final research paper will be about 6 pages in length and present an argued thesis concerning one of the texts on the syllabus or make a comparative analysis of a specific aspect of two texts. The paper should be formatted according to these specifications: typed, double-spaced, with 1-inch margins, in 10-to-12-point font, without gratuitous spelling or grammatical errors, and using correct (e.g. Chicago or MLA style) citation of primary quotations and sources. Submission will be both online and hardcopy and late submissions will be penalized 25% per day.

Grading

Test 1 (25%) + Test 2 (25%) + Paper (30%) + Participation (20%) = Grade (100)

The substantial “participation” segment expresses the importance of continuous in-class engagement as well as private study for developing your critical approach to literary texts. This component of the grade will take into account punctuality, attention to colleagues and professor, evidence of preparation, and, above all, frequency and thoughtfulness of discussion contribution.

Policies

DO bring to class: Textbook, paper, writing implement

DO NOT bring to class: Switched-on mobile phone or other electronic devices

The course will be administered in conformity with the University Catalogue and Student Handbook. This course depends on the exchange and development of ideas and arguments in seminar and your attendance is required; attendance will be taken and, per regulation, after five unexcused absences you may be dropped from the course. Success depends equally – as does all humanistic study – on the unique encounter of your individual mind with the text. All work must be original and must correctly cite any external sources on which you rely. Instances of academic dishonesty will be automatically reported to the Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, so be sure to familiarize yourself with relevant policies and please ask in advance if you have questions.

Provisional Class Schedule with Reading Assignments

Assigned readings to be completed in advance of the scheduled class. Readings are cited by line number (where appropriate) and page number in the Norton Anthology (NA).

Introduction: Classical epic

M 28/1 Overview

W 30/1 Homer, *Iliad* 16.1-418

F 1/2 Homer, *Iliad* 16.419-867

- M 4/2** Edmund Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, prologue to Book 1 (NA 781-82)
- W 6/2** Edmund Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, Book 1, Canto 1.1-27 (NA 782-88)
- F 8/2** Edmund Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, Book 1, Canto 1.28-55 (NA 788-95)
-
- M 11/2** Edmund Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, Book 1, Canto 2 (NA 795-806)
- W 13/2** Edmund Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, Book 1, Canto 3 (NA 806-17)
- F 15/2** Edmund Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, Book 1, Canto 4 (NA 817-830)
-
- M 18/2** Edmund Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, Book 1, Canto 5-6 (NA 830-55)
- W 20/2** Edmund Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, Book 1, Canto 7 (NA 855-67)
- F 22/2** Edmund Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, Book 1, Canto 8 (NA 868-80)
-
- M 25/2** Edmund Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, Book 1, Canto 9-10 (NA 880-910)
- W 27/2** Edmund Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, Book 1, Canto 11 (NA 910-24)
- F 1/3** Edmund Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, Book 1, Canto 12 (NA 924-34)
-
- M 4/3** Amelia Lanyer, *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum*, excerpts (NA1430-36)
- W 6/3** Andrew Marvell, *An Horatian Ode* (NA 1806-11)
- F 8/3** **Mid-term Test 1**
-
- M 11/3** John Milton, *Paradise Lost* prefatory matter and 1.1-220 (NA 1943-51)
- W 13/3** John Milton, *Paradise Lost* 1.221-521 (NA 1951-58)
- F 15/3** John Milton, *Paradise Lost* 1.522-795 (NA 1958-64)
-
- M 18/3** John Milton, *Paradise Lost* 3.1-55 and 4.1-357 (NA 1988-89, 2003-10)
- W 20/3** John Milton, *Paradise Lost* 4.358-775 (NA 2010-19)

- F 22/3** John Milton, *Paradise Lost* 4.776-1015 (NA 2019-24)
- W 27/3** John Milton, *Paradise Lost* 5.1-450 (NA 2024-34)
- W 3/4** John Milton, *Paradise Lost* 5.451-907 (NA 2034-44)
- F 5/4** John Milton, *Paradise Lost* 6.1-405 (NA 2044-53)
- M 8/4** John Milton, *Paradise Lost* 6.406-912 (NA 2053-63)
- W 10/4** John Milton, *Paradise Lost* 9.1-531 (NA 2091-2103)
- F 12/4** John Milton, *Paradise Lost* 9.532-1189 (NA 2103-16)
- M 15/4** John Dryden, *Absalom and Achitophel* 1-302 (NA 2212-20)
- W 17/4** John Dryden, *Absalom and Achitophel* 303-681 (NA 2220-29)
- F 19/4** John Dryden, *Absalom and Achitophel* 682-1030 (NA 2229-36)
- M 22/4** Jonathan Swift, *The Battle of the Books* (pdf)
- W 24/4** Jonathan Swift, *The Battle of the Books* (pdf)
- F 26/4** Alexander Pope, *The Rape of the Lock*, Cantos 1-2 (NA 2685-93)
- M 29/4** Alexander Pope, *The Rape of the Lock*, Cantos 3-5 (NA 2694-2704)
- W 8/5** Conclusion
- F 10/5** **Mid-term Test 2**
- 20/5** **Final paper**