

American University of Beirut  
 Department of English  
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 ENGL 205: English Literature I  
 Ext: 4094

Dr. David Currell

**MW 3:30-4:45 Fisk 313**  
**Office Hours tba**

### **Overview**

This course serves as a foundational course for the BA in English Literature and for the minor in English Literature, and is also available as an elective for fulfillment of the Humanities I GE requirement.

Its scope is literature in English in the medieval and early modern periods (roughly 1400-1700)—although the phrase “literature in English” when applied across such a timeframe describes a vast and dynamic space of linguistic and artistic change. By design, the course is centered on intensive analysis of representative works of literature composed in diverse periods and written in diverse genres. The literary riches notionally covered are almost unthinkable and we will at best be able to scratch their surface. That scratching alone, however, will prove a source of wonder, puzzlement, excitement, exasperation, indignation, joy, and the urge to take further courses in the Department of English.

This is a seminar course organized around group discussion of prepared materials read ahead of the relevant session, with occasional supplementation by new texts distributed during class.

### **Course Learning Outcomes**

After completing this course, students will be able to:

- Recall and articulate information about form, language, plot, theme, and character in specific literary texts in fine detail
- Analyze specific texts in relation to their literary and linguistic features and techniques and communicate that analysis orally and in writing
- Argue significant and non-obvious literary-critical claims about literary texts with principal recourse to the methods of close reading and potential recourse to other research methods

Outcomes achieved through this course will also be applicable to other courses in literature and in the humanities more broadly.

### **Texts**

Texts will be made available in electronic copies or online editions through Moodle:

Additional materials will be posted occasionally to Moodle and distributed by email.

### **Assignments**

Assessed work will take the form of participation, in-class written work, an online exercise, and a paper.

Papers should aim to argue something significant and non-obvious, and should grow from individual observations and discussion points raised throughout the semester. Engagement with scholarly sources is encouraged for those who wish to develop or exercise this skill (especially English majors), but is not

required and is not in itself a graded component of submitted papers. I discourage consultation of studyguide sites (SparkNotes etc.): they tend to foster reductive and derivative thinking and are frequently pitched to an audience below our level. The online exercise will invite you to reply to a specific prompt within a period of a few days. The inclass written work will require analysis and responses related to the class discussions; samples will be distributed and discussed ahead of time.

### Preparation and submission of written work

Papers must be formatted as follows: typed, double-spaced, 12-point font, 1-inch margins, free of gratuitous spelling or grammatical errors, and including name and page numbers. Please name the submitted MSWord or PDF file using the format “Firstname\_Lastname\_205\_Papernumber” (e.g. “David\_Currell\_205\_1.docx”)

### **Grading**

Participation	30
Online Exercises	15
In-class Writing	30
<u>Paper</u>	<u>25</u>
TOTAL	100

Assignment and overall grades are final and not negotiable. (Arithmetic errors made by me in calculating test scores are an exception to this rule and should be brought to my attention as soon as noticed.)

Grades are as given, i.e. they will not be standardized or fitted to a curve. Standard conversion between numeric and final letter grades will be used.

### **Policies**

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 unexcused absence beyond the threshold specified in the catalogue will result in a student being dropped.

It depends equally – as does all humanistic study – on the unique encounter of your individual mind with the text. All work must be your own and must properly cite sources wherever they have influenced your ideas or composition. Instances of academic dishonesty and violations of the student code of conduct will result in a zero for the assignment and be automatically reported to the Dean of FAS, so ensure you are familiar with policies on plagiarism and cheating and ask if you have questions.

AUB strives to make learning experiences as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience academic barriers due to a disability (including mental health and chronic or temporary medical conditions), please inform me so that we can privately discuss options and resources. To help establish reasonable accommodations and facilitate a smooth accommodations process, you are encouraged to contact the Accessible Education Office: [accessibility@aub.edu.lb](mailto:accessibility@aub.edu.lb); [+01-350000, x3246](tel:+1350000x3246); West Hall, 314.

### **Calendar**

An up-to-date calendar of class sessions with assigned readings, additional activities or exercises, and dates for exams and paper submissions will be maintained on the course Moodle page. These will be adjusted to circumstances as necessary and I welcome your feedback on the pacing of the class.

It is essential that you complete listed readings *before* the scheduled class session.