

English 2001.03 (Fall)

British Literature to 1800:

R. Huebert

MWF 1:35 - 2:25

This course offers students an opportunity to explore some of the more striking literary texts from *Beowulf* (written probably before 800) to Boswell, whose *Life of Samuel Johnson* (1791) was printed about a thousand years later. Within this millennium of literary history there are plenty of highlights to choose from: canonical works by Chaucer, Shakespeare, Marlowe, Jonson, Donne, Marvell, and Pope will be well represented. And, following on the recovery of women's writing in the last few decades, figures such as Lady Mary Wroth and Aphra Behn will find their place on the agenda too. The variety of literary genres and styles written in English over this period is nothing short of dazzling: there are heartfelt love-songs here, and clever satires; epic battles and trivial pursuits; tragic deaths and parodic frivolities. Speakers of English are simply lucky to have a tradition so rich and various on which to plant the present and grow the future.

Instruction will be by a combination of lecture, discussion, and tutorials. A weekly lecture (generally by a different member of the English Department each week, occasionally by a distinguished visiting speaker) will highlight a particular text and provide a focus for the rest of the week's intellectual work. Evaluation will be based on reader responses, examinations (a mid-term and a final exam), and a term paper.

Textbook:

The Norton Anthology of English Literature. 8th ed. The Major Authors. Vol. A: The Middle Ages Through the Restoration and the Eighteenth Century. Ed. Stephen Greenblatt, M. H. Abrams, et al. New York: Norton, 2006.