

Texas A&M University—San Antonio
English 2321: Themes and Genres of British Literature (Fall 2024, in-person)
Meeting Sessions: Monday and Wednesday, 9:30 am – 10:45 am
Classroom location: Classroom Hall, room 201

Instructor: Dr. Jackson Ayres

Office: AAB1, room 314L

Email: Jackson.Ayres@tamusa.edu

Zoom Room: <https://tamusa.zoom.us/my/jackayres>

Phone: 210-784-2229

Office Hours: Wed, 1:00-2:00pm; Thu, 11:00am-noon; and f2f or virtual meetings by appointment

Course Description

This course surveys the development of British literature from the Anglo-Saxon period to the twenty-first century. Students study works of prose, poetry, drama, and fiction in relation to their historical, linguistic, and cultural contexts. Texts represent historically diverse British writers and traditions.

Transferable Skills

Skills practiced in this class that are valuable elsewhere include critical thinking and reading, persuasive writing, analytic writing, synthesis of information, and collaboration.

The Ungraded Classroom

This class is ungraded. An ungraded course attempts to relocate the focus and purpose of the classroom onto *learning*, not ranking. Grades are not a necessity of education – in the centuries-long history of higher education, grades are a recent invention – and good reasons exist to discard them.

Students sometimes feel uncertainty or resistance to ungrading. A common negative reaction from students to ungrading is a sense that the instructor is abdicating a major responsibility. If there is no grading, this view asks, how will students receive guidance, recommendations, and a record of their accomplishment? Rest assured that while there are no *grades*, we still have *assessment* in forms of feedback, and review – but, I am detaching these assessment activities from grading, a move that prevents a grade from overshadowing or distorting assessment, feedback, and review. Ungrading also accommodates a customizable educational experience, as you create your own individualized learning plan and proceed through the course in a way that makes it most meaningful to you and your goals.

Of course, the requirements of the university mean that I must submit a final grade. In the end, then, you do in fact receive a grade. However, you and I will collaborate to determine, in a qualitative and holistic way, your course grade. Throughout the semester, we will reflect on your work, process, and learning goals. Your final reflective self-assessment asks you to decide your grade for the course. I will respond, and, in turn, you will either revise your grade or stick with it. This process has some caveats, identified later in this document, and I do retain a right to override; yet, I trust your judgment so I will only override a grade decision in select, rare circumstances – and it will not always be to lower a grade.

Required Materials

The Broadway Anthology of British Literature: One-Volume Compact Edition. Available at campus bookstore and from online vendors. Any other readings will be available online via our course Blackboard site.

Core Curriculum Learning Objectives

Critical Thinking Skills (CT) - creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation and synthesis of information

Communication Skills (COM) - effective development, interpretation and expression of ideas through written, oral and visual communication

Social Responsibility (SR) - intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to engage effectively in regional, national, and global communities

Personal Responsibility (PR) - ability to connect choices, actions and consequences to ethical decision-making

Instructor-Developed Course Goals

On completion of this course, students will:

- demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the major themes, genres, and critical issues of British literature;
- read and analyze, critically, a range of texts, with attention to the relationships between the texts and their historical and cultural contexts; and
- hone written and oral communication skills.

In addition to (or, to some extent, in place of) these goals, each student will develop, with me, their own personal learning goals. Students can periodically adjust their goals throughout the semester.

Attendance & Participation

I take attendance each class session for recordkeeping, and class attendance is a possible factor for final grade determinations. The class offers opportunities for different types of participation.

Assignments

We have three categories of assignments: 1) engagement, 2) checkpoint, and 3) depth assignments.

Engagement Assignments

- Classroom session activities
- Proposals and working drafts
- Reflection exercises

Engagement assignments may seem routine, but they cannot be undervalued: these consistent, short or brief assignments are the essential building blocks of your learning. These varied assignments allow you to explore our readings, brainstorm, make connections, and pose generative questions. They enable you to think through the ideas and arguments presented by our readings, clarifying your understanding of them and formulating critical responses, and extend our class conversations. In-class activities will occur on an ad hoc basis, and may include polls, peer review, free-writes, among others.

Impact on final self-assessment: we will incorporate how and to what extent you use engagement assignments toward your learning, but there is no requirement for them tied to final grade maximums.

Checkpoint Assignments

- Learning plan
- Process letters (2)
- Mid-semester reflection
- Final self-assessment

Checkpoint assignments undergird the ungraded pedagogical approach and structure your ongoing learning experience. The learning plan establishes your goals for the semester. Intermittent process letters ask you to describe and meta-cognitively comment upon your learning methods and progress. A reflection at mid-semester allows you to pause, take stock of your work in the course, and decide if you need to make adjustments in your approach to the class or revisions to your learning plan. Finally, the self-assessment at the end of term has you narrate and evaluate your learning experience and course performance; as part of this task, you will identify your course grade and then consult me about it.

Impact on final self-assessment: completing fewer than half the required checkpoint assignments (i.e., two or less) automatically limits your maximum final grade by one letter-grade.

Depth Assignments

- Close Analysis Assignment
- Multimedia Project Assignment
- Take-home Exam Assignment
- Critical Analysis Assignment

Depth assignments enable you to engage British literature in sustained, focused, and substantive ways.

Impact on final self-assessment: completing half or fewer the required depth assignments (i.e., two or less) automatically limits your maximum final grade by one letter-grade.

How to Submit Your Work

Submit assignments electronically to Blackboard. Be sure to familiarize yourself with the Blackboard system prior to submission / posting, and contact me if you have questions. Use MLA format.

Late Papers

I accept late work. However, if you submit work late, I may not have time to provide narrative feedback, undermining course benefits and outcomes, and the Final Self-Assessment determining your grade takes into consideration missed deadlines. Furthermore, please see the Course Schedule for late submission cut-off dates. In appropriate circumstances, request an extension in advance.

Artificial Intelligence Statement

ENGL 2321 assumes that all work submitted by students will be generated by the students themselves, working individually or in groups. Students should not have another person/entity do the writing of any portion of an assignment for them, which includes hiring a person or a company to write assignments and/or using artificial intelligence (AI) tools like ChatGPT. Use of any AI-generated content in this course qualifies as academic dishonesty and violates Texas A&M-San Antonio's standards of academic integrity.

Writing, Language, and Digital Composing Center:

The Center provides writing support to graduate and undergraduate students in all three colleges. Writing tutors work with students to develop reading skills, prepare oral presentations, and plan, draft, and revise their written assignments. Students can schedule appointments with the Center in JagWire under the student services tab. The Writing, Language, and Digital Composing Center can be reached by emailing wldcc@tamusa.edu. Students can also make appointments with the Writing, Language, and Digital Composing under the Student Services tab in JagWire.

JAGS

Additional academic skill resources can be found in The JAGS (Jaguar Academic Guides to Success) Program. JAGS offers academic skill building strategies and can assist you in developing an effective academic success plan. If you are interested in the JAGS program, please contact the Student Academic Success Center at (210) 784-1352.

Students with Disabilities

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disability. If you believe you have a disability that may require accommodations, please contact Disability Support Services (DSS) for the coordination of services. DSS is located at the Main Campus on the 2nd floor of the Central Academic Building in room 210. The phone number for DSS is (210) 784-1335 and email is dssupport@tamusa.edu.

Counseling Resources

As a college student, there may be times when personal stressors interfere with your academic performance and/or negatively impact your daily functioning. If you or someone you know is experiencing life stressors, emotional difficulties, or mental health concerns at Texas A&M University – San Antonio, please contact the Student Counseling Center (SCC) located in Modular C, Room 166 (Rear entrance) or call 210-784-1331 between the hours of 8 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday – Friday. After-hours crisis support is available by calling 210-784-1331. Please contact UPD at 911 if harm to self or harm to others is imminent.

All mental health services provided by the SCC are free, confidential (to the extent permitted by law), and are not part of a student's academic or university record. SCC provides brief individual and group therapy, crisis intervention, consultation, case management, and prevention services. For more information, please visit www.tamusa.edu/studentcounseling

Safer Spaces

We will work together to create a safer classroom for every student enrolled in this course. We will treat each other with common decency and respect. Derogatory or abusive comments made regarding race, class, gender identity, sex, sexual orientation, size, appearance, age, religion, ethnicity, political orientation, or nationality are grounds for dismissal from the classroom community. Enthusiasm is encouraged; hostility is not. These expectations apply to online interactions as well face-to-face ones. If you experience any discomfort, please contact me and we will redress it.

Meeting Essential Needs

Any student who has difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food to eat every day, or who lacks a safe and stable place to live, and believes this may affect their performance in the course, is urged to contact the Dean of Students (DOS@tamusa.edu) for support. Furthermore,

please notify the professor if you are comfortable in doing so. This will enable them to provide any resources they may possess.

Student Misconduct

Appropriate conduct is essential to the effective functioning of the University. University policy defines unacceptable conduct, both academic and non-academic misconduct, and penalties for such behavior in [The Student Handbook](#) and The Student Code of Conduct.

Academic Rights and Responsibilities

As a member in an academic community, students at Texas A&M University-San Antonio are expected to exhibit a high level of honesty and integrity in their pursuit of higher education, be mature, be self-directed and be able to manage their own affairs. Students who are unwilling to abide by these basic expectations will find themselves facing academic and/or disciplinary sanctions. Students are expected to share in the responsibility and authority with faculty and staff to challenge and make known acts that violate the Texas A&M University-San Antonio Code of Conduct. For more information please [this site](#), which includes information on policies for the use of AI tools. Students, moreover, are expected to contend with the content of the course and the academic field from which that content emerges. Please refer to [the Student Handbook](#) for more information.

Financial Aid and Verification of Attendance

According to the following federal regulation, [34 CFR 668.21: U.S. Department of Education \(DoE\) Title IV regulation](#), a student can only receive Title IV funds based on Title IV eligibility criteria which includes class attendance. If Title IV funds are disbursed to ineligible students (including students who fail to begin attendance), the institution must return these funds to the U.S. DoE within 30 days of becoming aware that the student will not or has not begun attendance. Faculty will provide the Office of Financial Aid with an electronic notification if a student has not attended the first week of class. Any student receiving Federal financial aid who does not attend the first week of class will have his/her aid terminated and returned to the DoE. Please note that any student who stops attending at any time during the semester may need to return a portion of his/her federal aid.

University Email Policy and Course Communications

All correspondence between professors and students must occur via University email accounts. You must have Jaguar email account ready and working. If it is not working, contact the help desk at sahelp@tamusa.edu or at 210-784-4357.

The Six-Drop Rule

Students are subject to the requirements of Senate Bill (SB) 1231 passed by the Texas Legislature in 2007. SB 1231 limits students to a maximum of six (6) non-punitive course drops (i.e., courses a student chooses to drop) during their undergraduate careers. A non-punitive drop does not affect the student's GPA. However, course drops that exceed the maximum allowed by SB 1231 will be treated as "F" grades and will impact the student's GPA.

Schedule (complete readings *prior* to their assigned class sessions)

Week 1

MONDAY, AUGUST 26

Course introductions / review syllabus

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 27

Introduction to British literature / defining key terms and periodization

Blog post due by Wednesday at 11:59 – please provide your expectations for the course.

Unit 1: myths and histories

Week 2

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 02

No class – Labor Day holiday.

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 04

Beowulf, day 1 (pp. 62-85, or lines 1-1,816)

Complete and submit Learning Plan by Friday, 11:59pm

Week 3

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 09

Beowulf, day 2 (pp. 85-103, or lines 1,817-3,183)

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 11

Elizabethan statements: “On Marriage,” “On Mary, Queen of Scots,” “On Mary’s Execution”, and “The Golden Speech” (pp. 501-508)

Week 4

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 16

Aphra Behn, *Oroonoko; or, The Royal Slave. A True History* day 1 (pp. 880-914)

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 18

Christina Rossetti, *Goblin Market* (pp. 1615-1622)

Week 5

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 23

Class canceled – catch-up day / prepare your Close Reading

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 25

Alfred, Lord Tennyson, “The Charge of the Light Brigade” (p. 1529)

Philip Larkin, “Church Going” (p. 1953)

Close Reading Assignment due by Sunday, 11:59pm.

Unit 2: classes and identities

Week 6

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 30

Felicia Hemens, “The Homes of England” (pp. 1374-1375) and “Casabianca” (pp. 1376-1377)

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 02

Eliza Haywood, *Fantomina; or, Love in a Maze*, day 1 (pp. 1034-1041)

Week 7

MONDAY, OCTOBER 07

Eliza Haywood, *Fantomina; or, Love in a Maze*, day 2 (pp. 1041-1049)

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 09

Oscar Wilde, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, day 1 (pp. 1689-1700, or Act 1)**Process Letter 1 due by Friday, 11:59pm***Week 8*

MONDAY, OCTOBER 14

Oscar Wilde, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, day 2 (pp. 1700-1720, or Acts 2 and 3)

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 16

Seamus Heaney, "Digging" (p. 1963)

Multimedia Assignment due by Sunday, 11:59pm.**Late submissions from Units 1 and 2 no longer accepted as of Sunday, 11:59pm****Unit 3: Britain and beyond***Week 9*

MONDAY, OCTOBER 21

Class canceled – work on Mid-semester Reflection.

Mid-semester Reflection due by Mon, 11:59pm (optional conference this week).

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 23

Geoffrey Chaucer, *Canterbury Tales: The General Prologue* (pp. 209-224)*Week 10*

MONDAY, OCTOBER 28

Jonathan Swift, "A Modest Proposal" (pp. 989-994)

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 30

William Blake, "The Ecchoing Green" (p. 1140), "London" (pp. 1152), and "Jerusalem" (Bb)

Week 11

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 04

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, "The Speckled Band" (pp. 1722-1736)

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 06

Class canceled – work on take-home exam, due by Friday at 11:59pm**Process Letter #2 due by Sunday, 11:59pm***Week 12*

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 11

Zadie Smith, "The Waiter's Wife" (pp. 2012-2020)

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 13

Kazuo Ishiguro, "A Village after Dark" (pp. 1999-2005)

Proposal for a topic and text for Critical Analysis due Sunday, by 11:59 pm.

Unit 4: Critical Analysis

Week 13

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 18

Class canceled – work on Critical Analysis

Working Draft of Critical Analysis (approx. 2-3 pages) due by 11:59pm.

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 20

In-class writing session for Critical Analysis (bring device and working draft)

Week 14

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 25

Class canceled – writing day

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 27

Class canceled – Thanksgiving holiday

Week 15

MONDAY, DECEMBER 02

Workshop: bring draft of Critical Analysis

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 04

Class canceled – finish Critical Analysis.

Critical Analysis due Wednesday by 11:59pm.

Sign up for self-assessment conference

Late submissions from Units 3 and 4 no longer accepted as of Wednesday, 11:59pm

Final Period: Saturday, December 07 – Friday, December 13

Self-assessment virtual conferences

Submit Self-Assessment prior to scheduled conference