

Department of English & Writing Studies

English 4321G (001)**Seminar in Renaissance Literature: The Royal Court (Tudor and Stuart) and English Literature**
Winter 2026

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Office Hours Term 2
Monday 1:00-2:00
Wednesday 12:00-2:00

Prerequisites: 1.0 from English 3000-3999 or permission of the Department.

Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

Course Description

Throughout the Tudor and early Stuart periods, the monarch and royal court stood at the centre of literary culture. This course will consider this phenomenon from a range of vantage points and considering a variety of literary categories: works attributed to the monarchs themselves, works celebrating them, satirising them, lamenting their deaths, and reflecting posthumously on their legacy. The course will unfold roughly chronologically from the hazards of Henry VIII's court, to the flowering of theatre and poetry in Elizabeth I's reign, to the tensions with Parliament in the early Stuart period. It will conclude with consideration of the literary response to the execution of Charles I in 1649. A range of genres of poetry, prose, and drama will be studied.

Objectives (a selection):

By the end of the course the successful student will be able to:

- Describe in detail the history and literary culture of the Tudor and early Stuart royal courts.
- Discuss how individual works engage with the court context.
- Discuss how individual monarchs both patronized and participated in the literary culture of the time.
- Describe the various ways in which the monarchs and royal courts more generally became of satiric attack.
- Use effectively a variety of reference and research tools relative to the topics of the course.
- Use and respond to some of the more significant scholarly material on the literary works studied.
- Persuasively deliver seminar papers to a small group of fellow learners.
- Respond critically (but kindly) to the ideas of others on the material studied

Methods of Evaluation

Short assignment(s)/project(s)	15%
Seminars	20%
Final Exam	20%
Participation*	20%
Research paper (2500-3000 words) (due Mon. April 6)	<u>25%</u> 100%

*Prepared attendance at all sessions is required.

Course Materials

Texts

Shakespeare, *Henry VIII*, ed. Jonathan Crewe (Pelican) ISBN 978-0143132264 (\$13.99)

A collection of primary materials that will be posted in Owl (indicated by “P.M.” in outline below), which should be printed out.

Various web editions.

A few selections are available in the folder entitled “Readings” at the course Owl site.

[some of the works listed below still await a link to an online edition, etc.; please see the copy of the syllabus at the Owl site for an updated version]

Formal Documentation Designation statement

Note that supporting documentation is **always** required for academic consideration requests for examinations scheduled by the office of the registrar (e.g. December and April exams) and for practical laboratory and performance tests typically scheduled during the last week of the term. When a student receives academic considerations or academic accommodations which overlap with the built-in flexibility of the assessment, the longest period of accommodation will determine the deadline. The built-in flexibility of the assessment should not be taken to extend any considerations or accommodations.

General information about missed coursework

Students must familiarize themselves with the *University Policy on Academic Consideration – Undergraduate Students in First Entry Programs* posted on the Academic Calendar:

<https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academicpolicies/appeals/academicconsiderationSep24.pdf>

This policy does not apply to requests for academic consideration submitted for **attempted or completed work**, whether online or in person. The policy also does not apply to students experiencing longer-term impacts on their academic responsibilities. These students should consult: [Accessible Education](#).

For procedures on how to submit Academic Consideration requests, please see the information posted on the Office of the Registrar’s webpage:

<https://registrar.uwo.ca/academics/academicconsiderations/>

All requests for Academic Consideration must be made within 48 hours after the assessment date or submission deadline.

All academic consideration requests must include supporting documentation; however, recognizing that formal documentation may not be available in some extenuating circumstances, the policy allows students to make one Academic Consideration request **without supporting documentation** in this course. However, the following assessments are excluded from this, and therefore always require formal supporting documentation:

Examinations scheduled during official examination periods (Defined by policy)

Final Exam. When a student misses the **Final Exam** and their Academic Consideration has been granted, they will be allowed to write the Special Examination (the name given by the University to a makeup Final Exam). See the Academic Calendar (Special Examinations), especially for those who miss multiple final exams within one examination period.

Policy on Late Assignments and Essays

Late essays that have not been approved for academic **consideration** will be penalized at a rate of three percent per day. Late essays will not be accepted after the end of term.

Students are fully responsible for looking at and being familiar with the information posted on the department website at <http://www.uwo.ca/english/undergraduate/Student%20Information.html>.

OWL Brightspace

Students are responsible for checking the course site on a regular basis for news and updates. This is the primary method by which information will be disseminated to all students in the class. Students may access the OWL Brightspace Learner Support site for assistance: <https://brightspacehelp.uwo.ca/> For IT related issues, they may contact Western Technology Services Helpdesk directly: <https://wts.uwo.ca/helpdesk/>.

Electronic Devices

No aids are permitted for the tests and exam of this course. Electronic devices of any kind (including calculators, cell phones and smart watches) are not permitted.

Attendance

Attendance is mandatory in all classes and tutorials. In cases of excessive absenteeism (e.g. more than 9 unexcused hours for a half course, 18 for a full course), which are not accounted for by either academic consideration or accommodation, students may be debarred from taking the final examination, and will receive an official warning to this effect by or before the course drop date (see Senate policy). In classes with or without final exams, students who do not attend class will receive 0% for course participation grades. Unless other policies dictate a different set of penalties in specific English and Writing Studies programs, this will apply to all department programs.

Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence

Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to, the unacknowledged use of AI tools, such as ChatGPT, Google Translate, Grammarly, etc. to create content that is submitted as one's own. In this course, the use of AI (automatic translation tools, grammar checkers, ChatGPT...) is prohibited. If AI use is suspected, the instructor will ask for research notes, rough drafts, essay outlines, and other materials used in preparing assignments. Students are expected to retain these materials until after final grades have been entered. In the unlikely event of concerns being raised about the authenticity of any assignment, students may be asked to produce these materials; an inability to do so may weigh heavily against them.

In the rare circumstance where AI might be helpful as part of the research process, the student must approach the professor for formal approval of its use.

Academic Offences

Scholastic offences are taken seriously, and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, here:

<http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academicpolicies/appeals/scholasticdisciplineundergrad.pdf>.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism of any kind is a serious academic offence. Be advised that electronic plagiarism-detection programmes will be used and essay banks checked, if the professor has any suspicion of plagiarism. Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea, or a passage from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing both in the body and at the end of the assignment. Any borrowings from secondary sources, whether wordings or ideas, must be acknowledged BOTH in the main body of your essay AND at the end in a bibliography or works cited! If you have any doubts about how to document your work correctly, check with your professor prior to handing in your essay.

All instances of plagiarism will be reported to the Chair of Undergraduate Studies. Proven cases of plagiarism will result in a grade of zero for the assignment. Subsequent offences will result in failure for the course.

Policy on Accommodation for Religious Holidays

Students should review the [policy for Accommodation for Religious Holidays](#). Where a student will be unable to write examinations and term tests due to a conflicting religious holiday, they should inform their instructors as soon as possible but **not later than two weeks** prior to writing the examination/term test. In the case of conflict with a midterm test, students should inform their instructor as soon as possible but not later than one week prior to the midterm.

Religious Accommodation requests for final exams should be submitted via the Student Absence Portal.

Academic Accommodation and Accessible Education

Academic Accommodation is “a means of adjusting the academic activities associated with a course or program of student in order to permit students with disabilities to participate in those activities at the University and to fulfill the essential requirements of a course or program.”

<https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academicpolicies/appeals/Academic%20Accommodationdisabilities.pdf>. Students with disabilities are encouraged to register with **Accessible Education** at the earliest opportunity. “Accessible Education plays a central role in Western’s efforts to ensure that its academic programs are accessible for all students”

<http://academicsupport.uwo.ca/accessibleeducation/index.html>

Special Examinations

A Special Examination is any examination other than the regular examination, and it may be offered only with the permission of the Dean of the Faculty in which the student is registered, in consultation with the instructor and Department Chair. Permission to write a Special Examination may be given on the basis of compassionate or medical grounds with appropriate supporting documents. To provide an opportunity for students to recover from the circumstances resulting in a Special Examination, the University has implemented Special Examinations dates. These dates as well as other important information about examinations and academic standing can be found [here](#).

Support Services

Academic Advising

Your Home Faculty's Academic Advising Office will support or refer whenever you have an issue that is affecting your studies, including information on adding/dropping courses, academic considerations for absences, appeals, exam conflicts, and many other academic related matters. Do not hesitate to reach out to them if you are struggling and unsure where to go for help. Contact info for all Faculties is here: <https://registrar.uwo.ca/facultyacademiccounselling.html>

Mental Health Support

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western (<https://uwo.ca/health/>) for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

Gender-Based and Sexual Violence

Western University [is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence](#) (GBSV) and providing compassionate support to anyone who is going through or has gone through these traumatic events. If you are experiencing or have experienced GBSV (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts at the following website:

<https://www.uwo.ca/health/studentsupport/survivorsupport/get-help.html>. To connect with a case manager or set up an appointment, please contact support@uwo.ca.

Learning Development and Success

Counsellors at the Learning Development and Success Centre <https://learning.uwo.ca> are ready to help you improve your learning skills. They offer presentations on strategies for improving time management, multiple-choice exam preparation/writing, textbook reading, and more. Individual support is offered throughout the Fall/Winter terms in the drop-in Learning Help Centre, and year-round through individual counselling.

USC

Additional student-run support services are offered by the USC, <https://westernusc.ca/services/>.

Schedule of Classes and Assignments

[some of the works listed below still await a link to an online edition, etc.; please see the copy of the syllabus at the Owl site for an updated version]

Mon. Jan. 5 -- The Court of Henry VIII

Alexander Barclay, [*Ship of Fools*](#) (Edinburgh, 1874) "Of newe fassions and disgised Garmentes.", vol. 1, pp. 34-40.

Skelton, "The Bowge of Court" ([*Luminarium*](#)),

Thomas More. [*Utopia*](#) (George M. Logan translation at Internet Archive, pp. 14-35) just the Cardinal Morton section from Book 1 [section beginning "It would take too long to repeat..." to "little bad as possible."]

Selection from *History of King Richard the Third* (P.M.)

Mon. Jan. 12 -- The Court of Henry VIII

Henry VIII, "Pastime with Good Company" (PM), "Though that men do call it dotage" (PM), "Greensleeves" ([Luminarium](#), erroneously attributed to Henry)

Poems of the Court of Henry VIII from the Devonshire Manuscript
(all readings from Elizabeth Heale, ed. [The Devonshire Manuscript: A Women's Book of Courtly Poetry](#))
["For love is yet the most stormy life,"](#) (p. 252)

Mary Shelton, "I am not she by proof of sight" (p. 160);

Margaret Douglas, "My heart is set not to remove," (poem 99, p. 159)
"Suffering in sorrow in hope to attain" (poem 8, p. 59)

Margaret Douglas and Thomas Howard, "Now that ye be assembld heer" (poem 175, p. 246)
and "the sueden glance ded make me mues" (poem 105, p. 163)

Sir Thomas Wyatt, selected poems: "[Whoso list to hunt](#)" (RPO), "Stand whoso list" (PM), "Who list his wealth and ease retain" (PM), "[Mine own John Poins](#)" (RPO), "Tagus, farewell" (PM), "My mother's maids when they do sew and spin," (PM)

Mon. Jan. 19 -- The Court of Henry VIII

Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey: "[So cruel Prison](#)" (RPO), "Th'Assyrians' King, in peace with foul desire" (PM), "[Wyatt Resteth Here](#)" (RPO)

Sir John Cheke's funeral elegy on Surrey: 'What natures worke is this' (PM)

Queen Katherine Parr, Letters, Summer 1544, to Lady Jane Wriothesley, on the death of a son (Mueller edition, pp. 80-1); Letters May 1547 to Lord Thomas Seymour (Mueller, pp. 139-42, his response follows, pp. 142-4; (*hand-out*))

Thomas Sackville, *Mirror for Magistrates*, "The Induction" (pp. 186-203 in [Lucas, ed.](#)), and "Complaint of Henry, Duke of Buckingham (pp. 203-229 in [Lucas, ed.](#))

Mon. Jan. 26 -- The Court of Elizabeth I

Queen Elizabeth, "Written on a Window Frame at Woodstock", "Letter to Mary, Queen of Scots, February 24, 1567" "Speech to the Troops at Tilbury", (all in PM)

Philip Sidney, "As I my little flock on Ister bank" (PM)

Edward de Vere, 17th earl of Oxford, "Framed in the front of forlorn hope past all recovery" (in PM)

Edward Dyer, "My mind to me a kingdom is" ([RPO](#))

Mary, Queen of Scots, [Selected sonnets](#). (from *The Broadview Anthology of Sixteenth-Century Poetry and Prose*, pp. 306-8.)

Mon. Feb. 2 -- The Court of Elizabeth I

Spenser, *Shepheardes Calender*, “[April](#)”,

Short Selections from *The Faerie Queene*: “Letter to Raleigh”, Book 1.9.8-17 (Arthur and the Faerie Queene)], Book 2.3.37-42 (Braggadocchio and Belphoebe on Court Life); 3.6.13 (Cupid at Court); Belphoebe and Timias (all of 4.7 and 4.8 up to stanza 17); Book 5.9.25-50 (the trial of Duessa (representing Mary, Queen of Scots) ([The Spenser Archive](#))

Spenser, *Colin Clouts Come Home Again* [selection: lines 616-955] ([The Spenser Archive](#))

Reading Week, Feb. 15-22

Mon. Feb. 9 -- The Court of Elizabeth I

Robert Devereux, earl of Essex, “Muses no more, but mazes be your names”, “Seated betweene the olde world and the newe”, “The ways on earth have paths and turnings known,” (PM)

Sir Walter Ralegh, “Ocean to Cynthia”, “Give me my scallop shell of quiet,” “What is our Life ..” (PM)

Thomas Nashe, selection from *The Unfortunate Traveler* (Dedication [to the earl of Southampton] and “The Induction to the Dapper Monsieur Pages of the Court”) (PM)

Harington, selected epigrams: Dedication to Pr. Henry (p. 93 in Kilroy), 1:85 (“To the Queenes Majestie when ..” 1:86 “To the Ladyes of the Queens privye Chamber...”. 2:27 “A wittie speache of Haywood to Queene Mary”, 3:70 “Against an extreame flatterer...”, 3:74 “To the great Ladies of the Courte”, 3:95 “Of the Earle of Essex”, 3:97 “To the earle of Essex...”

Drayton, *To the Majesty of King James* (1603) (*Literature of the Stuart Successions*, pp. 38-45)

Sir John Davies, “The King's Welcome” and “To the Queen at the Same Time”, *Literature of the Stuart Successions*, pp. 46-50.

Mon. Feb. 23

Newton, Thomas, gent. *Atropoion Delion* (1603) [basis of group project]
Shakespeare, *Henry VIII*

Mon. March 2

Shakespeare, *Henry VIII*

Mon. March 9 – the Court of James VI and I

James VI and I and the Castalian Band; James's “Twelve Sonnets of Invocations to the Gods”,

Selections from [Basilikon Doron](#), “The Argument” (Sonnet), “To Henry”, “To the Reader”, and “The Third Book” (“Of a King's Behaviour in Indifferent Things”) (edition by Fischlin and Fortier)

Arabella Stuart, Selected Letters from Steen's [edition](#), pp. 250-9.

Poems on the death of Arabella Stuart, by Richard Corbett and J[ohn] O[w]en] (PM)

John Davies of Hereford, *The Muses Teares* (on the death of Prince Henry, 1612) ([EEBO](#)) (from the beginning through image 12)

Mon. March 16 – the Court of James VI and I

John Donne, "Satire 4" (photocopies?)

Thomas Overbury, "A Courtier", *Characters* (PM)

Ben Jonson, *Epigrams*: "To King James" x2 "To the Ghost of Martial", "On Court-Worm", "To Robert, earl of Salisbury" (beg. "Who can Consider") "To the Same", "To my Muse", "To Censorious Courtling", "To Courtling", To the King, on his Birthday" (beg. "This is King Charles his day." (PM)

Mon. March 23 – the 1620s

Elizabeth of Bohemia, "The Queen of Hearts"

Henry Wotton, "[You Meaner Beauties of the Night](#)," George Herbert, "To the Queene of Bohemia" (PM)

Prince Charles and the Spanish Match (selected poems from *Early Stuart Libels* (section Nv. [Jack and Tom go to Spain](#))

Lucy Russell, countess of Bedford, Selected Letters in [The Private Correspondence of Jane Lady Cornwallis](#) (London, 1842)

"The King is dead: Long Live the King!": The death of King James and accession of King Charles

James Shirley, "Upon the Death of King James", *Literature of the Stuart Successions*, pp. 81-3.

Mon. March 30 -- The Court of King Charles

1630s court play/masque: Aurelian Townshend, *Tempe Restored* (pp. 79-100) in [Oxford Clarendon edition](#) of 1912 (notes are on pp. 118-22)

Selection from William Prynne, *Histriomastix*

The Cavalier Poets: Robert Herrick, "[The Argument of his Book](#)", "[The Bad Season Makes the Poet Sad](#)", "[His Return to London](#)";

Richard Lovelace, "To Lucasta, Going to the Wars", "The Grasshopper", "To my worthy friend Mr. Peter Lely", (all PM)

Denham, "[Cooper's Hill](#) ((1642) First Version)

<http://rpo.library.utoronto.ca/poems/coopers-hill-1642>

Mon. April 6 -- "To Kill a King"

Clarendon, from Book XI of *The History of the Rebellion* [that in Herschel Baker, pp. 933-37

Eikon Basilike, "Upon his Majesty's Calling this Last Parliament", pp. 51-2 in Daems and Nelson] "A Prayer in Time of Captivity", pp. 205-6 in Daems and Nelson]; Milton,

Eikonoklastes "The Preface" (pp. 221-27 in Daems and Nelson), "Entitled Meditations upon Death" (pp. 271-83 in Daems and Nelson)

Henry King, “To the Queen at Oxford” (1643), pp. 97ff.; “A Deepe Groane, fetch’d at the Funerall of....Charles the First”, pp. 110-7. ([*Poems of Henry King*](#), ed. Crum; notes are in the back, pp. 207-8 and 211ff. respectively)

Katherine Philips, [“Upon the Double Murder of King Charles”](#).