

Department of English & Writing Studies

**English 2301E (001)**  
**British Literature Survey**  
Fall/Winter 2026-27

Preliminary Outline

**Instructor:** J. Doelman  
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**Office Hours (in-person) Term I**  
Mondays 10:30-12:00  
Wednesdays 10:30-12:00

**Delivery:** This is an in-person course.

**Calendar Description**

This course investigates the changing forms of literature produced in the British Isles from the Middle Ages to the present. It addresses key movements and styles through careful analysis of both major authors, such as Shakespeare, Austen, Woolf, or Yeats, and some less well-known yet engaging figures.

**Antirequisite:** The former English 2307E.

**Prerequisites:** At least 60% in 1.0 of English 1020-1999 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**

This survey course charts the history of British and Irish literature through study of some of its major authors, from the anonymous Old English poet who wrote “The Wanderer” to the very recent Irish novelist Claire Keegan. Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, John Donne, Milton, Coleridge, Jane Austen (*Mansfield Park*), George Eliot (*The Mill on the Floss*) and T.S. Eliot are read along the way.

**Important Note A:** While this is an in-person course, students *must* be able to access Owl online for some readings, assignments, and lecture videos. To allow sufficient class time for discussion and in-class writing assignments, some required lecture material will be offered as recorded videos (available through Owl).

**Important Note B:** The general classroom experience in this course will be computer-free and phone-free. Students will be required to work from physical copies of the texts and make hand-written notes. Full lecture notes will be posted by the professor on Owl.

## Objectives

The major overarching goal of the course is for students to develop as rich, broad, and deep an understanding of the history of British and Irish literature as is possible within the limits of an 8-month course.

The second goal would be to inspire students to do much further reading and study of literature, both in and out of the classroom.

Under those broad aspirations, some specific objectives can be identified:

- Develop the habit and discipline of intense reading focus
- Describe the typical features of English literature from the different historical periods.
- Describe how particular literary works reflect the historical context in which they were written.
- Understand a wide variety of challenging literary texts from different historical periods.
- Recognize and explain the effectiveness of a variety of poetic elements and techniques.
- Describe the general history of the English language.
- Use language in a conscious and deliberate way, based upon an awareness of the history and usage of individual words and phrases and the broader changes within the English language.
- Write a coherent and clear essay that accurately discusses the features of a literary work.
- Identify some of the major writers and works of the English literary tradition.
- Identify a wide variety of poetic forms and genres, and explain how poets use, manipulate, extend and combine these forms and genres.
- Develop well-organized, effective, and rich arguments on literary topics of the period.
- Write clearly and concisely on complex topics.
- Present, in an oral format, a scholarly discussion of a literary work of the period.

## Course Materials/Texts

Broadview Custom Text ISBN: 978-1-55459-671-3 (\$67.44)

Shakespeare, *Henry V*. Broadview. ISBN 9781554812226. (\$17.95)

Samuel Johnson, *Rasselas* (Oxford) ISBN 9780199229970. (\$14.99) [requested copy]

Austen, Jane. *Mansfield Park*. Penguin ISBN-13 978-0141439808 (\$12.00) [requested copy]

Eliot, George. *The Mill on the Floss*. Oxford University Press. ISBN 978-0198707530 [requested copy] (\$17.95)

Keegan, Claire. *Small Things Like These*. Faber ISBN 978-0571368709 (\$22.60)

[Bookstore link](#) for textbook information.

## Methods of Evaluation

The overall course grade will be calculated as listed below:

|                                                           |            |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| Reading Quizzes (on period introductions and major works) | 10%        |
| In-class writing                                          | 25%        |
| Research Paper One ( <b>Due: Mon. Jan. 18</b> )           | 10%        |
| December Examination (in Exam Period)                     | 15%        |
| Research Paper Two ( <b>Due: Mon. Apr. 5</b> )            | 15%        |
| Final Examination:                                        | <u>25%</u> |
|                                                           | 100%       |

**Prepared attendance at all classes is required (attendance will be taken).**

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>.

**Quiz Evaluation**

As you will see in the schedule of classes below, the course features many brief reading quizzes. These can only be written in-class on the scheduled day. However, in recognition that illness and emergencies are a reality, students may miss **three of these without penalty or explanation**.

**In-Class Writing**

This course features weekly in-class writing sessions worth 25% of the final grade.

At least 3 times in term 1, and twice in term 2, there will be a longer writing exercise (30 minutes). These will all be fully marked. Some of these will be open-textbook.

In all other weeks, there will be a shorter writing assignment (10 to 15 minutes in length). These will require that students have done the reading for the week and watched the posted video lecture; some will be open-textbook. About half of these will be graded; the other half will be marked just for completion. It will not be announced in advance which are which (and the Instructor himself will not know).

These can only be written in-class on the scheduled day. However, in recognition that illness and emergencies are a reality, **students may miss one of the longer sessions, and three of the shorter sessions without penalty or explanation**.

**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)**

#### Evaluation Scheme for Missed Assessments

**Quizzes:** see above.

**In-class writing:** See above.

**Final Exam.** When a student misses the **December or 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.

#### **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.

#### **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.

### 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%20Accommodationanddisabilities.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/studentssupport/survivorsupport/get-help.html>. To connect with a case manager or set up an appointment, please contact [support@uwo.ca](mailto: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

As a matter of course, you should be reading the short biographical introductions in the course texts to all of the authors we are covering in the course. Material from these may come up in the Reading Quizzes.

#### **Sept. 9, 2026**

Introduction to course: the practise of literary history. Overview of the Middle Ages.  
Students should also begin reading "Introduction to Medieval English Literature", pp. 3-18 (<https://archive.org/details/oxfordanthologyo01kerm/page/2/mode/2up>) and [Introduction to Old and Middle English](#) (language) from Kay and Allan, *English Historical Semantics* (in "Resources")  
"The Wanderer"

#### **Week of Sept. 14 (Week 1)**

"The Wanderer",  
"Messe oculus Pangur Ban"

#### **Quiz on ["Introduction to Medieval English Literature"](#), pp. 3-18 (Wed. Sept. 16) and**

Introduction to Old and Middle English (language)

In-class writing (short): Wed. Sept. 16

*Sir Orfeo*

#### **Week of Sept. 21, (Week 2)**

*Sir Orfeo*

Chaucer, *The Canterbury Tales*:

Selections from "The General Prologue" [read lines 1-164]

In-class writing (short): Wed. Sept. 23

#### **Week of Sept. 28, 2025 (Week 3)**

Chaucer, "The Nun's Priest's Tale",

**Mon. Sept. 28: Quiz on *Sir Orfeo* and Chaucer readings**

Begin reading "[Introduction to the Renaissance](#)", pp. 503-518

#### **Week of Oct. 5, (Week 4)**

**Mon. Oct. 5 Quiz on "[Introduction to the Renaissance](#)", pp. 503-18**

Shakespeare, *Henry V*, Acts 1 and 2

**In-class writing (longer) Wed. Oct. 7**

#### **Week of Oct. 12 Reading week**

#### **Week of Oct. 19 (Week 5)**

Shakespeare, *Henry V*

**Mon. Oct. 19 : Quiz on *Henry V***

In-class writing (short): Wed. Oct. 21

**Week of Oct. 26 (Week 6)**

Donne, "Twickenham Garden", "The Flea", "Hymn to God, my God"

George Herbert, "The Flower", "Love" (3) [hand-out]

In-class writing (short): Wed. Oct. 28

**Week of Nov. 2 (Week 7)**

Milton, *Paradise Lost* (Books 1, 2)

**In-class writing (longer) Wed. Nov. 4**

**Week of Nov. 9 (Week 8)**

*Paradise Lost*, Book 4, lines 410-775; Book 9; Book 10, 415-584; Book 12, 552-649

**Wed. Nov. 12: Quiz** on *Paradise Lost* readings.

In-class writing (short): Wed. Nov. 12

Begin reading Introduction to ["The Restoration and the Eighteenth Century"](#), pp. 1549-60

**Week of Nov. 16 (Week 9)**

**Quiz** on Introduction to ["The Restoration and the Eighteenth Century"](#), pp. 1549-60

Swift, *Gulliver's Travels*, Parts 1, 2, and 4

**Wed. Nov. 19: Quiz** on *Gulliver's Travels*,

In-class writing (short): Wed. Nov. 19

**Week of Nov. 23 (Week 10)**

Swift, *Gulliver's Travels*, Parts 1, 2, and 4

Pope, "Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot"

**In-class writing (longer) Wed. Nov. 25**

**Week of Nov. 30 (Week 11)**

Pope, "Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot"

Mary Wortley Montagu, selected poems

Samuel Johnson, *Rasselas*

In-class writing (short): Wed. Dec. 2

**Week of Dec. 7 (Week 12)**

Samuel Johnson, *Rasselas*

**Mon. Dec. 7 : *Rasselas* -- quiz**

In-class writing (short): Wed. Dec. 9

Schedule of Classes and Assignments for Term 2

**Week of Jan. 4 (Week 1)**

Richard Brinsley Sheridan, *The School for Scandal*

**Wed. Jan. 7 Quiz** on *The School for Scandal*

Begin reading Introduction to ["The Romantic Period"](#), pp. 3-9

[https://archive.org/details/oxfordanthologyo0000kerm\\_a4e7/page/n111/mode/2up](https://archive.org/details/oxfordanthologyo0000kerm_a4e7/page/n111/mode/2up)

**Week of Jan. 11 (Week 2)**

Sheridan, *The School for Scandal*

Burns, "To a Mouse"

Coleridge, "Kubla Khan"

**In-class writing (longer): Wed. Jan. 13**

**Week of Jan. 18 (Week 3)**

**Wed. Jan. 20: Quiz** on Introduction to ["The Romantic Period"](#), pp. 3-9

Coleridge, "Frost at Midnight", Shelley, "Ode to the West Wind"

Austen, *Mansfield Park*

**In-class writing (short): Wed. Jan. 20**

**Week of Jan. 25 (Week 4)**

**Wed. Jan 27 Quiz** on *Mansfield Park*

Austen, *Mansfield Park*

**In-class writing (short): Wed. Jan. 27**

**Week of Feb. 1 (Week 5)**

Austen, *Mansfield Park*

Keats, "La Belle Dame"

**In-class writing (short): Wed. Feb. 3**

Begin reading Introductions to [Victorian Prose, pp. 621-30](#) and [Victorian Poetry, pp. 807-9](#)

[https://archive.org/details/oxfordanthologyo0000kerm\\_a4e7/page/n15/mode/2up](https://archive.org/details/oxfordanthologyo0000kerm_a4e7/page/n15/mode/2up)

**Week of Feb. 8 (Week 6)**

Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Selections from *Aurora Leigh* (pp. 795-821)

**Mon. Feb. 8 Quiz** on Introductions to [Victorian Prose, pp. 621-30](#) and [Victorian Poetry, pp. 807-9](#)

**In-class writing (short): Wed. Feb. 10**

**Week of Feb. 15 Reading Week**

**Week of Feb. 22 (Week 7)**

George Eliot, *The Mill on the Floss*

**Wed. Feb. 24 Quiz** on *The Mill on the Floss*

**In-class writing (short): Wed. Feb. 26**

**Week of March 1 (Week 8)**

*The Mill on the Floss*

**In-class writing (longer): Wed. March 3**

**Week of March 8 (Week 9)**

Christina Rossetti, “Winter: My Secret”, “After Death”, “When I am dead, my dearest”

Gerard Manley Hopkins, “God’s Grandeur”, “Carrion Comfort” [hand-out]

Thomas Hardy, “The Convergence of the Twain”

In-class writing (short): Wed. March 10

Begin reading [Introduction to Modern British Literature, pp. 1103-12](#)

[https://archive.org/details/oxfordanthologyo0000kerm\\_a4e7/page/n17/mode/2up](https://archive.org/details/oxfordanthologyo0000kerm_a4e7/page/n17/mode/2up)

**Week of March 15 (Week 10)**

**Quiz on** [Introduction to Modern British Literature, pp. 1103-12](#)

Joseph Conrad, “The Secret Sharer”

Joyce, “The Dead”

Mansfield, “The Garden Party”

Eliot, *Little Gidding* [hand-out]

In-class writing (short): Wed. March 17

**Week of March 22 (Week 11)**

Eliot, *Little Gidding*

In-class writing (short): Wed. March 24)

**Week of March 29 (Week 12)**

Claire Keegan, *Small Things Like These*

In-class writing (short): Wed. March 31

**Week of April 5 (Week 13)**

Claire Keegan, *Small Things Like These*

[While the above is a general reflection of the texts to be studied, some minor changes may be made, both to which texts are studied and the weeks assigned to them.]