



## **HUM 311**

**From Shakespeare to Mary Astell:**

**Major Works of Literature in the Early Modern Era**

**Instructor: Neriman Kuyucu**

**Teaching Assistant: Alperen Narmanlı**

**13:40-15:30 Wed in SOM G042**

**12:40-13:30 Thu in FASS 1080**

**Office Hours: 12:00-13:00 Wed or by appointment**

The period between 1450 and 1800 in Europe was a time of massive transformation, marked by the advent of the printing press and a cascade of social, cultural, and intellectual developments. This course offers an introduction to the literary works produced during this era, as well as the sociocultural, religious, and political contexts that shaped the early modern literary landscape. Throughout this course, we will set out on a literary journey, exploring various genres—poetry, prose, and drama—and study both major canonical writers like Shakespeare and Christopher Marlowe and women writers often relegated to the periphery such as Katherine Philips and Mary Astell. As we trace the evolution of literary aesthetics and forms over time, we will also engage with broader thematic concerns, with a specific focus on gender, that were pivotal in the development of early modern literature. Throughout the course, we will investigate key questions such as:

- How did writers in Europe respond to the economic, social, and political shifts in the early modern period?
- How did these changes influence aesthetic preferences and the creation of literary art?
- What does it mean for literary texts to serve as historical artifacts that offer insights into the past worlds?
- What insights can we glean from the literary texts regarding attitudes toward gender, class, and politics during the early modern period?

In HUM 311 this semester, together we will explore some of the literary masterpieces of the early modern period, as well as the complex web of context, culture, and thought that laid the foundation for the modern world.



## Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this course, students will:

- Become critical thinkers, careful readers, and better writers through reading, analysis, synthesis, discussion, and written assignments/exams.
- Develop an understanding of the characteristics of literary genres written, read, and performed in Europe before modernity.
- Learn how to make intertextual connections between the different writers and texts covered in the course.
- Understand literature as an expression of human values within the context of major historical events and sociopolitical developments.
- Cultivate a greater appreciation of language as an artistic medium and of the aesthetic principles that shape literary works.

## Reading Materials

All assigned texts will be available on SuCourse either in digital format or as links to e-books available in IC.

## Course Requirements

**Attendance & Participation: 20%**

**In-class assignments: 25%**

**Midterm: 25%**

**Final: 30%**

Your grade for this class will be determined by your successful completion of assigned readings, active discussion of class material, and application of learned skills and historical contexts and information to texts. All reading assignments are due on the dates listed on the course schedule. Medical reports are subject to the approval of the instructor. The instructor retains the right to decline a medical report.



### **Attendance & Participation:**

Active participation (10 points) is required by all students in the course. Your participation in discussions will constitute a significant percentage of your final grade, and you must be in class to participate. The more active, engaged students are in the classroom, the more fun and interesting this course will be. Students who have been present throughout the semester will be at a considerable advantage. Participation will be graded based on contribution in class discussions, pop up polls, activities during lectures and/or discussion, general involvement in the course, regular reading activity, observable progress throughout the term.

Attendance (10 points based on attendance reports) follow-up starts at the end of the add-drop period. Attendance is taken on an hourly basis during the lectures. Failure to attend more than three hours requires points to be taken off the overall grade. Students who miss more than twelve hours (regardless of medical reports) in total will automatically receive a N/A standing for HUM 201 course.

### **In-class assignments:**

Throughout the semester, you will be asked to write five, brief 300-word (minimum) responses to some of the texts covered in class. The prompts for these assignments may change every time. You will see the dates scheduled for these assignments on the course schedule. Your reflection should demonstrate a thoughtful reading of the text, your interpretation of the text, an acknowledgement of what confused or challenged you in the piece, and connections you drew between this text and other assigned readings from the course. I want to stress that this is not simply an opportunity for summarizing or discussing what you like/dislike about a piece. You will be expected to do analytical work in your reflections. Please be reminded that **you are responsible for all graded class work even if you are absent.** If you are absent, you will receive a zero for that day's assignment. You should always bring your books and/or printed copied materials to class, as lectures and class discussions will focus very closely on details of the texts we read.



## Midterm & Final

Questions for the midterm and the final exam will be directly taken from our lectures and discussions. All midterm and final exams will be in-person, on campus. Students may be invited to an oral assessment of their exam and asked to provide oral answers to the exam questions in the following cases:

- If any part of an exam does not appear to be 100% student's original work
- If suspicious activity is recorded during the exam
- If there is a need for random authentication check

Such papers will not be graded until after the oral assessment.

## Make-up Exams

A make-up exam, written or oral, is given to students who cannot take an exam for reasons acceptable to the instructors. Students who do not attend the final and midterm exams with an excuse that is accepted by the instructors are entitled to have a make-up exam. These students must submit their supporting documents for their excuse (health report, etc.) **within three weekdays** after the exam and these supporting documents must be found valid by the instructors.

## Grading

Your letter grade as well as exam grades are based on your individual performance. **Requests for extra work or other compensation will not be accepted. E-mails concerning such requests will not be replied.** Letter grades are calculated according to the following letter grade scale and are not open to negotiation.

### I will use the following scale for assigning letter grades:

A = 100-96

A- = 95-92

B+ = 91-88

B = 87-84

B- = 83-80

C+ = 79-76

C = 75-72

C- = 71-68

D+ = 67-64

D = 63-53

F = 52 and below



## Conduct & Anti-discrimination Policy

Common courtesy in the classroom is necessary. This, of course, goes both ways. I want to promote an open classroom environment where all topics pertaining to texts are open for discussion in a safe manner. For our classroom, this means there will be no insensitive or inappropriate remarks regarding race, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual preference, political affiliation, (dis)ability, national origin, etc. Additionally, please refrain from such incivilities as packing up before class is over, checking your phone in the classroom, making rude comments to the instructor or other students, and behaving in a disruptive manner in the classroom.

Please remember that it is pertinent to remember that human connection is the heart of a liberal arts education. *We can't learn without you.* Arrive prepared and ready to think out loud and share confusions and questions. Class meetings involve discussions in a variety of formats, some experimental and perhaps unfamiliar. These varied structures enable different forms of thinking and analysis; they also accommodate diverse personalities and learning styles. In all settings, collaborate thoughtfully and respectfully with your peers. When you disagree with or don't understand something you hear, ask questions. Your peers' questions are as important as mine, so listen carefully.

- You can use electronics, **laptops and tablets ONLY**, in class; **the use of mobile phones is strictly prohibited. Violating this policy will negatively impact your participation grade.**
  - I know that many of you read online or take notes on your laptops or tablets. While electronics may be beneficial, it is pertinent to remember that electronics are a major distraction in class and disrupt class discussion. There is literature that supports this claim, one of which includes: Fried, C.B. (2008), In-class laptop use and its effects on student learning, *Computers & Education*, 50(3), 906-914.
  - However, because we often read online, you are allowed to use electronics in class. If I find they become distracting, though, I hold the right to disallow them in class.



## **Academic Honesty Policy**

Major Works courses do not tolerate dishonesty and plagiarism. Plagiarism is an ethical and academic offense. Papers with plagiarism issues will be graded F, and your semester grade may be F depending on the severity of the offense. The offense may also be referred to as the University Ethics Committee. For information on plagiarism, please see Course Information.

## **Students with Special Needs**

It is the policy of Sabancı University to accommodate students with special needs and disabilities. To determine accommodations and/or academic adjustments, please let me know and contact the Disabled Students Support Unit of CIAD ([specialneeds@sabanciuniv.edu](mailto:specialneeds@sabanciuniv.edu)).

**\*\*\*Please note that I reserve the right to make changes on this syllabus as needed. This syllabus is a contract between the instructor and the student. By taking this course, the student accepts the rules and requirements of the course.**

**I look forward to working with you this semester!**



## Weekly Course Schedule

### Introduction

#### **Week 1 (Oct 2-6): Introduction to the syllabus & course policies**

Introduction to early modern literature: social, cultural, and historical context

### The Values of the Renaissance

#### **Week 2 (Oct 9-13): Prose**

Desiderius Erasmus (1466-1536) “The Praise of Folly”

(Add-drop dates: Oct 10-11)

#### **Week 3 (Oct 16-20): Prose**

Niccolo Machiavelli (1469-1527) “The Prince” (pgs. 1706-1715)

Francis Bacon (1561–1626) “Of Unity in Religion” “Of Marriage and Single Life” “Of Custom and Education”

### Elizabethan Poetry: Love, Marriage, and Passion

#### **Week 4 (Oct 23-27): Poetry**

##### **Prepare for in-class writing assignment 1**

Sir Philip Sidney (1554-1586) “Thou Blind Man’s Mark”

Elizabeth I, Queen of England (1533-1603) “On Monsieur’s Departure”

#### **Week 5 (Oct 30-Nov 3): Poetry**

William Shakespeare (1564-1616) Sonnet 138

Ben Jonson (1572-1637) “Song: To Celia”

#### **Week 6 (Nov 6-10): Poetry**

##### **Prepare for in-class writing assignment 2**

Christopher Marlowe (1564-1593) “The Passionate Shepherd to His Love”

Katherine Philips (1631-1664) “Against Love” – See SuCourse for required additional readings



**Week 7 (Nov 13-17)**

**Revision and midterm**

**Love, Gender Roles, and Class in Shakespeare**

**Week 8 (Nov 20-24): Drama**

Introduction to Drama and Shakespeare (1564-1616)

Shakespeare (1564-1616), *Hamlet*

**Week 9 (Nov 27-Dec 1): Drama**

**Prepare for in-class writing assignment 3**

Shakespeare (1564-1616), *Hamlet*

**Shakespeare's Sisters: Voices from the Margin**

**Week 10 (Dec 4-8): Prose, Part II**

Mary Astell (1666-1731), Excerpt from "A Serious Proposal to the Ladies"

Virginia Woolf "A Room of One's Own" Chapter 3

**Week 11 (Dec 11-15): Prose, Part II**

**Prepare for in-class writing assignment 4**

Marie Le Jars De Gournay (1565-1645) "On the Equality of Men and Women"

**Week 12 (Dec 18-22): Prose, Part II**

"The Heptameron" by Marguerite De Navarre

**Week 13 (Dec 25-29): Prose, Part II**

**Prepare for in-class writing assignment 5**

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu (1689-1762), Excerpt from "The Turkish Letters"





**Week 14 (Jan 1-5): Revision and Wrap-up**

**FINAL EXAM (To be announced by Student Resources)**