

Course Code: BLT-C201

Course Title: British Literature: 14th to 17th Centuries

Core/Elective: Core

Credits: 3

Course Description

“British Literature: 14th to 17th Centuries” is an introductory course that familiarizes students with the origin and evolution of the English language and literature and the first major contributors to the canon. Middle English literature is introduced through Geoffrey Chaucer’s *The Canterbury Tales*. The other poets covered are Edmund Spenser, John Donne, and Andrew Marvell. The emergence of a distinct dramatic form is traced through Mystery, Miracle, and Morality plays as well as the Interlude. Renaissance British Drama is represented in this course through Christopher Marlowe and William Shakespeare.

Course Outcomes

Upon completion of the course, students will be able to:

1. demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of the origin of English language and its evolution and the various socio-political and historical factors that influenced the language;
2. demonstrate a broad understanding of the literary history preceding Chaucer and the significance of Chaucer in the history of English literature;
3. understand characterization and its use by Chaucer and develop a critical understanding of current developments in character studies and their application;
4. explore the evolution of poetry in English literature with specific reference to the sonnet;
5. identify and appreciate the use of poetic devices and poetry as well as corresponding aesthetic theories;
6. establish a correlation between political and literary and cultural developments;
7. understand the evolution of drama leading up to Shakespeare;
8. use literary texts as cultural texts to understand and interpret social hierarchies, socio-economic and political stratification; the role of the Church, gender, identity, and subjectivity;
9. understand the dynamic connection between the social structure, and the cultural productions of a society;
10. understand the distinct social configurations of the British society across the ages and the way these relations of production/other social-personal relations formed the condition for literary-cultural production/reception;
11. gain knowledge of the processes and politics of representation through a critical understanding of the historiography of historical accounts, arrived through discussion;
12. understand and articulate the situatedness of all works of art to gain insight that the value of a work of art is primarily derived from the way it attempts to make sense of and evaluate contemporary situations and trends, in the light of a deep understanding of the human condition;
13. draft/publish essays that are well-informed, theoretically sound responses to attempts to project certain works of art as repositories of universal value, and an inherently universal

appeal; and

14. apply this knowledge about the connection between texts and contexts to understand and appreciate the literatures in one's own culture.

Essential Reading

Andrew Sanders – *The Short Oxford History of British Literature*

Geoffrey Chaucer – *The Canterbury Tales* (General Prologue; The Wife of Bath's Prologue)

Edmund Spenser – Selections from *Amoretti*

The Metaphysical Poets (Norton Anthology)

Christopher Marlowe – *Doctor Faustus*

William Shakespeare – *Twelfth Night*

William Shakespeare – *Macbeth*

Evaluation Scheme

Internal (40%): continuous assessment; every month one test (20 marks); final score to be based on best two performances

External (60%): semester-end examination