From the fourteenth to the seventeenth centuries, the development of English literature is closely involved with historical events and social conditions. The course considers several examples of how we observe this relation and how our observations have changed over time. We will explore historicism—the approach that treats each historical moment as the product of distinctive forces—as it evolved over the twentieth century. What are the different ways that a literary work of the past can be historical or political? Moreover, we will give some attention to how literature works as a force in culture, not only a reflection of other forces.

Schedule of Lectures

March 29
Introduction to the Course

March 31
Introduction to Medieval Literary Culture
Geoffrey Chaucer, General Prologue to *The Canterbury Tales*

April 5
*A Great Chain of Love*
Chaucer, "The Knight's Tale"

April 7
The Voice of the Past
Chaucer, "The Wife of Bath's Tale"

April 12
Early Modernity: Humanism, Diplomacy, and Intellectual Networks
Thomas More, *Utopia*

April 14
What's Political About Lyric Poetry?
Thomas Wyatt, poems

April 19
The Beginning of Elizabethan Comedy
Nicholas Udall, *Ralph Roister Doister*

April 21
The Height of Seneca's Style
Thomas Sackville and Thomas Norton, *Gorboduc*

April 26
'Vindicta Mihi!' Revenge and Justice in Popular Drama
Thomas Kyd, *The Spanish Tragedy*
April 28
Kingship and Absolutism
Christopher Marlowe, *Edward II*

May 3
Shakespeare's Historical World
William Shakespeare, *Richard II*

May 5
Shakespeare, *Richard II*

May 10
The Politics of Shakespearean Tragedy
Shakespeare, *King Lear*

May 12
Shakespeare, *King Lear*

May 17
Love, Wit, and New Knowledge
John Donne, from *Songs and Sonets*

May 19
The Politics and Poetics of Retirement
George Herbert, *The Temple*

May 24
The Restoration Mode

May 26
Experiment in Science and Society
Margaret Cavendish, *The Blazing World*

May 31
Retrospect

Books and Materials

The following titles are available at the Stanford Bookstore:

Margaret Cavendish, *The Blazing World and Other Writings*, ed. Kate Lilley (Penguin, 1994)


The following title is recommended as an e-textbook:


Other than the titles above, required readings will be available on our Canvas site (canvas.stanford.edu).

**Written Assignments**

• Weekly writing. Every Monday throughout the quarter, we will offer a prompt on the course’s Canvas site. Your one- to two-page response is due in your section that week.

• Two analytical papers (four to five pages), due Tuesday, April 12 and Tuesday, May 3. Topics will be distributed in advance, or you may develop your own in consultation with your TA.

• Take-Home Final Examination, due Monday, June 6, consisting of short answer identification of key words from the lectures, and three essay questions.

**Grading**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class attendance and participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Section attendance and preparation</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paper 1</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paper 2</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
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**Policies**

• Lectures will generally take forty-five minutes, followed by a five-minute written reflection, and afterwards, twenty to twenty-five minutes of questions and open discussion. The written reflection will ask you to respond to questions about the preceding lecture. Collected at the end of every class meeting, your responses will shape subsequent lectures and discussions.
• Regular attendance at lecture and participation in section is required. If you must miss a lecture, please tell your section leader, who will record daily lecture attendance.

• Written outlines, with key words and reading questions, will be distributed at each lecture.

• Sections may include assignments; these are also required.

• Papers are due at 9:00 p.m. by email to your section leader. You will receive a confirmation email; do not consider your paper submitted until you have received this email.

• If you require accommodation or assistance in taking this course, please speak to the professor as early as possible. If you have a letter from the Office of Accessible Education, please provide it.

**Honor Code**

The Honor Code is the University's statement on academic integrity written by students in 1921. It articulates expectations of students and faculty in establishing and maintaining the highest standards in academic work.

The Honor Code is an undertaking of the students, individually and collectively:

1. that they will not give or receive aid in examinations; that they will not give or receive unpermitted aid in class work, in the preparation of reports, or in any other work that is to be used by the instructor as the basis of grading.

2. that they will do their share and take an active part in seeing to it that others as well as themselves uphold the spirit and letter of the Honor Code.

3. The faculty on its part manifests its confidence in the honor of its students by refraining from proctoring examinations and from taking unusual and unreasonable precautions to prevent the forms of dishonesty mentioned above. The faculty will also avoid, as far as practicable, academic procedures that create temptations to violate the Honor Code.

4. While the faculty alone has the right and obligation to set academic requirements, the students and faculty will work together to establish optimal conditions for honorable academic work.

**Learning Goals**

Through this course, you should gain:

• knowledge and understanding of how works are gathered into literary history and how that literary history relates to concurrent political, social, and religious events
• awareness of the major literary movements, terms, and forms of the period, along with an appreciation for their relevance and connection to later literary developments

• reading skills: In this course you will continue to refine your ability to read and interpret both poetry and prose narratives, sometimes in isolation and sometimes in the context of literary history or the cultural conditions in which they were produced or received. Reading well means not only that you can understand a text but that you can read it aloud clearly and with appropriate expression, conveying its sense to a listener.

• writing skills: writing assignments are designed to develop your abilities as readers and as practitioners in the discipline of literary studies, which requires you to be able to develop a cogent argument about a literary work or works, to support that argument with evidence, and to demonstrate the argument’s importance within a broader framework of disciplinary knowledge.

**Instructors**

**Professor**

Roland Greene
Office: 460-302
Office Hours: Tuesday 12:30 to 2:00 p.m. and by appointment
Email: rgreene@stanford.edu

**Collaborative Instructors**

Juan Lamata
Office: 460-302
Office Hours: Monday, Wednesday 10:30 to 11:30 a.m.
Email: jlamata@stanford.edu

Hannah Smith-Drellich
Office: Lounge, Third Floor, Building 460
Office Hours: Thursday 12:30 to 2:00 p.m.
Email: hsd@stanford.edu