

## ENGL 1373: Reading Renaissance Women

Fall 2025 (MWF class)

Contrary to cultural narratives that premodern women docile, under control, and voiceless, women in the Renaissance produced a stunning array of writing. We will read poems, autobiography, and household manuals that give insight into the daily lives of women in the 11<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> centuries. We will also read texts that imagine and explore new realities: adventures set in foreign lands, a play about an army of women, and the first work of science fiction in English by any author. In an effort to capture the full range of women's writing, we will read and analyze a variety of genres, from drama to prose to poetry.

This course surveys women's writing from the Renaissance while placing it in its historical, cultural, and literary contexts. We will learn how these authors thought about their authorship, and their gender as we ask what it meant to write literature as a Renaissance woman. Along the way, we will consider intersections of race, class, and sexuality with gender identity. We will read obscure poets such as Hester Pulter as well as poems written by Queen Elizabeth herself, texts that were published and those that went unread for centuries until feminist scholars re-discovered them. We will also engage with the form of these texts, from their original manuscript contexts with some attention to book history to some of the new digital projects which bring these writings into the modern age.

This course is part of the Critical Inquiry component of the Lower-Division Core. Critical Inquiry courses promote the ability to analyze new problems and situations to formulate informed opinions and conclusions. For more information, go to <http://uca.edu/core>. This section is also designated as a **First-Year Seminar [FYS]** course. The purpose of the first-year seminar is to provide a small-class learning environment to facilitate engagement in academic study at the collegiate level, make a connection to the university, and reinforce the importance of written communication skills.

Taking English 1373, you will equip you to:

- **Say what you mean:** Generate insightful arguments about literature and the complex issues that are a part of our lives; Articulate your ideas out loud and in writing
- **Think on the spot:** Develop ideas spontaneously, in conversation with peers and instructor; Trust yourself to join in an intellectual conversation
- **Connect with others:** Cultivate a practice of empathetic reading, discussion, and analysis that fosters justice and democracy in our society and communities; Collaborate with peers; Find a place within a classroom community

- **Read with attention:** Interpret a text and draw out its complications; Situate a range of literature in their literary and historical contexts and articulate why reading them matters; Develop large ideas from local observations
- **Fail forward:** Reflect meaningfully on past, present, and future learning; Approach assignments with sense of curiosity; Practice growth mindset; Gain comfort challenging self and facing difficulty

## COURSE SCHEDULE

Day 1: Syllabus

### **Renaissance Women in Europe**

Week One: France

Day 2: Welcome Survey Due

Read Christine de Pizan, from *Book of the City of Ladies* #1

Day 3: Read Christine de Pizan, from *Book of the City of Ladies* #2, 3, 14

Day 4: Read Christine de Pizan, from *Book of the City of Ladies* #33, 37, 38

Week Two: Germany

Day 5: No Class, Labor Day

Day 6: Read Hildegard of Bingen, from *Letters*

Day 7: Response #1 Due

Read Hildegard of Bingen, from *Scivias*

Week Three: Italy

Day 8: Academic Date Reflection Due

Read Gaspara Stampa, *Rime* 1, 4, 7, 8, 20, 21, 26

Day 9: Read Gaspara Stampa, *Rime* 34, 50, 56, 61, 64, 84, 87

Day 10: Response #2 Due

Gaspara Stampa, *Rime* 93, 101, 159, 219 (221), 279 (307), 305

#### Week Four: Spain

Day 11: QQTP due

Read Maria de Zayas, *Desengaños Amorosos* p. 35-43  
[guest lecture by a colleague in Spanish]

Day 12: Mind Map Due

Read Maria de Zayas, *Desengaños Amorosos* p. 85-100  
[guest lecturer by a colleague in Spanish]

Day 13: Cornell Notes Due

Read Maria de Zayas, *Desengaños Amorosos* p. 101-111  
[guest lecturer by a colleague in Spanish]

### **Theorizing Renaissance Women**

#### Week Five

Day 14: Read Queen Elizabeth, Tillbury Speech

Read Joan Sharp, "Defense of Women"

Day 15: Read Anne Bradstreet, "The Author to Her Book"

Read Judith Lorber, "Night to his Day" [needs its own day, might swap out]

Day 16: Library Day! [session with instructional librarian on using databases]

No reading due

#### Week 6

Day 17: Article Report Due

No reading due

Day 18: Read [Hester Pulter](#), selections

Day 19: Response #3 due

Read Mary Wroth, selected poems

#### Week 7

Day 20: Read Margaret Hoby, from *Diary*

Day 21: Anne Clifford, *Autobiography* 1603

Day 22: Mini Close Reading Due  
Read Hannah Wolley, *The Gentle Woman's Companion*

#### Week 8

Day 23: Read Elizabeth Cary, *The Tragedy of Miriam* Act 1-3 [needs more time!]

Day 24: Summary Due  
Read Elizabeth Cary, *The Tragedy of Miriam*, Act 4-5

Day 25: No Class Fall Break

#### Week 9

Day 26: Read Syllabus  
Read Margery Kempe, *The Book of Margery Kempe* [needs more time: student favorite!]

Day 27: Margery Kempe, *The Book of Margery Kempe*

Day 28: Dr. K-M conference Due [next time will cancel week of class for this]  
Read Sample Close Reading

#### Week 10

Day 29: Close Reading Draft Due  
Peer Review Memo Due

Day 30: Peer Review Letters Due

Day 31: Revised Draft Due

### **Rewriting Renaissance Women**

#### Week 11

Day 32: Final Draft Due  
1 page Cover Letter due

Day 33: Read Amelia Lanier, *Salve Deus Rex Judeorum* "To the Virtuous Reader," lines 1-960 [will probably cut next time]

Day 34: Read Amelia Lanier, *Salve Deus Rex Judeorum* lines 961-end, "To the Doubtful Reader" [will probably cut next time]

#### Week 12

Day 35: Work Plan due  
Read Aphra Behn *Ooronoko* pg. 6-31 (through section 107) [more time here]

Day 36: Read Aphra Behn *Ooronoko* 31-56

Day 37: Response to Dr. K-M feedback due [I cut this but should put it back in]  
NO CLASS (meet on your own)

#### Week 13

Day 38: Proposal Due

Read Margaret Cavendish, *The Blazing World* pg. 1-18 (to "... beneficial to the publick.")

Day 39: Margaret Cavendish, *The Blazing World* pg. 18-37 ("The Empress having thus declared her mind..." to "where the Duke of Newcastle was.")

Day 40: Margaret Cavendish, *The Blazing World* pg. 38-end ("But one thing I forgot all this while," to end)

#### Week 14

Day 41: Margaret Cavendish, *The Convent of Pleasure* [needs more time]

Day 42-3: No Class, Thanksgiving

#### Week 15

Day 44: No reading due, work on final projects

Day 45: Final Reflection Due

No Reading Due

Final: Presentations

Group Edition Due

Individual Cover Letter Due

### ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Most of the work for this class will be keeping up with the reading and coming prepared to class to discuss it. There will also be a number of written assignments:

Two larger writing projects (Close Reading Essay, Group Edition Project)

Peer Review Process (Draft, Memo, Letters, Revision, Presentation)

Preparatory Assignments (3 Responses, Mini Close Reading, Work Plan, Proposal)

Reflective Work (Welcome Survey, Learning Reflection, 2 Cover Letters, Feedback Response, Final Reflection)

Enrichment Assignments (Academic Date, Conference, 2 Development Activities)

Low Stakes Assignments (QQTP, Mind Map, Cornell Notes, Article Report, Summary)

In order to let you take risks and try new things, as well as reduce anxiety, this class will use a labor-based grading mechanism. With the exception of the Article Report (3 points), Close Reading (3 points) and Group Edition (5 points), all assignments will be worth one point. Either you complete it and get credit or you don't. Each assignment prompt will have more details about what it means to complete and earn points for that specific assignment.

You will all begin the semester with 60 points, the minimum needed to pass the class with a D. You will accrue points with each assignment, and lose points if you are absent as follows:

Starting Point	60 points
Larger Writing Projects	10 points
Peer Review	7 points
Preparatory Assignments	6 points
Reflective Work	6 points
Enrichment Activities	4 points
Low States Assignments	7 points
<b>Total</b>	<b>100 points</b>
Possible Bonus Work	3 points

<b>Points</b>	<b>Grade</b>
0-59	F
60-69	D
70-79	C
80-89	B
90-100	A

[Policies and Resources redacted]