

**COURSE DATA****DATA SUBJECT**

Code: 35340
Name: Medieval and 16th century English literature
Cycle: Undergraduate Studies
ECTS Credits: 6
Academic year: 2025-26

STUDY (S)

Degree	Center	Acad. year	Period
1000 - Degree in English Studies	Facultat de Filologia, Traducció i Comunicació	4	First quarter

SUBJECT-MATTER

Degree	Subject-matter	Character
1000 - Degree in English Studies	English literature	COMPULSORY

COORDINATION

MARTINEZ LOPEZ MIGUEL

SUMMARY

In this course, students will develop a thorough knowledge of the historical, cultural, religious, literary and critical contexts of English literature from its origins until ca. 1600. Selected works of English and related literature from the Anglo-Saxon (Old English) period through the early Renaissance will be studied. Featured texts include *Beowulf*, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, a selection of sonnets by Wyatt, Surrey, Sidney, Spenser and Shakespeare, Marlowe's *Dr. Faustus*, Thomas More's *Utopia*, and others.

This course seeks to familiarize students with the main movements, genres, authors and works of medieval and sixteenth-century English literature, and to guide them in the development of critical skills needed to understand and provide a reasoned response to literary texts in relation to a variety of issues such as politics, economy, gender relations, social stratification, censorship or religious and philosophical questions.



Within the context of social entrepreneurship education for the Humanities, creativity, originality, autonomy, professionalism, risk management and self esteem will be stimulated from the perspective of the critical reading and discussion of the selected texts. They will have a better perception of the value of fulfilling deadlines, facing challenges, making commitments and compromising. They will better understand the historical evolution of risk management and of different problem-solving techniques.

PREVIOUS KNOWLEDGE

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER SUBJECTS OF THE SAME DEGREE

There are no specified enrollment restrictions with other subjects of the curriculum.

OTHER REQUIREMENTS

Competence in English at a CEF C1 level, or above, is strongly desired, since literary works will be read in the original (or in a contemporary English literary translation –in the case of O.E. texts- or in an annotated M.E. version– in the case of medieval texts). In addition, taking the following courses before registering for Medieval and Sixteenth Century English Literature-35338 is strongly recommended:

- English Language 6-35328
- Introduction to English Literature (35333)
- Practical Criticism Applied to English Literature (35334)
- History and Culture of English-Speaking Countries (35319)
- History of the English Language (35349)

COMPETENCES / LEARNING OUTCOMES

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Demonstrate communicative and social competence in the English language (oral and written comprehension and expression, communicative interaction and mediation that includes correct grammar and style).

Develop a critical ability to explain literary texts in English and to identify aesthetic conventions, movements, periods, genres, authors and works in English language and their modes of production.



Know and apply the currents and methodologies of literary theory and criticism.

Students must be able to apply their knowledge to their work or vocation in a professional manner and have acquired the competences required for the preparation and defence of arguments and for problem solving in their field of study.

Students must have acquired knowledge and understanding in a specific field of study, on the basis of general secondary education and at a level that includes mainly knowledge drawn from advanced textbooks, but also some cutting-edge knowledge in their field of study.

Students must have developed the learning skills needed to undertake further study with a high degree of autonomy.

Students must have the ability to gather and interpret relevant data (usually in their field of study) to make judgements that take relevant social, scientific or ethical issues into consideration.

DESCRIPTION OF CONTENTS

1. Introduction. The literature of ancient Britain.

Anglo-Saxon (Old English) Literature: epic, religious and elegiac poetry. *Beowulf*, "The Dream of the Rood" and "The Wanderer".

2. The literature of medieval England I

Cultural milieu. Literature in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth centuries. Middle English, Arthurian literature, chivalry and the alliterative revival. *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*. The beginnings of English drama: mystery and miracle plays. The moralities. *Everyman*.

3. The literature of medieval England II

Later medieval pilgrimage, literary genres and the birth of the bourgeoisie: G. Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales*. M.E. lyrics and ballads. W. Caxton and the printing press.



4. English Renaissance poetry

Neoplatonism, the Petrarchan tradition and the English sonnet. English sonneteers: Sir Thomas Wyatt; Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey; Philip Sidney; Edmund Spenser and William Shakespeare.

5. Sixteenth Century English prose

Narratives of the new worlds: Thomas More's Utopia and Francis Bacon's New Atlantis. Sixteenth-century literary theory: Ph. Sidney's *Defense of Poesy*.

6. Early modern English theatre to 1600

Renaissance drama at the turn of the century: complex protagonists, theatrical humanism, and the perfection of blank verse. Christopher Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus* and Thomas Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy*.

By successfully completing the course, students will be able to:

- Write essays on topics assigned to by the lecturer or chosen by the student related to one or several literary works in medieval and 16th-century English literature
- Identify and describe the aesthetic conventions, their evolution, modes of production and reception of works, genres and movements in medieval and 16th-century English literature
- Explain and assess literary texts in English using different critical approaches and in relation to their respective literary and historical contexts
- Identify excerpts from English literary works covered during the course and assess their significance
- Translate a short literary text in English into the official languages of the Valencian Community
- Describe the modes of production and distribution of literary texts in medieval and 16th-century English literature
- Explain the processes of preparing a critical edition and compiling an anthology.

WORKLOAD

PRESENCIAL ACTIVITIES

Activity	Hours
Theory	60,00
Total hours	60,00

NON PRESENCIAL ACTIVITIES



Activity	Hours
Attendance at other activities	0,00
Individual or group project	0,00
Independent study and work	60,00
Preparation of lessons	0,00
Preparation for assessment activities	30,00
Resolution of case studies	0,00
Total hours	90,00

TEACHING METHODOLOGY

Theoretical classes will be structured around lecture classes that aim to provide the necessary historical and cultural context for each period, author and text under consideration.

Practical sessions will focus on the close reading and group discussion of representative excerpts included in the reading list.

Lectures will focus on clarification and discussion of key concepts and techniques for students. Consequently, they are expected to work on assigned tasks (reading sections from course dossiers, answering questions set in advance, etc.) before attending class.

EVALUATION

Assessment systems for both the First and Second Calls:

1. Theoretical Written Exam (45% of the final grade): essays on the set texts (40%); and a multiple-choice test (5%).
2. Practical Tests (30% of the final grade): students will be given two quotes selected from the set texts. For each quote, students must identify the source, provide a translation, and write a commentary on its significance. Each practical test is worth 15% of the final grade.
3. Interview (20% of the final grade): students will deliver a five-minute oral presentation on a topic chosen from a provided list. A brief question-and-answer session will follow the presentation.
4. Class Participation (5% of the final grade).

Pass Requirement: To pass the course, students must achieve a minimum score of 5 out of 10 in each of the following components: 1 (theoretical written exam), 2 (combined practical tests), and 3 (interview).

No marks obtained in components 1 and 2 will be carried over to the second sitting. Marks of 5 (out of 10)



or above in the Interview component will be carried over to the resit session; if a student fails the Interview in the first sitting, they will be required to retake that component. Marks obtained in Class Participation will be carried over to the second call.

The ability to communicate at the C1+ (CEFR level) is required to pass the course as a whole. Students whose communication (written and/or oral) displays errors that are not consistent with the above level will fail the module regardless of their performance related to the course contents.

Intellectual honesty is vital to an academic community and for the fair evaluation of the student's work. All work submitted in this course must be originally authored by every student. No student shall engage in unauthorized collaboration or make use of ChatGPT or other AI composition software.

The general grading system will follow the regulations of the Universitat de València approved by the Consell de Govern on May 30, 2017. ACGUV 108/2017.

REFERENCES

10.1 Referencias Básicas

Referencia b1:	Greenblatt, Stephen, et al., ed. <i>The Norton Anthology of English Literature</i> . 10th edition. New York: W. W. Norton, 2018.
Referencia b2:	Hollander, John, Frank Kermode, and J. B Trapp, ed. <i>The Oxford Anthology of English Literature</i> . New York: Oxford University Press, 2011.
Referencia b3:	Godden, Malcom, Lapidge, Michael, ed. <i>The Cambridge Companion to Old English Literature</i> . Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991.
Referencia b4:	Scanlon, Larry, ed. <i>The Cambridge Companion to Medieval English Literature 1100-1500</i> . Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011.
Referencia b5:	Kinney, Arthur, F, ed. <i>The Cambridge Companion to English Literature, 1500-1600</i> . Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007.
Referencia b6:	Galván, Fernando. <i>Literatura inglesa medieval</i> . Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 2001.
Referencia b7:	de la Concha Muñoz, Ángeles and Marta Cerezo Moreno. <i>Ejes de la literatura medieval y renacentista</i> . Madrid: Editorial UCA, 2010.

**10.2 Referencias Complementarias**

Referencia c1:	Hamer, Richard, ed. <i>A Choice of Anglo-Saxon Verse</i> . Faber and Faber, 2015.
Referencia c2:	Boitani, Pietro, ed. <i>The Cambridge Companion to Chaucer</i> . Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.
Referencia c3:	Beadle, Richard, Fletcher, Alan J, ed. <i>The Cambridge Companion to Medieval English Theatre. Second Edition</i> . Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008.
Referencia c4:	Pearsal, Derek. <i>Arthurian Romance</i> . Blackwell Publishing, 2003.
Referencia c5:	Cheney, P. A., Hadfield, G. A. Sullivan Jr., eds. <i>Early Modern English Poetry (A Critical Companion)</i> . Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003.
Referencia c6:	Weidle, Roland. <i>A Comprehensive Guide to Shakespeare's Sonnets</i> . London: Bloomsbury, 2024.
Referencia c7:	Berensmeyer, I. <i>Handbook of English Renaissance Literature</i> . Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2019.
Referencia c8:	Martínez López, M., ed. <i>Thomas More and Spain</i> . Valencia. Universitat de València, 2024.
Referencia c9:	Gurr, Andrew. <i>The Shakespearean Stage 1574-1642</i> . Third Edition. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.
Referencia c10:	Martínez-López. <i>Y seréis como dioses: estudio sobre Christopher Marlowe y Doctor Fausto</i> . Granada: Universidad de Granada, 2010.
Referencia c11:	Smith, Emma, Sullivan, Garrett, A, Jr., ed. <i>The Cambridge Companion to English Renaissance Tragedy</i> . Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010.