Department of English & Writing Studies

English 3320F (001)
Desire in the Renaissance
Fall 2024

(draft syllabus)

Western University is located on the lands of the Anishinaabek, Haudenosaunee, Lūnaapéewak, and Attawandaron peoples.

Instructor: Professor Madeline Bassnett

Prerequisites: At least 60% in 1.0 of English 1020-1999 or permission of the Department.

Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

Course Description
This course will examine the profuse complexity of Renaissance love poetry. Love poems were transgressive, fantastical, and even political. They allowed men and women to break through cultural and religious restrictions on the expression of desire, and gave them a language to discuss gendered and political dynamics of dominance and submission.

In this course, I'm especially interested in the idea of "writing back." While we'll take care to establish the normative language of desire, we'll also think extensively about how writers transgress that language. We'll ask questions such as: How do women writers establish themselves as desiring subjects using the patriarchal discourses of Petrarchism and Neoplatonism? How do both male and female writers destabilize normative gender hierarchies, express same-sex desires, and even gesture towards non-binary identities? How do Renaissance writers respond to and reshape traditional narratives of desire in ways that allow us, today, to reflect on our own increasingly multidimensional experience of desire, gender, and sexuality?

Objectives:
By the end of the course, successful students will be able to:
- Identify traditional discourses of Renaissance desire, including Petrarchism, Neoplatonism, and Ovidianism
- Analyse generic, formal, and discursive methods of expressing desire
- Examine the development of non-normative expressions of desire
- Engage with theoretical and critical examinations of gender, desire, and sexuality
- Engage critically and creatively with Renaissance literature
- Develop effective arguments through a combination of close reading and independent research
- Evaluate, critique, and integrate secondary criticism
- Discover connections between the past and present

Course Ethos
Our class will honour the principles of equity, diversity, and inclusion. We will use each other's preferred and chosen names and pronouns; we will engage in respectful and generous conversation with each other; we will avoid language that is hurtful, violent, or exclusive. We will also acknowledge that we may make mistakes, and that learning from each other and questioning ourselves is part of the EDI process. My goal is to create a challenging and safe space to explore and exchange ideas. Please feel welcome to talk with me if you have any concerns.

Course Materials

Required:
Available through the Western Bookstore as **print** copies only and in the editions listed. You will be required to bring the relevant text to every class. Laptop/device use in this class will be limited, and you will not have regular access to screens. (see Technology Use below) The final exam will be open-book. You will be permitted to bring the print copies of *Broadview Coursepack* and Cary's *Tragedy of Mariam* to the exam, with any notes you have made in the margins. OWL material will not be allowed into the exam.

Broadview Coursepack bundled with Elizabeth Cary, *The Tragedy of Mariam* (Broadview Press)

Selected readings (as indicated on the Course Outline) will be available through OWL Brightspace (https://westernu.brightspace.com/). I encourage you to print out this material for easy access and reference during discussions and online lectures.

If students need assistance with the course OWL site, they can seek support on the OWL Brightspace Help page. Alternatively, they can contact the Western Technology Services Helpdesk. They can be contacted by phone at 519-661-3800 or ext. 83800.

Methods of Evaluation

The grade for the course will be arrived at as follows:

Reading quizzes (best 7/10)	10%
Group discussions (8/10)	10%
Reading responses (2 x 500 words)*	15%
Essay #1 (1500 words)*	15%
Essay #2 (2500 words)*	25%
Final Exam (3 hours)	25%

Assignments marked with an asterisk have flexible deadlines and are **not** eligible for academic consideration.

Students are fully responsible for looking at and being familiar with the information posted on the department website at http://www.uwo.ca/english/undergraduate/Student%20Information.html.

Reading Quizzes 10% (best 7/10)
In a three-hour class, it's more important than ever that you keep up with the reading. To encourage you in this task, each class (except Weeks 1 and 12) will start off with a short weekly reading quiz. The top 7 (out of 10) quizzes will count towards your final grade. If you miss a quiz due to absence, then it will count as one of the 3 "non-counted" quizzes. In other words, accommodation will not be granted for the first 3 quizzes missed.

Group Discussions 10% (8/10)
Each week (except for Weeks 1 and 12) we'll be engaging in organized and guided discussion sessions.

These groups will provide opportunities for focused peer-group conversation and analysis. Topics are designed to assist with essay preparation and encourage practical and creative responses to the readings. You'll be asked to appoint a note-taker for the group, and to hand in/email me your notes at the end of class, with a list of attending members. While your notes won't be formally graded, evidence of attendance AND fruitful discussion will count towards 10% of your final grade. All groups should be prepared to contribute to follow-up class discussions.

Note: If you miss a discussion due to absence, then it will count as one of the 2 "non-counted" discussions. Accommodation will not be granted for the first 2 discussions missed.
Bonus: If you're here for all 10 discussions, you'll get a bonus 2%.

Reading Responses (2 x approx. 500 words) 15%
Due: Nov. 27 (midnight) at the latest
A list of reading response topics will be provided in the first week of class (Assignment Guidelines folder). You must choose two of these topics for your responses and hand them in when completed. Please complete both responses before handing them in. Although you have lots of flexibility here, these must be submitted by November 27th at the latest to avoid penalties. I'd encourage you to take advantage of the flexibility and get these done sooner than later.

Short Essay (1000 words) 15%
Due: Anytime between September 30-Oct. 4 (midnight)
Please see Assignment Guidelines for more information. We will discuss these in more detail in the second week of class.

Research Essay (2000 words) 25%
Due: Anytime between November 18-22 (midnight)
Please see Assignment Guidelines for more information. These will be posted and discussed in detail after Reading Week.

Final Exam 25%
There will be a three-hour written exam during the December exam period, which will cover the entire term's work. This exam will consist of short answer questions plus two longer essays. I will give you a list of **four** possible essay topics on the last day of class. **Two** of these topics will be included on the exam (i.e. there will be no choice). You may bring your hard copy texts (*Broadview Coursepack* and Cary's *Tragedy of Mariam*) **AND** one 8 1/2 x 11 sheet of paper with notes (you can use both sides) to the exam. You may **not** bring in copies of OWL texts

Additional Information
Technology Use
Please keep the classroom technology free. Except when necessary (e.g. to read OWL material, or as needed during discussions), please put away all laptops, iPads, cellphones, and other gadgets. If you have legitimate need for any of these items (on an ongoing or specific basis), please talk to me.

Email
I check email on a regular basis Monday to Friday, and will respond to emails within 24-48 hours. Please do not expect an immediate response from me on weekends.

Submission of Assignments
Essays and reading responses must be submitted through the OWL Brightspace Assignments tab.

Be sure to keep a copy of all assignments submitted as well as your research notes.

Late Assignments
If you submit a paper after the final day of the flexible deadline, the paper will be counted as late, and the following procedures will apply:
1. The paper will not be read until all previous assignments have been read and marked, and depending on the extent of the lateness, may be returned at a later date.
2. A grade will be given, but no (or minimal) comments or corrections will be provided.
3. The grade will be reduced by a penalty of two marks (2%) for each calendar day (including weekends) that it is late.

Attendance
Attendance is mandatory in all classes and tutorials. In cases of excessive absenteeism (e.g. more than 9 unexcused hours for a half course, 18 for a full course), which are not accounted for by either academic consideration or accommodation, students may be debarred from taking the final examination, and will receive an official warning to this effect by or before the course drop date (see Senate policy). In classes with or without final exams, students who do not attend class will receive 0% for course participation grades.

Academic Consideration
Students may request academic consideration in cases of extenuating circumstances – that is, personal circumstances beyond the student's control that have a **substantial but temporary** impact on the student's ability to meet essential academic requirements.

1. Requests for academic consideration are made to the Academic Advising office of the student's Faculty of Registration.

2. Requests for academic consideration include the following components:
   a. Self-attestation signed by the student;
   b. Indication of the course(s) and assessment(s) relevant to the request;
   c. Supporting documentation as relevant.

Requests without supporting documentation are **limited to one per term per course**.

Instructors may designate one assignment or assessment as exempt from this allowance. (No assignment is formally exempt in this course).

Assignments with flexible deadlines and any term work that does not count towards the course grade are **not** eligible for additional consideration.

Documentation for medical illness, when required, includes the completion of a Western Student Medical Certificate (SMC) or, where that is not possible, equivalent documentation, by a health care practitioner.

Requests linked to examinations scheduled by the Office of the Registrar during official examination periods as well as practice laboratory and performance tests typically scheduled in the last week of term **always** require formal supporting documentation.

Intellectual Property/Copyright
All instructor-written materials (e.g. PowerPoints, lecture notes, oral lectures) for this course are created solely for students' personal use within the course, and remain the instructor's intellectual property. Further reproduction, fixation, distribution, transmission, dissemination, communication, or any other uses, without securing the consent of the copyright owner (the course instructor) may be an infringement of copyright. You may not distribute, email, or otherwise communicate these materials to any other person. These limitations extend to recording, photographing, or sharing lectures (online or in-person) and lecture material without permission. Posting the instructor's content from this course to online course sharing sites like OneClass or Course Hero without permission is both an infringement of intellectual property law and a violation of academic integrity guidelines. The instructor will pass these cases on to the Western University Ombudsperson or their Department Chair as appropriate.

AI Technologies
Use of AI technologies such as Chat GPT are not permitted in this class, and using these will be considered to be in violation of Western's Academic Integrity Policy. If AI use is suspected, I will be asking you for research notes, rough drafts, essay outlines, and other materials used in preparing assignments. I value *your* thoughts, research, and writing, and a primary goal of this class is to support and encourage you to strengthen those critical and creative skills. All stages of the essay writing process will help to build and reinforce those skills, from conceptualizing, researching, and drafting, to the final stages of editing and polishing. As we all know, AI can introduce mistakes, make up sources, and reinforce stereotypes. It's your perspectives that are unique, not the AI's. For help with essay planning and questions about course materials or assignments, please talk to me, not Chat GPT.

Religious Accommodation
Students should consult the University's list of recognized religious holidays, and should give reasonable notice in writing, prior to the holiday, to the Instructor and an Academic Counsellor if their course requirements will be affected by a religious observance. Additional information is given in the Western Multicultural Calendar.

Academic Offences
Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at
http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

Plagiarism
Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea or passage from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offence.

Plagiarism Checking
All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the

system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com http://www.turnitin.com.

All instances of plagiarism will be reported to the Chair of Undergraduate Studies. Proven cases of plagiarism will result in a grade of zero for the assignment. Subsequent offences will result in failure for the course.

Gender-Based and Sexual Violence
Western is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence (GBSV) and providing compassionate support to anyone who is going through or has gone through these traumatic events. If you are experiencing or have experienced GBSV (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts at the following website: https://www.uwo.ca/health/student_support/survivor_support/get-help.html. To connect with a case manager or set up an appointment, please contact support@uwo.ca.

Support Services
Registrarial Services http://www.registrar.uwo.ca
Student Support Services https://student.uwo.ca/psp/heprdweb/?cmd=login
Services provided by the USC http://westernusc.ca/services/
Academic Support & Engagement http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to MentalHealth@Western: http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/ for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.