

## ENGL 2503 – Authors before the Author: British Literature before 1660 – Spring 2020

**Instructor:** Dr. Deven Parker (she/her) | **E-Mail:** [deven.parker@colorado.edu](mailto:deven.parker@colorado.edu)

**Class time:** Tuesdays & Thursdays, 9:30-10:45am

**Location:** KTCH 1B84 | **Office:** Denison 262

**Office hours:** Tuesdays & Thursdays, 3:15-4:30pm (& by appointment)

**Course site:** Canvas <https://cuboulder.instructure.com/>

### Course Description

Given its prevalence in our culture, it's surprising that the concept of a literary work having an "author" is a relatively recent invention, dating to the late 17<sup>th</sup>- and early 18<sup>th</sup>-centuries. For example, when some of Shakespeare's plays were initially published during his lifetime, their cover pages did not contain his name, but rather the acting company that first performed them. Even earlier, the 14<sup>th</sup>-century Christian mystic, Margery Kempe, would not have called herself an "author" despite having written what some consider the first autobiography in English. Why and how, then, did the concept of authorship arise? How did "pre-author" authors think of themselves in relation to their texts? How does the anachronistic concept of "authorship" continue to color our readings of early literature, even works like *Beowulf* that have no identifiable author?

These are the questions that will guide our survey of British literature from *Beowulf* to Milton's *Paradise Lost*, a span of almost 700 years. Alongside these texts, we will read foundational works of literary criticism that look for answers in the birth of the author, which happened through a series of cultural and legal changes. In Britain, these changes cleared space for a new kind of canonicity and a reorganization of the literary field. We'll also take a look at shifts in publishing and editing, and finally, consider what it means to sweep away this powerful creation who is at the center of our discipline.

### Required Texts (all available at the CU Bookstore, but I recommend Abebooks.com for better deals on used copies)

*Beowulf: A New Verse Translation.* Trans. Seamus Heaney. Norton, 2001. ISBN 978-0393320978

Shakespeare, William. *The Tempest.* Folger Shakespeare Library, 2004. ISBN 978-0743482837

Cavendish, Margaret. *The Blazing World and Other Writings.* Ed. Kate Lilley. Penguin Classics, 1994. 978-0140433722

Milton, John. *Paradise Lost.* Ed. John Leonard. Penguin Classics, 2003. ISBN 978-0140424393

### Reading & Assignment Schedule (subject to change)

#### Part 1: Authors vs. Translators

Tue., Jan. 14: Syllabus review + OED definitions of "author"

Thu., Jan. 16: Foucault, "What is an Author?" (Canvas)

Tue., Jan. 21: Benjamin, "The Task of the Translator" (Canvas) + *Beowulf*, pages 3-53

Thu., Jan. 23: *Beowulf*, pages 53-101

Tue., Jan. 28: *Beowulf*, 101-153

Thu., Jan. 30: *Beowulf*, 153-209

Part 2: Manuscript Culture: or, Always Make a Copy

Tue., Feb. 4: Chaucer, “To His Scribe Adam” (Canvas) + **meet in Special Collections (Norlin Library M350B)**

Thu., Feb. 6: Chaucer, “General Prologue” from *Canterbury Tales* (Canvas)

Tue., Feb. 11: Chaucer, “The Wife of Bath’s Prologue” (Canvas)

Thu., Feb. 13: Chaucer, excerpt from “The Tale of Sir Thopas” (Canvas)

Sun., Feb. 16: **paper 1 due before midnight via Canvas**

Part 3: God is a Woman (Writer): Gender, Authorship, and the Divine

Tue., Feb. 18: Kempe, *The Book of Margery Kempe*, **page numbers TBA**

Thu., Feb. 20: Kempe, **page numbers TBA**

Tue., Feb. 25: Kempe, **page numbers TBA**

Thu., Feb. 27: Kempe, **page numbers TBA** & Julian of Norwich excerpt (Canvas)

Part 4: The Case of the Invisible Audience: Authorship under Print

Tue., Mar. 3: Brown, excerpt from *Poets, Patrons, and Printers* (Canvas) & Spenser, excerpt from *Shepheardes Calendar* (Canvas)

Thu., Mar. 5 Spenser, excerpt from *Shepheardes Calendar* (Canvas)

Tue., Mar. 10: Shakespeare, *Tempest*, Act 1

Thu., Mar. 12: Shakespeare, *Tempest*, Act 2

Tue., Mar. 17: Shakespeare, *Tempest*, Act 3-4

Thu., Mar. 19: Shakespeare, *Tempest*, Act 5

Fri., Mar. 20: **paper 2 due before midnight via Canvas**

Tue., Mar. 24 – NO CLASS (Spring Break)

Thu., Mar. 26 – NO CLASS (Spring Break)

Part 5: Man, I (Write) Like a Woman: Print’s Gender Politics

Tue., Mar. 31: Ezell, excerpt from *Social Authorship and the Advent of Print* (Canvas) & Cavendish, *Blazing World*, **pages TBA**

Thu., Apr. 2: Cavendish, *Blazing World*, **pages TBA**

Tue., Apr. 7: Cavendish, *Blazing World*, **pages TBA**

Thu., Apr. 9: Cavendish, *Blazing World*, **pages TBA**

Part 6: The Birth of the Author: Literary Property, Genius, and Print

Tue., Apr. 14: Loewenstein, excerpt from *The Author’s Due* (Canvas)

Thu., Apr. 16: Milton, excerpt from *Areopagitica* (Canvas)

Tue., Apr. 21: Milton, *Paradise Lost*, book 1  
 Thu., Apr. 23: Milton, *Paradise Lost*, book 2

Tue., Apr. 28: Milton, *Paradise Lost*, book 3  
 Thu., Apr. 30: Milton, *Paradise Lost*, book 4

Wed., May 6: **Final paper due before midnight via Canvas**

### Assignments and Grade Values

Commonplace book: 20%

Paper 1 (4-6 pages; due 2/16): 15%

Paper 2 (4-6 pages; due 3/20): 15%

Final Paper (7-9 pages; due 5/6): 25%

Quizzes: 10%

Participation (both in-class assignments & discussion): 15%

### Digital Commonplace Book (10 entries over 15 weeks > 200 words, with 2-3 page preface):

Throughout the course, we will experiment with a particular reading practice called the “Commonplace Book.” For many centuries, readers kept these books by copying out excerpts and passages that they wanted to retain and return to, whether because they represented a particularly beautiful style, captured a piece of essential wisdom, or contained information that seemed important to have close at hand. For this class, you will create entries in your digital commonplace book by selecting one passage from each week’s reading and annotating, analyzing, diagramming, or visualizing the features of the passage that seem most important to retain. These entries not only will they allow you to prepare for class discussions but also to brainstorm for your papers. At the end of the semester, you will compile all your entries into a final book, with a 2-3 page preface reflecting on what you learned by reading this way. My weekly feedback will include very brief comments and a numerical rating of your entry (1-5) based on thoroughness and engagement with the passage. You will also receive a numerical rating for your preface. **Commonplace book entries are always due the Monday night before class by midnight.**

**Close-reading papers (2).** You will write two close reading papers for this course. Selecting a passage from any text in our first unit, you will unpack strange or striking details and propose an explanation or an interpretation of why such details matter. Papers will be evaluated based on their analysis of literary texts; their execution of a particular focus or question; and the organization and polish of your writing. **I will hand out prompts for the papers you write at least 3 weeks before the deadline.** I encourage you to meet with me outside of class for one-on-one consultations about your writing, especially since there will be no rewrites. **Papers will always be due before midnight and should be submitted via Canvas dropbox.** Late papers receive a half letter-grade deduction for each day they are late, and I do not accept papers more than week after the due date.

**Final paper.** For your final paper, you will be asked to select one of your close-reading papers (paper 1 or 2) and **expand it into a 7-9-page research paper.** We will have a seminar at Norlin Library on how to conduct academic research, after which you **will find 3-4 peer-reviewed academic sources (articles or books) that treat your selected text or topic.** As you revise and expand the original paper, **you should integrate these new sources in a way that bolsters your argument.** The final paper is **due via Canvas on 5/6 before midnight.** I will circulate more detailed instructions in March.

**Quizzes.** Quizzes on the day's reading will be frequent and unannounced; they will be administered during the **first 5-10 minutes of class**. Latecomers will not be allowed to make them up. They will usually consist of 2-3 basic questions about the reading to make sure you complete it.

**Canvas.** Be sure to check our course site on Canvas at least once per day. I will use it to post announcements, grades, PDFs of course readings, and to take attendance.

**Attendance and Punctuality.** Do not be late, and do not miss class unless you must. **After three absences**, your course grade will drop by a half-letter for each subsequent absence. For every two latenesses, you will incur one absence.

**Inclusion and Equity.** I strive to make my classroom an environment of inclusion, tolerance, and compassion for all, including people of color and those belonging to LGBTQ+, immigrant, disabled, and non-normative communities. I do not and will not tolerate hate, bigotry, or the incitement of either in my course. In addition, I am committed to meeting the needs of neuroatypical learners, including adapting assignments. Do not hesitate to contact me with any concerns about our classroom environment, or suggestions for how I can better meet your learning needs. I am also a mandatory reporter for the Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance.

**Participation.** While I will lecture occasionally, our class will primarily depend on your substantive and judicious participation. Come to class having prepared questions and ideas about specific parts of the reading you've done. *Take notes in your text* so that you're able to locate parts that are important, confusing, strenuous, or just plain weird (and there will be many, many such moments!).

**Decorum.** Arrive to class on time and prepared for active participation. Be vibrant and energetic. Don't leave the room unless there is an emergency. Keep your phone *silent and out of sight* for the duration of class. This is an absolute rule and there are no exceptions. **If I see your phone out during class, you will be marked absent.**

**Laptops.** You're permitted to use laptops in class, but I strongly recommend that most of you take handwritten notes because, for \*most\* learners, they have been proven to facilitate better retention. In my experience, non-laptop users tend to receive higher grades. If you do use laptops to take notes, please turn off wireless and remember that your screen affects those around you.

**Plagiarism.** Plagiarism will result in stiff disciplinary action: a first offense will result in an automatic 0% for the assignment grade, while a second offense will result in an automatic 0% for the course.  
<<http://www.colorado.edu/honorcode>>

**The Writing Center.** You should consider utilizing the Writing Center—a campus service offering free one-on-one feedback about academic writing—as a supplement to this course. (See <http://www.colorado.edu/pwr/writingcenter.html> for more information about the Center or to schedule an appointment.) Be warned, however, that the Center books up quickly, often up to one week in advance during peak times.

## Paper Grading Rubric

The following represent my general grading criteria for essays. (Separate rubrics for the final essay will be provided later in the semester):

### An essay in the “A” Range will feature

- a strong thesis with a clear claim, reason, and warrant;
- numerous specific examples drawn from appropriate sources (e.g., specific information from primary and secondary source material);

- consistently clear analysis of examples;
- consistently appropriate and correct use of citation (including attributive tags);
- consistently clear and correct use of quotation, summary, and paraphrase;
- careful attention to issues of grammar and style (especially sentence boundaries, clarity, coherence, and punctuation); and
- the meeting of minimum page requirements.

**An essay in the “B” Range will feature**

- a generally good thesis with a clear claim, reason, and warrant;
- several specific examples drawn from appropriate sources;
- generally clear analysis of examples;
- generally appropriate and correct use of citation;
- generally clear and correct use of quotation, summary, and paraphrase;
- generally strong attention to issues of grammar and style; and,
- the meeting of minimum page requirements.

**An essay in the “C” Range will feature**

- a thesis lacking a clear claim, reason, and/or warrant;
- few specific examples drawn from appropriate sources;
- little specific analysis (often as a result of a poor thesis);
- minimally appropriate and correct use of appropriate citation styles;
- minimally clear and correct use of quotation, summary, and paraphrase;
- minimal attention to issues of grammar and style; and
- the meeting of minimum page requirements.

**An essay in the “D” Range will feature**

- no real thesis;
- few or no examples;
- little or no analysis;
- generally inappropriate or incorrect use of citation (but without lapsing into plagiarism);
- generally unclear or incorrect use of quotation, summary, and paraphrase;
- significant problems with grammar and style; and
- the meeting of minimum page requirements.

**An essay in the “F” Range will feature**

- no real thesis;
- few or no examples;
- little or no analysis;
- generally unclear and incorrect use of citation styles (often in ways that lapse into plagiarism);
- generally inappropriate or incorrect use of quotation, summary, and paraphrase;
- significant problems with grammar and style; and / or
- the failure to meet minimum page requirements.

## **Campus-Wide Policies**

***Students with Disabilities***

If you need accommodations because of a disability, please submit your accommodation letter from Disability Services to your faculty member in a timely manner so that your needs can be addressed. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities in the academic

environment. Information on requesting accommodations is located on the [Disability Services website](http://www.colorado.edu/disabilityservices/students) (www.colorado.edu/disabilityservices/students). Contact Disability Services at 303-492-8671 or [dsinfo@colorado.edu](mailto:dsinfo@colorado.edu) for further assistance. If you have a temporary medical condition or injury, see [Temporary Medical Conditions](#) under the Students tab on the Disability Services website and discuss your needs with your professor.

### ***Religious Holidays***

Campus policy requires that faculty make every effort to deal reasonably and fairly with all students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with scheduled exams, assignments or required attendance. In this class, students must alert me at least one week in advance of any conflict. See the [campus policy regarding religious observances](#) for full details.

### ***Classroom Behavior***

Students and faculty each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. Those who fail to adhere to such behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with race, color, national origin, sex, pregnancy, age, disability, creed, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, veteran status, political affiliation or political philosophy. Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student's legal name. I will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please advise me of this preference early in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my records. For more information, see the policies on [classroom behavior](#) and the [Student Code of Conduct](#).

### ***Honor Code***

All students enrolled in a University of Colorado Boulder course are responsible for knowing and adhering to [the academic integrity policy](#). Violations of the policy may include: plagiarism, cheating, fabrication, lying, bribery, threat, unauthorized access to academic materials, clicker fraud, resubmission, and aiding academic dishonesty. All incidents of academic misconduct will be reported to the Honor Code Council ([honor@colorado.edu](mailto:honor@colorado.edu); 303-735-2273). Students who are found responsible for violating the academic integrity policy will be subject to nonacademic sanctions from the Honor Code Council as well as academic sanctions from the faculty member. Additional information regarding the academic integrity policy can be found at the [Honor Code Office website](#).

### ***Non-Discrimination***

The University of Colorado Boulder (CU Boulder) is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working, and living environment. CU Boulder will not tolerate acts of sexual misconduct, discrimination, harassment or related retaliation against or by any employee or student. CU's Sexual Misconduct Policy prohibits sexual assault, sexual exploitation, sexual harassment, intimate partner abuse (dating or domestic violence), stalking or related retaliation. CU Boulder's Discrimination and Harassment Policy prohibits discrimination, harassment or related retaliation based on race, color, national origin, sex, pregnancy, age, disability, creed, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, veteran status, political affiliation or political philosophy. Individuals who believe they have been subject to misconduct under either policy should contact the Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance (OIEC) at 303-492-2127. Information about the OIEC, the above referenced policies, and the campus resources available to assist individuals regarding sexual misconduct, discrimination, harassment or related retaliation can be found at the [OIEC website](#).