

COM 180: Selected Topics in Comparative Literature
Renaissance Lyric Poetry

Instructor: Victoria White
Office: —
Office Hours: —
Class Meetings: —
email: vmwhite@ucdavis.edu

Course Description

Welcome to COM 180!

Living in the twenty-first century, we are positioned to observe the rise of digital media and the Internet as means of producing and disseminating information; digital media haven't totally supplanted print, but the meaning of terms like *publication* and *audience* have been radically expanded to include our new digital realities. The only comparable revolution in media and publication happened during the Renaissance: the new world of the printing press.

In COM 180, we will engage with that critical moment in history by studying the material culture of Renaissance lyric poetry—that is, we will study the poetry as literature, but we will also analyze the manuscripts and books in which that literature circulated. We will work with the Renaissance-era books that are housed in the Special Collections of Shields Library, here at UC Davis. We will also supplement these artifacts with facsimiles, both digital and in print, taking digital portals to some of the finest collections of Renaissance lyric in the world. Our hands-on approach to working with these materials will grant us practical and theoretical knowledge of book culture in the early modern era, as well as an awareness of the relationships between content, medium, circulation, and audience. All of these concerns will in turn inform our reading of lyric poetry and how it might have been received by its original audiences.

Our particular focus on lyric will initiate us into the literary Renaissance in two important ways. First of all, lyric poetry was a type of literature that continued to circulate in manuscript even after the invention of the printing press, so it's the perfect vehicle for a comparative study of the overlapping spheres of manuscript and print culture. A focus on lyric allows us to ask such questions as: For the Renaissance poet, what are the advantages and disadvantages of print publication versus manuscript circulation? What kinds of lyric are suitable for print publication, or which authors have access to print? What kinds of audiences can be reached by print, as compared to manuscript circulation? How will a collection of verse be received in print as compared to manuscript?

Secondly, Renaissance lyric was subject to trends that were international in scope, and this allows us a robustly comparative field of study. Take the sonnet, for instance: we will study the

usage of this particular poetic form across the boundaries of language and nationality. The sonnet won't be the only poetic form that we study, but tracing the vogue for the sonnet will take us to Renaissance Italy and France, Golden Age Spain, and Elizabethan England. So, in COM 180, we will study the forms, tropes, and themes of early modern lyric poetry in a comparative context, allowing us to interrogate notions of poetic convention, originality, imitation, translation, and adaptation.

Writing assignments and in-class work during the first half of the quarter will equip students with the vocabulary and analytical tools that are most useful to readers and interpreters of Renaissance lyric poetry. For the second half of the quarter, students will work on collaborative research projects, selecting texts from UCD's Special Collections, such as *The triumphes of Fraunces Petrarche* (1555) or John Donne's *Poems* (1669). Using these books as case studies, students will unpack our questions about lyric poetry's material culture, circulation, and audience. During week 7, students will give presentations on their texts. The final project for the course will be an individually-authored research paper that analyzes a book from the Special Collections as both a poetic work and a cultural artifact.

Required Texts

- *Sixteenth-Century Poetry: An Annotated Anthology*. Gordon Braden (Editor)
- *Petrarch's Lyric Poems: The Rime Sparse and Other Lyrics*, by Frances Petrarch (Author) and Robert M. Durling (Translator)
- *Tottel's Miscellany*, Penguin Edition
- *Sidney's 'The Defence of Poesy' and Selected Renaissance Literary Criticism*, Penguin Edition
- Shakespeare's *Sonnets*. (Any annotated and critical edition will do, but Stephen Booth's version is most highly recommended as it contains facing page facsimiles of the early modern print edition. The Arden edition is also recommended.)
- Additional readings will be posted to Smartsite. When we discuss these readings in class, bring either a printed copy or bring an electronic copy on your laptop or tablet (not on your smartphone).

Assessment:

Close Readings (x4 with lowest score dropped) = 15%

Archival Assignments (x2) = 5%

Midterm = 10%

Group Presentation (Proposal 3%, Annotated Bibliography 6%, In-Class Presentation 6%) = 15%

Final Paper (Outline 5%, 2 Feedback Letters 5%, Final Draft 25%) = 35%

Final Exam = 10%

In-Class Participation and Performance = 10% (see Appendix A, below, for the participation rubric)

Course Schedule:

Class Day	Do Before Class	Class Activities	Major Due Dates
Week 1a		Introductions Close Reading Exercise	
Week 1b	Read selections from Dante and Petrarch	Introduction to the forms, tropes, moods, and themes of "Petrarchism"	
Week 2a	Read assigned selections from Santillana, Garcilaso, and Herrera	Discussion of Spanish lyric Special Topic: Renaissance Theories of Imitation; Ciceronians, Bees, and Pietro Bembo	
Week 2b	Read assigned selections from Wyatt and Surrey Browse the Special Collections website and read the "About Us" page	Discussion of English lyric during the reign of Henry VIII Visit to the Special Collections: Introduction to UCD's holdings in early modern	
Week 3a	Read the Introduction and assigned selections from the Devonshire MS WikiBook , and browse the rest of the document Browse the BL's online exhibit on Henry VIII , paying special attention to the section on Wyatt ("The Great Matter" — >"Book of Sir Thomas Wyatt")	Discussion of manuscript circulation, readership, and authorship Continued discussion of English lyric poetry	
Week 3b	Read the Introduction, "To the reader," "List of Poem Genres," "Index of Verse Forms," and assigned selections from <i>Tottel's Miscellany</i>	Discussion of print publication, audience, and Tottel's editorial choices Introduction to EEBO Continued discussion of English lyric poetry	Archival Assignment # 1 to be submitted to both the Google doc and Smartsite "Assignments" not later than 11:55 pm
Week 4a	Read assigned selections	Discussion of women writers in	

	from Gaspara Stampa and Louise Labé Read the intro to “The Other Voice” series on early modern women writers	Italy and France	
Week 4b	Read assigned selections from Colonna and Michelangelo, Franco and Venier, and Elizabeth and Raleigh	Discussion of poetry as dialogue/debate between men and women writers Introduction of group projects Intro to research strategies	Archival Assignment #2 due by 11:55 pm
Week 5a	Read assigned selections of lyric from Sidney’s <i>Arcadia</i>	Discussion of formal experimentation, adaptation of classical and Italian models	
Week 5b	Read assigned selections from Puttenham’s <i>The Arte of English Poesy</i>	Discussion of early modern literary criticism and notions of form	Group project proposal due in class as a hard copy
Week 6a	Prepare for Midterm	MIDTERM	
Week 6b	Read Sidney’s <i>Astrophil and Stella</i> (A&S) Prepare annotated bibliography	Discussion of A&S and the vogue of the English sonnet sequence Short, informal presentation of bibliographies (a resource swap)	Group annotated bibliography due in class as a hard copy
Week 7a	Work on group presentations Read assigned selections from Spenser’s <i>Amoretti</i>	Continued discussion of sonnet sequences, A&S, and <i>Amoretti</i>	
Week 7b	Prepare group presentation	Group Presentations, Q&A	Post PDF version of presentation to Smartsite “Resources” before class
Week 8a	Read assigned selections from du Bellay, Ronsard, and Marot	Discussion of French Lyric Special Topic: du Bellay’s notion of forgetting how to “Petrarchize” (and tracing that word’s early usage in the OED)	

Week 8b	Read assigned selections from Samuel Daniel and Thomas Campion's prose treatises	Discussion of early modern literary criticism, pushing back against the sonnet mania	Outline for final paper due not later than 11:55 pm and to be submitted to Smartsite "Assignments"
Week 9a	Read Shakespeare's <i>Sonnets</i>	Discussion of Shakespeare's innovations to the sonnet form and mood	
Week 9b	Continue reading Shakespeare's <i>Sonnets</i>	Further discussion How to write a good feedback letter	Submit a draft of your paper to Smartsite "Resources" ("Paper Project" folder) not later than 11:55 pm
Week 10a	Read assigned selections from Donne's <i>Poems</i> Work on Peer Review Letters	Discussion	
Week 10b	Bring a draft of your conclusion as a hard copy Prepare 3 study questions for the final exam Work on your Final Paper	Conclusions Workshop Exam Review: Student-Generated Study Guide	Feedback Letters to be submitted to Smartsite ("Paper Project" folder) not later than 11:55 pm
Final Exam			
Final Paper due			

Appendix A: Participation Grading Rubric for COM 180

A+

Comes to class on time, alert, and ready to contribute. Arrives late or leaves early only in extraordinary circumstances. Has either perfect attendance or a valid, documented excuse for each absence. Has read the assigned text(s) closely (looking up unfamiliar terms or names, annotating the text, and taking notes as appropriate). Always brings the text(s) to class. Has thoughts, observations, or questions (regarding the text) ready to share with the class. Consistently contributes verbally to discussion (3-4 times per class) voluntarily and with enthusiasm. Comments are insightful, relevant, and demonstrate critical thinking. Listens attentively and responds to the questions or comments of other students with respect, tact, and interest, fostering an authentic and lively group discussion. Is a model classroom citizen who practices UCD's [Principles of Community](#).

B

Attends class regularly. May have one unexcused absence, or may have perfect attendance, but may occasionally be tardy, noticeably tired, or unprepared. Usually does the reading, but may not read closely, or may not complete all assigned readings. Always brings the text to class. Voluntarily contributes verbally to discussion (1-2 times per class), and always responds when called upon. Comments are usually interesting and relevant, though may occasionally be confused, tangential, or obvious.

C

May have 2-3 unexcused absences. May consistently be late to class or leave early. Is often "out of it" or unprepared for discussion. Often does not finish the reading. Sometimes fails to bring the text to class. Only contributes verbally when called upon. Comments are often confused, tangential, or obvious. May monologue without regard for the pace of the group discussion. May attempt to interrupt others, or speak while others are speaking.

Not passing

May have 3-4 unexcused absences. May consistently be late to class or leave early. Is consistently "out of it" or unprepared for discussion. Often does not finish the reading. Often fails to bring the text to class. Will not verbally contribute to discussion when called upon. Has body language that communicates apathy or disrespect (e.g., head down, or eyes closed, or staring out the window, or not facing the rest of the class).

Please note:

The use of language or tone that is antagonistic, patronizing, or otherwise demeaning or threatening is absolutely not appropriate and will not be tolerated.

The use of electronic devices (phones, laptops, tablets, etc.) is not allowed for anything other than checking the time, taking notes, or referencing an e-text.