

WORLD LITERATURE I: ENG 2205

Lan Lipscomb

Fall 2004

ENG 2205.CAR: 4:00-5:15, Monday and Wednesday, Whitley Hall, Room 223
ENG 2205.CBR: 6:35-7:50, Monday and Wednesday, Whitley Hall, Room 223

COURSE INFORMATION

ACCESS AND MEANS OF CONTACTING ME:

My office hours for Fall, 2004, will be Monday and Wednesday 1-3:30, Tuesday 4:00-6:00, and outside of these hours by appointment. You may also reach me as follows:

Office Location: Room 313, Building 136 (136 Catoma St.), across from Post Office

Office Phone: 241-9702

Fax: 241-9586, please put my name conspicuously on the cover sheet or first page since this machine is shared

Email: lanlipscomb@troyst.edu, it's critical that you identify yourself clearly on the email and specify what your email subject is. Because of the high volume of virus attacks, I discard without opening any email I cannot clearly identify.

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND REQUIREMENTS: The prerequisite for this course is ENG 1102; if you haven't taken it, please see me immediately. ENG 2205, World Literature I, is a survey of western literary masterpieces from the ancient and Classical Ages through the Middle Ages and into the Renaissance period. The span of years containing this literature stretches almost 4500 years from 2700 BC to 1674 AD and may seem dauntingly large. To help manage the expanse this term, we'll focus in sections on lyrics, narratives, drama, and epics. By this means, we will see how certain literary types endured while undergoing changes through the ages. The three main periods of study are (1) ancient/classical (including Hebrew, Greek, and Roman), (2) medieval (roughly 400-1400 AD), and (3) Renaissance (roughly 1300-1700). One purpose of the course is to make connections and distinctions between the periods, genres, and national origins of these works. Another aim is to build on the knowledge you gained in your composition and introduction to literature courses. Along with lecture from me, we'll spend class meetings in close reading, in explication (line-by-line explanation), and in other forms of analysis. Before each class, you should read your assignment carefully, paying attention to issues, questions, and definitions I will ask you to consider in the attached class preparations. To help you analyze this material, I emphasize certain literary concepts and terms helpful to understanding and talking about literature. The booklet included with this syllabus contains pertinent definitions, study questions, and other material to get you ready for the next class, for the papers, and for the exams.

REQUIRED TEXT: *The Norton Anthology of World Masterpieces*, vol. I., 7th ed., Sarah Lawall, general editor. New York: 1999.

ATTENDANCE AND RESPONSIBILITIES: Be in class regularly and promptly. Please understand that it is my policy that a student cannot pass this course if he or she misses more than 20% of the contact hours (more than six classes). If you must miss a class and you wish for me to consider excusing it, submit a written explanation when you return. Do not call me or the division secretary when you must miss a class. The only time you should contact me on matters of attendance is if some disaster befalls that will force you to miss more

than two classes in a row. I take the roll regularly in the form of a brief quiz at the beginning of the class meeting on the reading assignment. Only in the case of an excused absence will a late paper be accepted without penalty (on or before the next class meeting) or will a missed mid-term exam be made up (within a week and in the Gene Elrod Success Center—the former Learning Resource Center). If you miss an important due date (midterm, papers, final), I expect you to contact me as soon as possible with your explanation. I will require evidence explaining your absence; otherwise, I may not accept the late work or may penalize you. You may submit your papers in person, by email as a Microsoft-Word or Word Perfect document attachment to lanlipscomb@troyst.edu, or by fax 241-9586. If you email me, be very plain in indicating who you are and what the subject of your email is. Because of a high volume of virus attacks at this school, I delete without reading any email I cannot identify. If you fax me, be sure to put my name on the top sheet since the fax machine is shared. You're welcome to use email for general messages or questions, but I'll check my messages regularly only when I'm in my office on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Wednesdays. The Gene Elrod Success Center (GESC) is also where you will go if you need tutorial assistance with your writing. Please call the GESC in advance for hours of operation at 241-9530. If you start to struggle in the course or just don't understand what's up, get in touch with me. Unless I am in a meeting or called away from my office, I am in my office during the office hours specified near the top of this handout. If you cannot reach me by phone, the only way to leave a message is by email. Students meeting the Americans with Disabilities Act criteria should contact the Office of the Dean of Students, Dr. Western, at 241-9532, room 431, Whitley Hall, for information regarding documentation of disability and requests for special services or accommodations.

EXAMS: You will have a midterm and final. Both tests will contain questions requiring a mixture of short answers (identifications mainly) and paragraph- or essay-length responses.

PAPERS: You will write three brief papers for the course (due as specified in the syllabus), and you may revise at least two of those (for up to 10 points added to the original paper's grade). You will also write an in-class essay with the midterm and an out-of-class essay with the final. Near the end of the term, you will also submit a longer paper, the "Review of Scholarship" as I call it, requiring library work and knowledge of the principles of documentation taught in ENG 1102. This Review of Scholarship asks you to review one chapter, at most, from a source like one of the books listed in the brief bibliographies at the ends of introductions in your anthology or from a similarly scholarly work in a book, collection of essays, or learned journal. I expect all out-of-class papers to be produced on a word processor, and be careful to save all final drafts of the three brief papers because you will be required to revise one of them and may the rest (see next section).

REVISIONS: You will be required to revise your choice of any one of the three brief papers, and you may at your option revise the others. I'll add as much as ten points to your original draft's grade depending on how well you do in the revision. To get the full ten points you have to fix all of the errors (style, mechanics, content, organization, etc.) I noted when I graded your paper. Take care with these revisions. I've had students repeat errors or create new ones in their revisions and wind up with little or no extra points for their effort. You also **MUST** return the original draft with the revision, or I will not grade it.

GRADES: Your final course grade will be determined as follows:

Reading Quizzes	15%
Three Short Papers	30%
Review of Scholarship	20%
Midterm	15%
Final	20%

90-100 A, 80-90 B, 70-80 C, 60-70 D, BELOW 60 F. Letter grades on the papers have the following numerical values: A+ = 100, A = 95, A- = 92.5, B+ = 87.5, B = 85, B- = 82.5, C+ = 77.5, C = 75, C- = 72.5, D+ = 67.5, D = 65, D- = 62.5, F = 50. (Note especially the points for A+ and F.) I occasionally assign a paper a NG, meaning Failing/No Grade. Papers with this grade must be rewritten after a conference with me. The revised paper's grade will be averaged with the failing grade (50). You must also complete all assignments (all four papers,

midterm, and final) in the course to pass.

I use the following grade descriptions to evaluate your projects and performance in the course:

- A Excellent. Denotes not only outstanding achievement but also an unusual degree of intellectual initiative. It is the highest grade awarded.
- B Good. Denotes work which surpasses the objectives for the course. It is a mark of distinction.
- C Satisfactory. Denotes work which achieves the objectives for the course. It is the lowest grade given for an acceptable performance.
- D Unsatisfactory. Denotes work of inferior quality compared to the objectives for the course. It is the lowest passing grade and a mark of inadequate performance.
- F Failure. Denotes inadequate work below the minimal standards of competence required to pass the course. A course with this grade does not satisfy prerequisite or degree requirements.

HONESTY: I expect you to conduct yourself honorably in my course. That means I will report any cheating to the dean and seek the stiffest possible sanction. Learning to adequately acknowledge your sources and thereby avoid plagiarism is essential knowledge for this course and for intellectual undertakings of all sorts. The concept of proper documentation will be reviewed briefly as part of your preparation for the Review of Scholarship, though you should be familiar with it already. If you have questions about proper documentation at any time during the term, you should refer them to me. One of the textbooks in ENG 1101 and 1102, *The Everyday Writer*, 2nd ed., also treats the requirements of documentation; see especially sections 12g, 48-51. Another useful reference work on matters of documentation is *The MLA Handbook* (4rd edition).

PAGERS AND CELL PHONES: Please remember to turn off pagers and cell phones before coming into class. If you should forget, I expect you to shut off the device without replying. Do not answer a page or cell phone in my classroom.

SYLLABUS

This syllabus may change as your and my needs demand. Please treat it, then, as an outline for the course. To get the most from these classes, you should be sure to have your assignments read on the dates indicated. Notice that some of the works you are to read for classes 2-5 are found in your course booklet.

Monday, August 23

CLASS 1: INTRODUCTION to course and overview; *Ancient and Classical Lyrics*: Psalm 23, p. 89; Psalm 137, p. 91; Sappho, pp. 514-517; Catullus, pp. 808-813.

Wednesday, August 25

CLASS 2: *Medieval Lyrics*: Boethius' "He that hath set his headlong heart," (in course booklet, not in anthology); Anonymous "The Ruin," p. 1193; Christine de Pizan's "Alone in Martyrdom," p. 1222.

Monday, August 30

CLASS 3: Masterpieces of the Middle Ages, pp. 1035-1039; *Medieval Lyrics*: Anonymous "Calvary," p. 1218; Villon's "Ballade" (booklet); Anonymous "Western Wind" (booklet).

Wednesday, September 1

CLASS 4: *Renaissance Lyrics/Sonnets*: Petrarch, pp. 1664-1667, 1673-1678; Shakespeare's "Sonnet 29"

("When in Disgrace with Fortune and Men's Eyes) (booklet).

Monday, September 6: Labor Day Holiday (no class, no make-up)

Wednesday, September 8

CLASS 5: *Renaissance Lyrics, Sonnets*: Shakespeare's "Sonnet 73" ("That Time of Year Thou Mayst in Me Behold") (booklet); "Sonnet 130" ("My Mistress's Eyes Are Nothing Like the Sun") (booklet); Donne's "Song: Go and Catch a Falling Star" (booklet).

Monday, September 13

CLASS 6: *Medieval Narratives*: "Thorstein the Staff-Struck," pp. 1178-1184; *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, Part 1, pp. 1458-1469.

Wednesday, September 15

CLASS 7: *Medieval Narratives: Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, Parts 2, 3, 4, pp. 1469-1512.

Monday, September 20

CLASS 8: *Medieval Narratives*: Chaucer's "General Prologue," ll. 1-40, pp. 1512-1518; "The Miller's Prologue and Tale," pp. 1534-1548.

Wednesday, September 22

CLASS 9: *Medieval Narratives*: Chaucer's "The Pardoner's Prologue and Tale," pp. 1573-1585.

Monday, September 27

CLASS 10: *Medieval Narratives*: Malory's *Morte Darthur*, pp. 1610-1628.

Wednesday, September 29

CLASS 11: FIRST BRIEF PAPER DUE; Masterpieces of the Ancient World, pp. 1-15; *Classical Drama*: Aristotle's *Poetics*, pp. 746-750; Sophocles' *Oedipus the King*, pp. 596-640.

Monday, October 4

CLASS 12: *Classical Drama*: Sophocles' *Oedipus the King*, (continued, discussion).

Wednesday, October 6

CLASS 13: *Classical Drama*: Aristophanes' *Lysistrata*, pp. 672-699, ll. 1-720.

Monday, October 11

CLASS 14: *Classical Drama*: Aristophanes' *Lysistrata*, pp. 699-726, ll. 720-end.

Wednesday, October 13

CLASS 15: *Classical Drama*: Euripides' *Medea*, pp. 640-672.

Monday, October 18

CLASS 16: MID-TERM EXAM (COVERING CLASSES 1-15). BRING A BLUE EXAM BOOKLET FROM THE BOOKSTORE. THE EXAM WILL LAST 1¼ HOURS.

Wednesday, October 20

CLASS 17: *Classical Drama*: Plautus' *Pseudolus*, pp. 750-807.

Monday, October 25

CLASS 18: ASSIGNMENT/DISCUSSION OF THE REVIEW OF SCHOLARSHIP.

Wednesday, October 27

CLASS 19: SECOND BRIEF PAPER DUE; *Medieval Drama: Everyman*, pp. 1628-1650.

Monday, November 1

CLASS 20: *Renaissance Drama: de Vega's Fuente Ovejuna*, pp. 2072-2110.

Wednesday, November 3

CLASS 21: Masterpieces of the Renaissance, pp. 1653-1663; *Renaissance Drama: Shakespeare's Othello*, Acts I-II, pp. 2110-2147.

Monday, November 8

CLASS 22: *Renaissance Drama: Shakespeare's Othello*, Acts III-V, pp. 2147-2192.

Wednesday, November 10

CLASS 23: *Classical Epic: Virgil's Aeneid*, Books I and II, pp. 814-847.

Monday, November 15:

CLASS 24: *Classical Epic: Virgil's Aeneid*, Books IV and VI, pp. 847-886.

Wednesday, November 17

CLASS 25: THIRD BRIEF PAPER DUE; *Classical Epic: Virgil's Aeneid*, Books VIII and XII, pp. 886-895.

Monday, November 22

CLASS 26: DOCUMENTATION WORKSHOP. BRING THE DOCUMENTATION HANDOUT AND YOUR ANTHOLOGY WITH YOU. I WILL BE HAPPY TO ANSWER YOUR INDIVIDUAL QUESTIONS ABOUT THE REVIEW OF SCHOLARSHIP AFTER WE'VE COMPLETED THE WORKSHOP, SO COME PREPARED WITH ANY QUESTIONS. THE WORKSHOP WILL LAST 1¼ HOURS.

Wednesday, November 24: Thanksgiving Holiday (no classes, no make-up)**Monday, November 29**

CLASS 27: *Classical Epic: Homer's Iliad*, Books I-VI, 98-131.

Wednesday, December 1

CLASS 28: *Classical Epic: Homer's Iliad*, Books VIII-XVIII, pp. 131-176.

Monday, December 6

CLASS 29: REVIEW OF SCHOLARSHIP DUE; *Medieval Epic: Beowulf*, pp. 1057-1073.

Wednesday, December 8

CLASS 30: *Medieval Epic: Beowulf*, pp. 1073-1103.

Monday, December 13

CLASS 31: IN-CLASS FINAL EXAM (COVERING CLASSES 17-30); BRING A BLUE EXAM BOOKLET.

CLASS PREPARATIONS

Throughout the course preparations, you will notice terms in boldface. These terms are keyed to the glossary, another handout. I expect you to study those definitions whenever they are introduced as part of your class preparations. They and other background information in the introductions, handouts, lectures are essential to your success in this course and form much of the material I draw on for the quizzes, midterm, and final.

Class 1 Preparation

Assignment: Psalm 23, p. 89; Psalm 137, p. 91; Sappho, pp. 514-517; Catullus, pp. 808-813.

Some of the essential concepts presented in the first class meeting include the definition of the **lyric**. You should also note the scholarly opinion on the question of authorship of the Psalms by David and others, the different meanings of “Zion,” the meaning of the “Babylonian captivity,” ways of understanding Sappho’s love and friendship for the young women she addresses, and the details of a souring relationship with Clodia/Lesbia which are discernible in Catullus’ poetry.

Class 2 Preparation

Assignment: Described below.

We’ll continue talking about the lyric and looking at some examples from the medieval period. The medieval period or Middle Ages is the second of the three ages into which your anthology is divided, but it is the first of such ages which we will study closely for its cultural and literary features—as we’ll eventually do with the other periods (ancient/classical and Renaissance). We’ll also talk about other concepts and terms often associated with the lyric with the poems below. Read about the **Middle Ages** in your glossary.

Boethius: “He that hath set his headlong heart” (below). Boethius (480-ca. 524) lived near the end of the Roman Empire, but he is generally classified among the early medieval philosophers and poets rather than as a classical one. I’ll give you details in his biography in class. Ask yourself what is the tone of the poem? To understand the poet’s point about Brutus, Cato, and Fabricius (ll. 18-end), look carefully at the terms **contemptu mundi**, **mutability**, and **ubi sunt** in the glossary.

From BOETHIUS’ *Consolation of Philosophy* (written 524 A.D.)

He that hath set his headlong heart
 On ultimate renown,
 Let him lift up his eyes to the vast fields of air
 And then look down
 On this cramped earth that crouches here.
 How shall he not think shame
 Of that poor fame,
 That cannot even fill so brief horizon?
 Why do men strain
 To lift the yoke of man’s mortality
 From their proud necks in vain?
 Your name has gone the rounds
 Of foreign lands, spoken by foreign tongue,
 Your house is starry with historic blazon.
 But Death despises glory,
 Wraps in his grave-clothes humble head and proud,
 Rich man and poor man level in their shroud.

Tell me where is Brutus laid?
 Where stern Cato buried?

Fabricius that defended Rome?¹

¹ Brutus, Cato, and Fabricius are heroic figures from ancient Roman history.

A ghostly fame
 Lives after them,
 Writes on a page or two
 An empty name.
 But though we know the names of famous men,
 What know we of the men who carried them?
 Lie down to die, and straight you are unknown,
 Fame can no knowledge give of any man.
 Think not the echo of a mortal name
 Shall lengthen life beyond your span.
 The twilight of our day
 Shall steal this too away.
 To die to Fame
 Is to die once again.

Anonymous: “The Ruin,” p. 1193. Though this work is fragmentary, enough of it remains that you should be able to detect its overall tone. What is the mood of the poet here? Does it compare in any way to that in Boethius’ poem? Refer to the definition of **elegy** in the glossary.

Christine de Pizan: “Alone in Martyrdom,” p. 1222. Though Italian by birth, Christine de Pizan was a leading French poet of her generation. This poem appears to be an elegy to her husband, Etienne du Castel, who was the notary and secretary to King Charles V of France. Refer also to the definition of **refrain** in the glossary.

Class 3 Preparation

Assignment: Masterpieces of the Middle Ages, pp. 1035-1039; the rest is described below.

Anonymous: “Calvary,” p. 1218. This is a very brief lyric. The word “rueth” in lines two and four means “to take pity on” or “to feel sorry for.”

François Villon: “Ballade” (below). Who is speaking? Read the definition of **ballade** in the definitions and try to find as many features of the ballade in this poem as possible. Read also the definitions **memento mori**, **grotesque** and **Gothic**.

FRANCOIS VILLON (1431-?)

Ballade²

Brother humans who live after us
 Don't let your hearts harden against us
 For if you have pity on wretches like us
 More likely God will show mercy to you
 You see us five, six, hanging here
 As for the flesh we loved too well

² Translation by Galway Kinnell.

A while ago it was eaten and has rotted away
 And we the bones turn to ashes and dust
 Let no one make us the butt of jokes
 But pray God that he absolve us all.

Don't be insulted that we call you
 Brothers, even if it was by Justice
 We were put to death, for you understand
 Not every person has the same good sense
 Speak up for us, since we can't ourselves
 Before the son of the virgin Mary
 That his mercy shall keep flowing
 Which is what keeps us from hellfire
 We are dead, may no one taunt us
 But pray God that he absolve us all.

The rain has rinsed and washed us
 The sun dried us and turned us black
 Magpies and ravens have pecked out our eyes
 And plucked our beards and eyebrows
 Never ever can we stand still
 Now here, now there, as the wind shifts
 At its whim it keeps swinging us
 Pocked by birds worse than a sewing thimble
 Therefore don't join in our brotherhood
 But pray God that he absolve us all

Envoy

Prince Jesus, master over all
 Don't let us fall into hell's dominion
 We've nothing to do or settle down there
 Men, there's nothing here to laugh at
 But pray God that he absolve us all³

Now that you've finished this poem and have considered its images, I thought you might be interested in a more recent example of the power of grotesque art. These are lyrics to the song "Strange Fruit" made famous by Billie Holiday (1915-1959), the great blues/jazz singer: "Southern trees bear strange fruit / Blood on the leaves / Blood at the root / Black bodies swinging from the poplar trees. . . / Here is a fruit for crows to pluck / For the rain to gather / For the wind to suck / For the sun to rot / For the tree to drop / here is a strange and bitter crop."

³ François Villon is the poet of the fifteenth century who evokes perhaps the deepest response from a modern reader. Born in Paris in 1431, well educated at the Sorbonne, he led an irregular life and was often an associate of criminals. In 1455 he was charged with killing a priest but acquitted on the grounds of self-defense. Involved with others in a theft from the College of Navarre, he left Paris for several years of wandering. During this period he visited the court of Charles d'Orléans, who was a poet and a patron of poets. In 1461 he was imprisoned at Meung-sur-Loire, apparently on a serious charge the nature of which is unknown. Liberated later that year by the new king Louis XI (in a coronation amnesty), Villon returned to Paris and soon was once more in difficulty with the law. A death sentence was in January 1463 commuted to banishment from Paris, and from this time nothing is known of him.

(adapted from *The Norton Anthology of World Masterpieces*, vol. I, 6th edition.)

Anonymous: “Western Wind” (below). This is also a brief lyric. Look for its lyric features and try to imagine the situation (the setting) of the poem. Where is the speaker in this poem?

ANONYMOUS

Western Wind (late 15th century)

Westron Wind, when will thou blow?
The small rain down can rain.
Christ, if my love were in my arms,
And I in my bed again.

Class 4 Preparation

Assignment: Described below.

Francis Petrarch: pp. 1664-1667, 1673-1678. You need to read only five of the poems: #3 “It was the day when the sun’s rays . . .,” #61 “Blest be the day . . .,” #62 “Father in heaven . . .,” #90 “She used to let her hair fly free . . .,” #333 “Go, grieving rimes of mine . . .” In the glossary, read about the **sonnet**, **conceit**, and **Petrarchan conceit**.

William Shakespeare: “Sonnet 29” (“When in Disgrace with Fortune and Men’s Eyes”) (below).

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE (1564-1616)

Sonnet 29

When in disgrace with fortune and men’s eyes,
I all alone beweep my outcast state,
And trouble deaf heaven with my bootless⁴ cries,
And look upon myself and curse my fate;
Wishing me like to one more rich in hope,
Featured like him, like him with friends possessed,
Desiring this man’s art and that man’s scope,
With what I most enjoy contented least;
Yet in these thoughts myself almost despising,
Haply I think on thee and then my state,
Like to the lark at break of day arising
From sullen earth, sings hymns at heaven’s gate.
For thy sweet love rememb’red such wealth brings
That then I scorn to change my state with kings.

Class 5 Preparation

Assignment: Described below.

William Shakespeare: “Sonnet 73” (“That Time of Year Thou Mayst in Me Behold”) (below). Refer to your glossary definition of **metaphor** in connection with this poem.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE (1564-1616)

4 bootless: useless

Sonnet 73

That time of year thou mayst in me behold
 When yellow leaves, or none, or few, do hang
 Upon those boughs which shake against the cold,
 Bare ruined choirs where late⁵ the sweet birds sang.
 In me thou seest the twilight of such day
 As after sunset fadeth in the west,
 Which by and by black night doth take away,
 Death's second self that seals up all in rest.
 In me thou seest the glowing of such fire
 That⁶ on the ashes of his⁷ youth doth lie,
 As the deathbed whereon it must expire,
 Consumed with that which it was nourished by.⁸
 This thou perceivest, which makes thy love more strong,
 To love that well which thou must leave ere long.

“Sonnet 130” (“My Mistress’s Eyes Are Nothing Like the Sun”) (below). This poem is considered an anti-Petrarchan lyric because of the way it travesties parts of the **Petrarchan conceit** known as the *effictio* and *notatio*. Refer again to that definition. Be ready in the quiz to explain how these poems are examples of English sonnets (see your definition of the **sonnet**).

Sonnet 130

My mistress's eyes are nothing like the sun;
 Coral is far more red than her lips' red;
 If snow be white, why then her breasts are dun;
 If hair be wires, black wires⁹ grow on her head.
 I have seen roses damasked,¹⁰ red and white,
 But no such roses see I in her cheeks;
 And in some perfumes there is more delight
 Than in the breath that from my mistress reeks.¹¹
 I love to hear her speak; yet well I know
 That music hath a far more pleasing sound:
 I grant I never saw a goddess go¹²;
 My mistress, when she walks, treads on the ground.
 And yet, by heaven, I think my love as rare
 As any she¹³ belied with false compare.¹⁴

5 late: lately

6 That: as

7 his: its

8 Consumed with that which it was nourished by: i.e., breath, air, which makes the fire burn.

9 Other poets had compared their lady-loves' hair to the gold filigree (called 'wire') used to enhance paintings.

10 damasked: from "Damascus," meaning a variegated or intermixed pattern like damascene.

11 reeks: breathes, smells (not necessarily unpleasantly).

12 go: walk

13 she: woman

14 belied with false compare: misrepresented with false comparisons.

John Donne: “Song: Go and Catch a Falling Star” (below). What’s the tone of this poem? To whom is the speaker in the poem speaking? In the last line of the poem we are told that a woman will be “false” (‘unfaithful’) before the speaker can reach her “to two or three.” What are those “two or three”? Be ready to define “mandrake” for the quiz.

JOHN DONNE (1573-1631)

Song¹⁵

Go and catch a falling star,
 Get with child a mandrake root,¹⁶
 Tell me where all past years are,
 Or who cleft the devil’s foot,
 Teach me to hear mermaids¹⁷ singing
 Or to keep off envy’s stinging,
 And find
 What wind
 Serves to advance an honest mind.

If thou beest¹⁸ born to strange sights,
 Things invisible to see,
 Ride ten thousand days and nights,
 Till age snow white hairs on thee,
 Thou, when thou return’st, wilt tell me
 All strange wonders that befell thee,
 And swear
 No where
 Lives a woman true, and fair.

If thou find’st one, let me know
 Such a pilgrimage were sweet;
 Yet do not, I would not go,
 Though at next door we might meet;
 Though she were true when you met her,
 And last till you write your letter,
 Yet she
 Will be

False, ere I come, to two, or three.

Class 6 Preparation

Assignment: “Thorstein the Staff-Struck,” pp. 1178-1184; *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, Part 1, pp. 1458-1469; **ASSIGNMENT OF FIRST BRIEF PAPER.**

“Thorstein the Staff-Struck” is an odd little story from medieval Iceland which appropriates the **heroic code**, a term you need to study carefully in the glossary. But this story also departs from the code in interesting ways. We’ll use it

15 from *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, vol. I.

16 The mandrake root, or mandragora, is forked like the lower part of the human body. Getting such a vegetable with child presents obvious difficulties.

17 Identified with the sirens, whose song only the Odysseus survived.

18 beest: be’est, or are

as an opportunity to familiarize ourselves with the concept of the heroic code, which is an important feature of emerging societies in the ancient and medieval worlds and which we study further in epics like the *Iliad* and *Beowulf*.

The heroic code is a precursor to medieval chivalry, which we will study at greater length beginning with *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*. This work lets us deepen our understanding of medieval literature and get into some concepts that we'll refer to several times during the course. SGGK (as the title is conveniently abbreviated) is one of the masterpieces of that medieval period written by an anonymous poet writing at the time of Chaucer but rivaling that more famous poet in poetic ability. You'll enjoy the basic story. The first book focuses on Gawain at Arthur's court. You'll need to look at this work alongside the definition of **chivalric romance** in the glossary and be ready to note the differences between the earlier medieval heroic code and the later medieval chivalric code.

ASSIGNMENT OF FIRST BRIEF PAPER

We'll also talk about your first paper today. It will be due Wednesday, September 29.

Choose one of the following topics:

1. Read and analyze a poem we have not studied together in class, Dante's "Love and Poetry" (p. 1217), or Shakespeare's "Sonnet 18" (below) for its lyric features. (While you may include an explication of this poem in your analysis, be sure that you do what the assignment asks and analyze the poem for its lyric features.) Be sure to refer to the glossary definition of **lyric** to find your point or points of comparison and contrast.
2. Read and analyze a poem we have not studied together in class, Dante's "Love and Poetry" (p. 1217), or Shakespeare's "Sonnet 18" (below) for its sonnet features. (While you may include an explication of this poem in your analysis, be sure that you do what the assignment asks and analyze the poem for its sonnet features.) Be sure to refer to the glossary definition of **sonnet** to find your point or points of comparison and contrast.
3. Analyze in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* the symbolic significance of Lord Bercilak's gifts to Gawain's experiences in his bedroom of the Castle of Haut Desert.
4. Read and analyze a poem we have not studied together in class, the fabliau "The Butcher of Abbeville" (pp. 1234-1246), and find one or two features of it to compare with Chaucer's fabliau "The Miller's Tale." Be sure to refer to the glossary definition of **fabliau** to find your point or points of comparison and contrast. And be careful not to fall into simple plot summary.

Sonnet 18: Shall I Compare Thee to a Summer's Day, by William Shakespeare

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?
Thou art more lovely and more temperate:
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May;
And summer's lease hath all too short a date.¹⁹
Sometime too hot the eye of heaven²⁰ shines,
And often is his gold complexion dimmed;
And every fair from fair²¹ sometime declines,
By chance, or nature's changing course untrimmed²²:

¹⁹ And summer's lease hath all too short a date: summer's term has too short a duration

²⁰ eye of heaven: sun

²¹ every fair from fair: every attractive thing from beauty

But thy eternal summer shall not fade,
Nor lose possession of that fair thou owest²³
Nor shall Death brag thou wand'rest in his shade,
When in eternal lines to Time thou growest.²⁴
So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,
So long lives this, and gives life to thee.

CAUTION: Many students have failed and/or been required to re-do this assignment for failing to follow instructions. I'm asking for analysis in each of these and from particular angles of approach. Make sure you understand the nature of the assignment. Ask me if you don't. I do not want only explication of the poem's content in topics one or two. And I don't want plot summary (simply paraphrasing what happens) in your replies to topics three or four. Refer to the tips for submitting your papers including later in this booklet. DO NOT use any sort of outside published material (electronic, or print, or otherwise) in this paper. I want this paper to contain your ideas based on concepts and terms we have been using in this class. The paper must be produced on a word processor. Remember to keep your file of the document in case you choose to do this paper as one of your revisions. The rest of the format instructions are included with the separate "Instruction and Advice" handout. Your paper should be at least two double-spaced, typed pages long.

²² untrimmed: disarrayed

²³ owest: possess

²⁴ When in eternal lines to Time thou growest: when my lines (poetry) make you as eternal as Time itself