Welcome to a survey of early British literature, which examines forms of epic from the Anglo-Saxon heroic poem, *Beowulf*, to Milton's *Paradise Lost*. The course is designed to whet your appetite with what some consider the “greatest hits” of canonical literature. Food for thought also includes terms of prosody, literary analysis, and lessons in sonnet sequences, which often voice epic themes of love and betrayal.

Format is Mediterranean table theater: coming to class means being prepared to think with and against the texts, with and against each other. Attendance is mandatory, under penalty of disinheritance.

SURGEON GENERAL’S WARNING: These poetic texts bring to the table figures of passion, over-the-top narrativized vocalizations, and mythic conceits of contagious force. Whether their heroes and heroines are boasting (yet reproductively-challenged) warriors, decked-out knights looking for a fight, or scheming sweethearts plotting revenge, they take no prisoners. So I say, come willing and able to meet them in kind, gregariously, with full-bore intelligence; or come not at all.

**THE SPECIFICS:**
Regular, prompt attendance (10%)  
2 close-reading exercises (1-2 pages, typed) (40%)  
Exam (50%)

**Required texts:**  
*Norton Anthology of English Literature (NA)*, 9th ed., vols. 1A, 1B, 1C

**Attendance:** The quality of class discussion depends on your presence and active participation. As such, I expect you to be here. If you are habitually late, leave early, read the newspaper, listen to music, text, or sleep in class you will be considered absent. **Upon your fifth absence, you risk failing the class.** Perfect attendance (which is just that—no excuses, no doctor’s notes, no inclement weather, etc.) is rewarded with 3 bonus points on your overall average.

**Close-reading exercise:** Close reading is a fundamental part of literary analysis. In this class you will learn how to “explicate a text” (provide an explicit paraphrase) and analyze your explication using terms of prosody and literary analysis. In other words, your paper will do more than summarize plot; it will examine literary tropes and techniques at work in an excerpt of poetry and subsequently draw conclusions about the effects these tropes have on the text itself. Do not be deceived by the apparent brevity of the paper. Brief yet comprehensive and thoughtful literary analysis is not for the faint of heart. You will aim for quality in these pages, rather than quantity. Late papers are penalized ½ grade per day (not per class) late. All papers must be typed in a 12-point Times New Roman font, double spaced with one-inch margins, and page numbered.

**Exam:** As students of English literature, you will be held accountable for factual information that you will learn in this course. The exam comprises two parts. The first is an in-class test that will combine
short answer questions (including dates, genres, poetic forms, etc.) and identifications (provide the author, name of the text, and a brief description of the passage’s significance). The second part is a take-home essay in which you will use tools of literary analysis that you developed in the close-reading exercise to provide an explicit interpretation of a given text.

**Plagiarism:** The UNT Undergraduate Catalogue notes that “the term ‘plagiarism’ includes, but is not limited to, the use, by paraphrase or direct quotation, of the published or unpublished work of another person without full and clear acknowledgement. It also includes the unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another person or agency engaged in the selling of term papers or other academic materials.” Plagiarized work results in an immediate “F” for the course.

**Students with disabilities:** In accordance with the terms and spirit of the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504, Rehabilitation Act, the instructor will cooperate with the Office of Disability Accommodation to make reasonable accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. If you have a disability for which you will require accommodation, you must advise me of your needs in writing no later than the end of the second week of class.

Phew! An over-written course description, yes, but one that is happily symptomatic of what it's like to get involved with reading (slowly, slowly, and much aloud, to hear tone and see drama) and thinking (what's actually going on here? how are we supposed to find out? why should I bloody care?) at the highest level.
The Middle Ages

Thurs 8/31  Introduction to Poetry

Tues  9/4  “The Middle Ages to ca. 1475,” NA1A, pp. 3-28
          Beowulf, ll. 1-1250
          Grammar Review for Poetry Exercises on Blackboard Homepage

Thurs 9/6  Beowulf, ll. 1251-2199

Tues  9/11 Beowulf, ll. 2200-3182

Thurs 9/13 Geoffrey Chaucer, pp. 238-41
          Lyrics and Occasional Verse, p. 343-46
          Using the Middle English Dictionary, look up the word "treuth" and note the various
definitions of the word. Do the same using the Oxford English Dictionary online for
"troth." Come to class equipped to talk about these differences and how they affected
your reading of Chaucer's poem, "Truth."

Tues  9/18 Introduction to Manuscript Studies and Rare Books
          Class meets in the Willis Library Forum

Thurs 9/20 Chaucer, Lyrics and Occasional Verse, p. 343-46

Tues  9/25 Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, Fitt I
          DUE: Close Reading I to TurnItIn on Blackboard

Thurs 9/27 Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, Fitt II

Tues 10/2  Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, Fitt III

Thurs 10/4 Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, Fitt IV

The Renaissance (Early Modern)

Tues  10/9  “Introduction,” NA1B, pp. 531-63
          Sir Thomas Wyatt, “The long love that in my thought doth harbor”; “Whoso list to
          hunt”; “They flee from me”

          Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, “The soote season”; “Love, that doth reign and live
          within my thought”

          Petrarch, Rima 140, Rima 190, Rima 310
          Petrarch Canzonieri Questions on Blackboard Homepage
          Due: Post Close Reading II to Discussion section on Blackboard

Thurs 10/11 Wyatt, Howard, Petrarch, continued
Due: Responses to Close Reading II in Discussion section on Blackboard

Tues  10/16  Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Queen*, Book I, canto i

Thurs 10/18  *The Faerie Queen*, Book I, cantos ii-iii

Tues  10/23  *The Faerie Queen*, Book I, cantos iv-v

Due: Close Reading II to TurnItIn in Close Reading Folder on Blackboard

Tues  10/25  *The Faerie Queen*, Book I, cantos vi-vii

Tues  10/30  *The Faerie Queen*, Book I, cantos viii-ix

Thurs 11/1  *The Faerie Queen*, Book I, cantos x-xii

The Seventeenth Century

Tues  11/6  “Introduction to the Early Seventeenth Century,” *N.A1B*, pp. 1341-69
          John Milton, *Paradise Lost*, Book I

Thurs 11/8  *Paradise Lost*, Books 2-3

Tues  11/13  *Paradise Lost*, Books 4-5

Thurs 11/15  *Paradise Lost*, Books 6-7

Tues  11/20  *Paradise Lost*, Books 8-9

Thurs 11/22  THANKSGIVING

Tues  11/27  *Paradise Lost*, Book 10-11

Thurs 11/29  *Paradise Lost*, Book 12

Tues  12/4  Final Review

Thurs 12/6  In-class exam; take-home due