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Survey of British Literature: Love and Marriage

From the Earliest Works to the Eighteenth Century

This course is a sophomore-level survey of British literature from the earliest writings in the English language to the end of the eighteenth century; that is, from Bede to Boswell. The concentration of study will be on the major works in prose, verse, and drama; the major writers; and particularly the intellectual concepts, themes, and traditions that define the literary periods to be studied. This course features selected works from the Great Books Curriculum.

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Theme

The theme of this course is “love and marriage” in early British literature. Students of early English literature are confronted with a vast resource of readings, many of them with challenging spelling and syntax, addressing a multitude of contemporary issues, and structured in a variety of prose and verse forms. Among the significant ideas that appear in the literature, the theme of love and its relationship to marriage retains a special importance in the first thousand years of literature in England—the early canon—where meanings are fluid and perspectives can shift dramatically within as short a time as a decade.

The theme of this course raises questions about issues that have not been satisfactorily answered because the subjects of love and marriage continually evolved in early English history and literature. For people of all classes, love and marriage did not naturally belong together. This tradition has not disappeared and is evident in modern society. Love is an emotion; marriage is a contract. That love is not limited to a man and a woman is hardly a surprising concept to young people living in today's society; nor has the idea changed from a millennium ago, when a man's love for God was considered the only sacred contract and friendships were valued far above marriages, which were based on mutual convenience and were frequently arranged. On the other hand, few today appreciate the social development behind the words spoken during the marriage ceremony: "Dearly beloved, we are gathered here in the sight of God, to join together this man and this woman"; these words were first printed in the Book of Common Prayer in 1552, translated from the centuries-old Latin liturgy.

Requirements and Guidelines

The main text used in this course is volume 1 of *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*. In the course, students are required to do two research assignments, each consisting of a brief essay and a presentation to the class. Quizzes are given regularly to encourage students to read and prepare to discuss the material that is to be covered on any particular day, and there is a midterm and a final exam.

Students enrolled in this course are expected to do the following.

1. Set aside for themselves significant blocks of reading time in order to complete the assigned readings well ahead of scheduled discussions. Primary works, even those that are condensed, require multiple readings, especially earlier vernacular works. This discipline in itself is excellent preparation for serious scholarship.

2. Engage three of their five senses as they study by reading aloud and taking notes as they read. Francis Bacon would advise them to read not in order to contradict or to believe, but to weigh and consider. This must be done methodically. Without compromising course requirements, the instructor is willing to sacrifice the mass production of three-to-five-page essays in favor of concentrated reading, note-taking (in a reading journal), and focused research and reflection, all of which will bear fruit in learning and manifest itself in the discussions and in examinations.

3. Seek to understand the factors that shaped love and marriage by perceiving the underlying influences upon both happy and stifled love: stubborn ignorance, unrestrained greed for purposes of control, and abuse by one's fellow men and women and by others who occupy positions of power by reason of wealth, birthright, education, or exclusive spiritual enlightenment.

4. Avoid overreliance on secondary sources.

Assigned Texts

The following books are required for this course:

The Norton Anthology of English Literature, vol. 1, edited by M. H. Abrams, 7th edition.

Aphra Behn, *Oroonoko*, edited by Joanna Lipking, Norton Critical Editions.

The Early English literary period extends over one thousand years. The authors of the primary course text, *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, volume 1, establish the period's beginning at about 450 AD and its end at 1800. Within this period the following Great Books authors from Britain may be found:

Francis Bacon*	Thomas Hobbes	Thomas More*
James Boswell	Samuel Johnson	Isaac Newton
Geoffrey Chaucer*	Ben Jonson*	Alexander Pope
Daniel Defoe	John Locke	William Shakespeare*
John Donne*	Thomas Malory	Edmund Spenser*
John Dryden	Christopher Marlowe*	Jonathan Swift
William Harvey	John Milton*	

*Author's work featured in this module.

The following are compendious or anonymous English works on the Great Books list that are of thematic relevance to this course:

<i>Beowulf</i>	<i>Sir Gawain and the Green Knight</i>	Talmud
Bible (Authorized, Geneva, Tyndale)	Greek Anthology	<i>Tristan and Iseult</i>

In addition, a number of European Great Books authors, both classical and modern, were markedly influential on the British authors of the period, and their works in translation were widely read:

Thomas Aquinas	Desiderius Erasmus	Ovid
Aristotle	Lucretius	Francesco Petrarch
St. Augustine	Niccolo Machiavelli	Plato
Dante Alighieri	Jean Moliere	Sappho
Rene Descartes	Michel de Montaigne	Virgil

Many of these authors will be consulted and studied in this class with especial regard to the theme of evolving ideas of love and marriage.

Overview of the Course

The format of the literature survey that frames the module is as follows. After a general introduction and the proposed scope of the course is explained, the module content will be introduced early in the schedule of instruction so that students may begin reading as soon as possible. The module content, as well as the primary course text, is sequenced into the following four periods:

1. The Anglo-Norman Middle English Period	2. Early Modern Britain: Sixteenth Century	3. Early Modern Britain: Early Seventeenth Century	4. The Restoration to the Eighteenth Century
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Although the thematic content for this course could easily be divided into three traditional forms of love—*eros* for physical love, *agape* for altruistic love, and *philia* for strong

feelings of friendship—this classification does not conform to the two Early English literature anthologies chiefly used in the United States (the *Norton Anthology* and the *Longman Anthology*), nor are the divisions clearly delineated. A far more convenient organization is to select readings that deal with love and marriage in successive periods and allow for considerable overlap. Accordingly, within each of the following period summaries you will find a capsule description of what distinguishes the period; the treatment of love and the tradition of marriage; a brief introduction to the works selected for their relevance to the themes of love and marriage; and one or more of the biographical, historical, or critical works devoted to the period and its literature.

The Anglo-Norman Middle English Period

The arrival of Norman poets and clerics from the Continent shortly after the Norman Conquest brought a number of important traditions that took firm root in Anglo-Saxon soil, including chivalry, mysticism, scientific and cultural influences from the Levant, neoclassical mythology, university reforms, courtly literature and, most of all, the romantic love tradition. All of these traditions were eventually made available to the masses by the introduction of moveable type for printing relatively inexpensive books.

The institution of marriage has been an important societal bond for a long time, as can be seen in Homer's *Odyssey*, with Telemachus and Penelope for example, and in other classical works. However, many scholars question the existence of secular love in vernacular English literature before the twelfth century. It was then that narrative fictions about love affairs began to appear out of France. The ancient Grail legend is often considered to be the ancestor of the Arthurian tale of Guinevere and Lancelot, the prototypical catastrophe of the unfaithful wife and illicit love. Other popular universal love themes include the wronged wife, the vixen, the jealous or wrongly suspected lover, the wicked stepmother, and the ready or desperate widow or widower.

The *Norton Anthology* contains among its first selections a brief elegy titled "The Wife's Lament," translated from the Anglo-Saxon. The narrator is an abandoned wife who was married to a nobleman from another country, and she lives alone in the wilderness, awaiting the coming of a new lover. (To view a four-minute video commentary on "The Wife's Lament" by student Tiana Caylor, see <http://instructors.sbccc.edu/stevens/wifeslament.htm>.) It may appear that there's nothing very romantic about the Wife's situation unless we place her story within the context of the romantic love tradition, where the lovers' romantic experience is painful, and passion ultimately leads to an early death. The classic scholarly work that addresses this particular motif is Denis de Rougemont's *Love in the Western World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983).

Focusing at this time on the Christian love tradition seems necessary, as it persisted where other conventions suddenly rose and fell into obscurity, or in the case of romantic love, became the object of harsh satire and parody. The Romanization of Britain beginning in 55 AD was also the Christianization of it, which continued into the pivotal eleventh century. Christian love was conceived within an atmosphere poisoned by the doctrine of original sin. During the early Middle Ages, biblical verse established the few acceptable behaviors relating to love, courtship, and marriage. What began as inconsistent or sympathetic treatment of women was much later transformed into misogynistic and condemnatory traditions; women's inferior nature was purportedly demonstrated in their

guilt for original sin and their attempted domination of men's souls. The outcome of such contrasting views was a contradictory view wherein the female's delicate nature and her prized virginity required that she be submissive to her husband within the sacred rite of marriage. Illustrative excerpts from allegorical literature of the period warn men that "a stubborn horse is not to be ridden at festival times, but is to be kept in its stable or used as a beast of burden . . . The lustful eye of a woman brings scandal to a man and dries him out like hay . . . Woman's love is no love, but only bitterness." We see that these earlier readings emphasize the inferiority and evil cunning of women. We must not turn our heads away, but must take a more encompassing view of the various dispiriting human conditions we read about, and have faith that enlightenment can transcend the persistence of deeply held social beliefs and traditions that resist cultural revolutions and reformations.

The indispensable source for both the romantic and the chivalric traditions is *Tristan and Iseult*, the first significant reading that shall be assigned in this course for students' critical responses. It superseded the Christian concept of true, procreative love, variations of which could be found throughout the medieval period. Indeed, the suffering, unrequited lover reappears in England with the sonnets of the fourteenth-century Italian poet Petrarch. The following is the first part of the thematic reading list for the course (page numbers from the *Norton Anthology* are in square brackets):

We will read a translation of Marie de France's medieval story of "Lanval," about a mortal lover and a fairy bride, in which Marie explores female and male desire [126–140]. The *Ancrene Riwle* (Rule for Anchoresses), the parable of the Christ Knight [154–155], is an example of monastic literature, this one originally written for three young sisters. It is the earliest such work and will be followed by excerpts from the mystical "Showings" of Julian of Norwich (1342–ca.1416) [355–366].

Geoffrey Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* will lighten the tone, specifically "The Miller's Prologue and Tale" [235–251], which introduces Alisoun, a young woman who allows herself to be seduced by a young scholar who is boarding with her and her middle-aged husband. Comparison will be made with another Alisoun, the Wife of Bath, whose love story has been described by modern scholars as an autobiography, a confession, a lecture, a homily, and a harangue on virginity, early wedding ceremonies and multiple marriages. I will refer students to the excellent critical edition of this story by Peter G. Beidler (Boston: Bedford, 1996).

We will also read a selection of Middle English lyrics [349–355], including "The Cuckoo Song," "Alison," "My Lief is Faren in Londe," and "I Sing of a Maiden." The dominant motif of these lyrics is forlorn love, or the separation of the lovers. Returning to the romantic roots of King Arthur, we will read from *Morte D'Arthur*, the tale of the conspiracy against Lancelot and Guinevere and their tragic deaths [421–439]. Readings in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries include excerpts from *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* and *Everyman*.

Aside from the module readings, this course includes a general introduction to the Middle Ages (to ca. 1485) and readings from the Venerable Bede and *Cadmon's Hymn*, *The Dream of the Rood*, and *The Wanderer*.

Among the numerous scholarly works that chronicle the Anglo-Norman period, students are recommended to browse through William Manchester's *A World Lit Only by Fire* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1992), described by one reviewer as "lively and engaging, full of exquisite details and anecdotes that transform this period—usually murky—into a comprehensive tableau." Manchester chose to conclude his chronology of horror and wonder with the mention of two banned but highly influential books that capture the harsh contrast of the time: Pietro Aretino's pornographic *Ragionamenti*, and the works of Erasmus.

Students have reported that the *Historical Dictionary of the Elizabethan World* (New York: Checkmark Books, 2002) is an accessible text that was very helpful in beginning their research.

Early Modern Britain: Sixteenth Century

The popularity of Sir Thomas Hoby's translation of Baldassare Castiglione's *The Courtier* suggests the importance of what modern critics would call self-fashioning in the sixteenth century, the period of courtly love. The lover is portrayed as someone fully self-absorbed amidst the shifting power structures of Tudor society. This theme is thoroughly addressed by Stephen Greenblatt in his prize-winning study *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980). Assigned period readings that address love and marriage appear below.

In the first half of the sixteenth century, King Henry VIII broke away from the Roman Catholic church and established the Anglican church in large part so he could marry a sequence of seven women who he thought would bear him a male successor. Regarding the failure of the marriages ("divorced, beheaded, died, divorced, beheaded, survived"), Henry seemed oblivious to the possibility that he could have been the one who was barren and therefore responsible for the lack of progeny. Shortly after his death, Archbishop Cranmer wrote the first Book of Common Prayer, from which we will read and discuss "The Form of Solemnization of Matrimony" [553–56]. Cranmer was burned at the stake for his work, yet it became the foundation of English common law regarding moral and social behavior. Among his sources was the Book of Genesis, where Eve, mother of womanhood, was described as weak, deceitful, and prone to error at man's expense. Thus the persistent role of evil women was established.

Students will also read selections from Sir Thomas More's *Utopia*, a bold satire of both the repressive government and the sometimes inane social conventions of his beloved homeland. More's narrator makes use of understatement to ridicule marriage customs among the Utopians.

During the latter half of the sixteenth century, Henry's daughter, Queen Elizabeth, declared herself to be married to the nation of England, much to the consternation of powerful religious writers who bewailed "the monstrous regiment of women." The capacity for rational thought was considered the exclusive domain of men. Since women were led only by their passions, their properly subordinate place in society was the home. Elizabeth's right to rule was won only after she had renounced her gender. We shall read her "Golden Speech" [598–600], wherein she thanks the men of Parliament: "Had I not received a knowledge from you, I might have fallen into the lap of error."

Other theme-related readings include the prohibited Will and Testament of the first woman writer in England to publish her writings, Isabella Whitney [606–614]; and extended excerpts from Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene* [622–783], a chivalric romance celebrating Queen Elizabeth, in which the "Bower of Bliss" canto is known for its seductive and threatening eroticism and is often the subject of interpretations by modern psychosexual critics. Sir Guyon, the knight of temperance, encounters a spectrum of hidden desires, violent passions, and orgiastic pleasures in a suppressed dream world, an underworld of Christian morality that must have been shared by most men who could afford such fantasies. In the pastoral tradition, readings from Sir Walter Raleigh [878–84] include "The Nymph's Reply to the Shepherd"; "Farewell, false love," in which true love is described as a durable

fire; “Methought I saw the grave where Laura lay,” a celebration of virginity; and the allegorical “Nature, that washed her hands in milk,” which contains a fine blazon of women’s virtues. Both erotic and homoerotic love are the subjects of Christopher Marlowe’s “Hero and Leander” [970–89], the best of a passing vogue for sensual classical revisionism. More conventional romance is represented by Thomas Campion [1196–1200], whose lyrical verses include rare instances of love expressed in the voice of a female speaker.

Sonnets made their entrance into England in the sixteenth century. Representative sonnet writers studied in this course include Sir Thomas Wyatt the Elder, Henry Howard Earl of Surrey, Edmund Spenser, Sir Walter Raleigh, Sir Philip Sidney, Samuel Daniel, and Michael Drayton. The greatest English master of the sonnet, however, was William Shakespeare. Students will be asked to read the introduction to the sonnets by Shakespeare that are included in the *Norton Anthology*, and they will read the entire collection from Helen Vendler’s critical edition of them (Cambridge: Harvard/Belknap, 1997). Sonnet background lectures and student sonnet presentations, explained below, should begin approximately one-fourth of the way into the course.

As the first of two research assignments, each student will select one Shakespearean sonnet to examine critically in a brief essay and a presentation to the class. The course syllabus describes this assignment as follows:

The class presentations will be limited to no more than ten minutes each. The following format is recommended:

1. Read or recite the sonnet, paying special attention to enjambment and caesuras, meter, rhythm, and correct pronunciation.
2. Provide background information to include the sonnet’s place in the sonnet sequence and other extra-textual information.
3. Describe the sonnet’s form, noting any particularities in rhyme scheme, meter, and syntax.
4. Interpret the sonnet. State the conceit or theme in a complete and generalized sentence.
5. Submit a short summary, including a complete bibliography of your sources. (This may be done at any time prior to the end of the semester.)
6. A creative approach to the assignment is encouraged. Successful past presentations have included PowerPoint, dramatization, music (recorded or live), overhead visuals, slides, videos, and visual tableaux (including exemplary period clothing or accoutrements or any accessories or artifacts that increase the effectiveness of the presentation). The sonnets have also been rendered into modern languages that include Spanish, Japanese, French, German, Swedish, and Persian. The effects of translation are then explained.

Students learn that information on Shakespeare’s sonnets is available from a number of sources, including a combination of the Internet, library research (ask a librarian for assistance), and class lecture notes. As the instructor, I offer as much assistance and direction as possible. The criteria for grading the sonnet presentations include:

- presentation: quality of reading or recitation

- presentation: completeness and correctness of information presented
- presentation: clarity of information presented
- presentation: creative component
- research paper quality

Class presentations have proven successful as a pedagogical medium and for facilitating a class unity which significantly improves discussions. These presentations are typically done “live,” but students have the option of creating a more durable presentation in the form of a DVD or VHS containing a quick-time video. “The Wife’s Lament,” mentioned earlier, is one example; another is a ten-minute video featuring William Shakespeare’s Sonnet 110, created by Ryan Abshere and Nathan Kuljian. These students used interviews as their primary research methodology. To view the video, see <http://instructors.sbccc.edu/stevens/sonnet110.htm>.

Early Modern Britain: Early Seventeenth Century

The standard introduction to and reference for this period (as well as the preceding one) remains E. M. W. Tillyard’s *Elizabethan World Picture* (New York: Vintage, 1943), reprinted numerous times. On the theme of love and marriage, the most frequently recommended work is Lawrence Stone’s *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England, 1500–1800* (New York: Harper, 1979).

The literary period referred to as the early seventeenth century begins in 1603, the year of Elizabeth’s death and King James’ accession, and it concludes with the restoration of Charles II in 1660. These were tumultuous decades in which the execution of King Charles I occurred and religions clashed, bringing about the English Civil War. It was also a time of significant change in conventions of love and marriage. Although the social order continued to be strictly patriarchal, the court of King James was disorderly and indecorous. He was open in his preference for young men whom he favored lavishly, and male friendships became a social norm. It was inevitable that a strong Puritan opposition would form against him. The literature reflects the dialectical anxiety of the times, and many major authors in early modern English literature are represented in the assigned thematic readings.

We begin with John Donne, whose early works explore the private world of sexual love and whose later works apply the same poetic craftsmanship and fervor in his exploration of *passion* in a religious context [1233–76]. His love poetry is startling in its sensuous detail, bold; it makes all earlier poets’ work seem no more than variations upon a few ancient clichés, and he ridicules their work as infantile, lacking in sophistication. Most surprising in Donne, however, is how he reveals his own deepest personal emotions by incorporating elaborate blasphemies in his love poems and by expressing banal, even crude, conceits in concentrated, stunning images. Donne’s love can be erotic, devotional, or domestic, and he influenced a generation of imitators. His short poetry is essential for an appreciation of the evolution of love at a turning point in the history of literature. The most honored critical study of the man and his writings is John Carey’s *John Donne: Life, Mind and Art* (London: Faber and Faber, 1981).

Among the followers of Donne were the following poets who address important notions of love and marriage: George Herbert [1595–1633] and Henry Vaughan [1633–

1629], spiritual love; Richard Crashaw [1629–43], Catholic sacred love; Andrew Marvell [1684–1724], Neoplatonic love; and Thomas Traherne [1754–58], ecstatic love.

Ben Jonson was a contemporary of John Donne who represented a contrasting picture of love and marriage. Considered to have been the first professional author in England, Jonson was a renowned classicist who also wrote in verse and drama about carnal love among the social ranks, and, being a notorious drinker and glutton himself, about the love of life that includes fraternal, marital, and familial love [1393–1421]. Jonson also had a group of followers who perpetuated his interests. These were known as the Sons of Ben: Robert Herrick [1643–55], Thomas Carew [1656–63], and Sir John Suckling [1664–69]. All three were inspired to write upon the beauty of the physically mundane.

The subject of Robert Burton's *The Anatomy of Melancholy* [1560–68] includes "love melancholy." "Tis a happy state indeed when he rejoiceth with the wife of his youth," he wrote, "and he delights in her continually, but this love of ours is immoderate, inordinate, and not to be comprehended in any bounds." He examines burning lust and jealousy, infidelity and lovesickness in both men and women. His is a fascinating word picture of love gone wrong.

More women writers appeared on the literary scene, and the quality and importance of their contributions cannot be overlooked. Aemilia Lanyer wrote "Eve's Apology in Defense of Women" [1285–86], setting her discourse safely in biblical times, where she tells the (male) reader that "You came not in the world without our pain, make that a bar against your cruelty." Among her prolific works, Mary Wroth wrote a 558-page romance in which she transforms gender politics and explores the poetics and situation of other women writers. She also addresses such issues as rape, incest, arranged or forced marriages, jealous husbands, tortured women, and endangered children, along with the attainment or preservation of personal integrity and agency in love amid intense social and psychological pressures and constraints [1422–31]. Another writer who in a wryly judicious tone wrote about the pleasures and pains, satisfactions and injustices of the female lot was Martha Moulsworth, whose *Memorandum* [1552–55] recounts three marriages in which she found freedom and satisfaction, including a suggestion of sexual satisfaction. Moulsworth was an early spokesperson for all women.

In contrast, Sir Francis Bacon belittled women and marriage in all his writings, especially his *Essays* [1529–41]. In "Of Marriage and the Single Life" he wrote: "He that hath a wife and children hath given hostages to fortune, for they are impediments to great enterprises," and "Wives are young men's mistresses, companions for middle age, and old men's nurses." Bacon married late to a woman aged sixteen, almost certainly for her dowry and to deflect widely held suspicions of his own sexual preferences. His wife married her manservant a mere two weeks after Bacon died, only to discover that her late husband had revoked her inheritance, yet she was able to prevail and lived a long and comfortable life that included more marriages.

John Milton is another poet who was not known for his sympathy for the misfortunes of women. Yet he presents a very sympathetic character in Eve, the mother of mankind in *Paradise Lost* [1815–2044].

Early Modern Britain: The Restoration to the Eighteenth Century

The final period covered by the course extends from the restoration of Charles II in 1660 to the year 1785. The moral laxity of Charles II became a matter of concern among the people. The lives of ordinary men and women were reflected in new periodicals such as the *Tatler* and the *Spectator*. Women began acting the parts of women in Restoration drama. The word “sentimental” came into fashion and fostered an interest in man’s natural goodness that was balanced by the rise of evangelicalism. The institution of marriage was increasingly defined as a means to self-fulfillment and personal happiness rather than as a family alliance. These social changes are reflected in the literature of love and marriage of the period.

Significant background books for this period include the following: John Brewer, *The Pleasures of the Imagination: English Culture in the Eighteenth Century* (New York: Farrar Straus and Giroux, 1997); J. R. Jones, *Country and Court: England 1658–1714* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978); and Roy Porter and Simon Schama, *Flesh in the Age of Reason* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2003).

Moralists of the period believed that conduct motivated by reason is virtuous conduct, but conduct motivated by unregulated passion is vicious. Who better could represent the latter moral laxity than John Wilmot, Second Earl of Rochester? Students will be cautioned about the raw sexuality of the assigned examples from his erotic poetry, including “The Imperfect Enjoyment,” a meditation upon impotence [2163–65]. Rochester’s liberality is contrasted and weakly confuted in a response by the contemporary woman writer Aphra Behn, “The Disappointment” [2167–70]. Behn’s heroic romance *Oroonoko* (the Norton Critical Edition edited by Joanna Lipking) is designated as the book-length reading assignment for this course.

A successful woman of the time was Katherine Phillips, who came from a well-to-do family and wrote poems exalting the ideal of female friendship as a Platonic union of souls. Her poem on “A Married State” [1679–80] begins with this couplet: “A married state affords but little ease / The best of husbands are so hard to please.”

Mary Astell also questioned the foundation of marriage in a piece that anticipates the era of women’s liberation. We shall read a selection from her prose work “Reflections upon Marriage” [2281–84], as well as one from Daniel Defoe’s *Roxana, or the Fortunate Mistress*, “The Cons of Marriage” [2285–91], wherein we find some liberated views of marriage that sound surprisingly contemporary: “Oh ‘tis pleasant to be free, / The sweetest Miss is Liberty.” Defoe in *Roxana* is critical of the institution of marriage as it then existed. Additional readings from this period include two more selections from Katherine Phillips, “Against Love” and “An Answer to Another Persuading a Lady to Marriage,” and Thomas Traherne’s breathless “Love” from the *Dobell Folio*.

Mary Leapor wrote a response to Alexander Pope entitled “An Essay on Woman” [2603–05] in which she declares that women’s virtues can be turned against them. Their beauty and wit will be betrayed and shunned, she writes, but as with other female writers of the post-Restoration period, she presents a strong voice for her gender.

The course concludes with a sequence of contemporary satiric engravings by William Hogarth entitled “Marriage a la Mode” [2652–59]. The artist considered this collection to be part of his Modern Moral Subjects, as he called them, with “Marriage” being about a rich miser who buys a worthless son of an aristocrat for his restless daughter, begetting a disastrous forced marriage that reflects the tensions of a fading aristocracy and a middle class

that is upwardly mobile and greedy for power. The twelve reproductions of these prints in the course textbook are inferior; therefore, students will work with color transparencies so they can study the details of this highly critical view of love and marriage.

Quiz-Writing Strategies

I give quizzes regularly to encourage students to read and prepare to discuss the material that is to be covered on any particular day. The following strategies guide my quiz writing.

1. In comparing open-ended questions (requiring short written answers) versus multiple-choice ones, I recommend a combination. Multiple-choice quizzes allow for more questions and greater variety. I write from ten to fifteen questions for each multiple-choice quiz, so the breadth of the students' reading experience can be measured. The open-ended questions allow for more in-depth responses and reduce the tendency to guess. Many students prefer them because they allow for, and encourage, superior comprehensive answers.

2. Students are informed that quiz questions may reappear in part of the midterm and final exams, usually in modified form. This encourages students to return to quiz questions they missed in order to learn the correct response.

3. I write questions based on the current assigned reading of all introductory material, including historical or period description, biography, social and literary milieu, thematic content, and relationships with preceding and succeeding sections. I also require students to focus on around fifty archetypal literary concepts (such as *carpe diem*, chain of being, blazon, world upside down, select nation, poetic immortality, microcosm/macrocosm, etc.), and these concepts reappear in quizzes.

4. Typical quiz questions from each of the literary periods studied (both open-ended and multiple-choice) include:

- Identify and describe *the three estates* class structure that prevailed in England during most of the premodern era. What popular board game represents this structure?
- Which one of the following *terms* of literature best describes the *Faerie Queene*?
 homily elegy epigram pastoral allegory
- The language of the early seventeenth century has been described by one literary historian as “speaking familiarly of ultimate things.” Give at least six different examples of the Metaphysical Style of poetry. Use these keywords in your answer: patterns, conceits, traditions, imagery, order, and fusion.
- Which of the following terms from *Paradise Lost* is an oxymoron?
 knowledge forbidden glorious enterprise transcendent glory
 link'd thunderbolts darkness visible
- Explain by referring to her writings the relationship between Lady Mary Wortley Montagu and Turkish harems.