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**LITERATURES ON THE BRITISH ISLES: POETRY AND DRAMA FROM RENAISSANCE TO RESTORATION**  
**Selections from 16th- and 17th-century literature**

***Aims and objectives***

This course should introduce students to the development of early modern English poetry (especially the sonnet form) and drama (focusing on the transformations of the genre of comedy (Shakespeare's comedies, satire in Ben Jonson's comedy of humours and the comedy of manners).

***Material***

- a reader of early modern English poetry (available online at <http://dl1.cuni.cz/file.php/1416>)
- William Shakespeare, *The Sonnets* (recommended edition: Torst, Praha, 1997, or Brno: Atlantis, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 2005, with translation by M.Hilský); if unavailable, any scholarly edition with commentary (e.g. Penguin)
- William Shakespeare, *The Merchant of Venice* (recommended edition: Torst, Praha, 1999, or 2nd edition from Brno: Atlantis, with translation by M.Hilský); if unavailable, a good edition with introduction and critical commentary is e.g. Arden, New Penguin, etc.
- Ben Jonson, *Volpone* (e.g. in Ben Jonson's Three Comedies, available in dept. library, or reprint in The Norton Anthology of English Literature, vol.1)
- William Wycherley, *The Country Wife* (recommended edition Penguin Classics)
- a selection of literary criticism - hand-outs for presentations (available online at <http://dl1.cuni.cz/file.php/1416>)

***Assessment***

**Credit (Z):**

The requirements include attendance, active participation in seminar work and satisfactory oral and written work. You are expected to be prepared for class, i.e. to keep up with the reading schedule, and contribute to class discussions. More than THREE absences during the semester are excessive.

Credit assignments include:

- 1 brief (max. 15 mins long) oral presentation OR a 1-page (300-word) abstract (a summary of a literary critical work).
- 1 test based on the texts and facts covered in class. Pass limit: 60 points (max. 100). If a student fails, s/he must write an extra essay of 1,000-1,200 words on a given topic. Topic and deadline in January will be specified by the instructor. (If unsatisfactory, this essay is subject to only one rewriting.) Not writing the test will be considered as failing. Make-ups will not be given.

Failing to fulfill any single one of the above requirements will result in not obtaining credit.

**Examination (Zk):**

Takes the form of a 2,000-word essay on a given topic provided by the instructor. Essays will be judged on depth of thought, originality, strength of example, clarity and articulateness. Referencing must comply with MLA guidelines. Pass limit: C max. Subject to two rewritings according to study regulations for an exam. Resubmitted essays should be handed in together with the commented first version. Students submit their papers by 9.00 a.m. on the examination date they have signed up for in the SIS. E-mail submission on prior arrangement. There are 3 dates after each semester. The examination paper must be completed by the date required by the study regulations, i.e. the end of the academic year following the one in which the student registered for the course.

PLAGIARISM WILL RESULT IN AN F GRADE FOR THE WHOLE COURSE.

## Oral presentation assignment

Each class member will select ONE item from the list below for a BRIEF (10, or, in some cases, 15 minutes long) in-class presentation of its summary. In case of more students in the class than the number of topics, students who do not have an oral presentation will provide me with a one-page written abstract (i.e. summary; of max. 300 words).

1. Michel Foucault, "The Prose of the World", *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*, New York: Pantheon, 1970 **week 2**
2. Eliot, T.S., review of *Metaphysical Lyrics and Poems of the Seventeenth Century: Donne to Butler*, *Times Literary Supplement*, 20 October 1921 **week 2**
3. Alexander Shurbanov, "Shakespeare's Sonnet 126 as Envoi: The Test of Imagery", *The University of Sophia English Papers*, Sophia: University of Sophia, 1986 **week 3**
4. Michael McCanles, "Some Themes of Shakespeare's Sonnets", *Texas Studies in Literature and Language*, 1971 **week 3**
5. Frances A. Yates, "The London Theatres", in *Theatre of the World*. London: 1989 **week 4**
6. David Cecil, "Shakespearean Comedy", in *Shakespeare's Romantic Comedy*, ed. by Herbert Weil, Jr., 1966 **week 5**
7. "The Sources" and "Stage History", in *Shakespeare: The Merchant of Venice*, Arden edition **week 5**
8. Hermann Sinsheimer, "Shylock's Medieval Elements, or Reality versus Myth", in *Shylock, The History of a Character, or the Myth of the Jew*, London: Victor Gollanz, 1947 **week 6**
9. Jean E.Howard, "Crossdressing, the Theatre and Gender Struggle in Early Modern England", *Shakespeare Quarterly*, vol.39, Winter 1988 **week 7**
10. Milan Lukeš, "Jonsonova teorie komedie", *Alžbětinské divadlo II* . Praha: Odeon, 1978. **week 8**
11. Roy Daniels, "Mannerist Perspective", *Milton, Mannerism and Baroque*, Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press, 1963 **week 9**

NOTE: Deadlines for abstracts correspond with the dates of presentations. Abstracts must be typed and conform to usual requirements.

## Programme with reading schedule

week 1	7.10.	Introduction to the course and the problematics of Renaissance literature. The sonnet I: evolution of form <b>R: Moodle topic 2 – "sonnet form";</b> <b>article "Miniature poems"</b> and/or read introduction to Hilsky's translation of Shakespeare's Sonnets; The sonnet II: conceit <b>R: Moodle topic 3 – "sonnet conceit"</b>
week 2	14.10.	The sonnet III: conventions (themes, imagery, sonnet sequence) <b>R: Moodle topic 3 – "sonnet themes"</b> <b>P1,P2</b>
week 3	21.10.	Shakespeare's sonnets <b>R: Moodle topic 5 – "Shakespeare's sonnets"</b> <b>P3,P4</b>
week 4	4.11.	Introduction to drama. <i>The Merchant of Venice</i> <b>R: <i>Merchant of Venice</i>, cursory reading of the whole play;</b> <b>Act I, close reading</b> <b>P5</b>
week 5	11.11.	<i>The Merchant of Venice</i> (cont.) <b>R: II.1, II.7, II.9, III.2, close reading</b> <b>P6, P7</b>
week 6	18.11.	<i>The Merchant of Venice</i> (cont.) <b>R: II.8, III.1, close reading</b> <b>P8</b>
week 7	25.11.	<i>The Merchant of Venice</i> (cont.) <b>R: IV.1, V, close reading</b> <b>P9</b>
week 8	2.12.	From the comedy of humours to comedy of manners 1: <i>Volpone</i> <b>R: <i>Volpone</i></b> <b>P10</b>
week 9	9.12.	Metaphysical poets to Restoration <b>R: Moodle topic 6 – "survey Donne to Restoration"</b> <b>P11</b>
week 10	16.12.	From the comedy of humours to comedy of manners 2: <i>The Country Wife</i> <b>R: <i>Country Wife</i></b>
week 11	6. 1.	<b>Test</b>