

BIOGRAPHY BEFORE 'BIOGRAPHY'

ENGL 609
(FALL 2011)

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
FACULTY OF ARTS
UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY

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Description

This course will study forms and readings of biographies in English from the late middle ages to the late seventeenth century. We will read the lives of historical and contemporary men and women, both those they wrote and those written about them. The term 'biography' was not coined until the 1660s, but before that lives inhabited many different generic forms: hagiography and martyrology; classical and biblical examples; historical lives in chronicles and onstage; diaries and letters; and funeral elegies and sermons. We will punctuate our investigations of that material by reading from recent biographies of early modern figures, and we may consider film adaptations of the same. Among our questions: Did Lives affect lives, or vice versa? How did readers and writers gauge their truth and their consequences? And how did social changes (rising literacy, religious change, civil wars) affect biographical writing?

Textbooks

1. *Foxe's Book of Martyrs: Select Narratives*, ed. John N. King (Oxford, 2009)
2. John Aubrey, *Brief Lives*, ed. Richard Barber (Boydell, 1982)
3. Other readings on reserve (articles and excerpts)

Evaluation

Participation	20%
Topical Presentation	20%
Critical Response	10%
Research Paper	50%

You must complete all three assignments (two presentations and one final paper) to earn a passing grade in this course.

Each component is graded on a percentage scale. Here are their corresponding letter-grades:

90 + %	A+	4.0
85 – 89 %	A	4.0
80 – 84 %	A–	3.7
77 – 79 %	B+	3.3
74 – 76 %	B	3.0
70 – 73 %	B–	2.7
67 – 69 %	C+	2.3
64 – 66 %	C	2.0
60 – 63 %	C–	1.7
55 – 59 %	D+	1.3
50 – 54 %	D	1.0
0 – 49 %	F	0

All grades below 70% (B-) are indicative of failure at the graduate level and cannot be counted toward Faculty of Graduate Studies course requirements.

Topical Presentation (20%)

The Topical Presentation is a 20-minute oral presentation on a topic pertaining to one or more of the *primary* texts we are reading that day. For full marks, you will deliver a thoughtful and well-prepared presentation. Think of it as an undergraduate lecture; each of the presentation subjects focuses on a text's relation to other texts or to its culture, which would be appropriate topics for an introductory lecture. However, do not simply tell a story: develop an argument about any aspect of the prescribed topic.

Two days before your presentation—on Sunday—submit a written summary (750-word minimum) to your Dropbox folder, for your fellow students to read in advance.

Researching many of these topics will require the ODNB (for biographies), the OED (for definitions and etymologies), LION and EEBO searchable texts (for word-usage), LEME (for definitions), and/or other resources; I will familiarize you with these five.

Before your presentation, distribute to your colleagues an annotated bibliography (on paper) of both primary and secondary texts:

- Use EEBO to find at least **three** other texts/sources that shed light on your argument. They could be comparable texts, source texts, adaptations/responses, historical records, other texts by the same author, or any other early modern printed book. Your secondary research will provide leads.
- Use the MLA International Bibliography to find at least **five** recent scholarly contributions on your topic: books, chapters, or articles. Limit your search to the last 20 years or so.

Annotate each entry with a few sentences on its importance to your argument, *not* with a summary of its complete contents!

After your presentation, you will lead class discussion and address your colleagues' comments and questions. (I will not speak first.) You may find it helpful to conclude your presentation with a few topics for this discussion.

Finally: the week before your presentation, I will ask two students to serve as Respondents. Each will offer substantive feedback on your presentation, your written summary, and/or your bibliography, and ask a question or two.

Critical Response (10%)

The Critical Response is a shorter version of the Topical Presentation: a 10-minute oral presentation, but on one of the *secondary* texts we are reading that day. For full marks, you will (again) deliver a thoughtful and well-prepared presentation on your text. *You will not merely summarize the argument*, but address methodological questions: how the author structures his/her argument; how s/he uses evidence; how you might adapt his/her methods in your own criticism or historiography. Finally, you will apply the secondary text(s) to the primary text we are also reading that day. If it engages the primary text directly, is its argument valid? Does it use evidence rigorously (i.e. thoroughly, with attention to detail)? If it engages the cultural and intellectual surroundings of the primary text, how does the text reflect those surroundings?

Research Paper (50%)

The seminar will emphasize the elements of scholarly writing for professional forums (conferences, publications), including ways to engage with literary criticism and cultural historiography. That means we will always read secondary texts with attention to their methods as much as their arguments: what works, what doesn't, and why? What can we learn from them *beyond* transferrable insights?

We will also treat your scholarly writing as a work-in-progress. The 'final' Research Paper you submit will be the culmination of successive drafts. Research Papers will be on a topic you propose to me via e-mail by November 1st. You will then submit a more formal Prospectus on November 15th, and post it to Dropbox for your colleagues to comment on. It will include a few paragraphs (about 750 words) detailing your questions and the texts you will use to investigate them; it will also include an annotated bibliography. Then on November 29th you will deliver a 10-minute Work-in-Progress talk to the seminar: where has your research led, and where is it going? Which critical methods are you using to answer your question(s), and why? The final draft of your Research Paper is due on Monday, December 12th.

The length of this paper should be at least 4000 words.

Participation (20%)

Participation grades depend on your consistent, collegial, well-informed contributions to the seminar. That means you come to class regularly, always prepared to discuss the day's reading(s) with your colleagues. You also respond to their presentations and their research-in-progress (including the Prospectus for the Research Paper) regularly, thoughtfully and constructively. You respect their views, particularly when you disagree with them—yet you also (courteously) challenge their arguments when they appear untenable.

The success of this seminar depends on your willingness to offer ideas, and to build on your colleagues' ideas (including mine). Some students will inevitably speak more often than others, while others will prefer to hold back and offer comments less frequently. However, do some self-examination to avoid the opposing poles of anxious observer and dominating talker. If you find yourself veering in either direction, try to do more speaking or listening.

If you would like an interim participation grade at any stage of the course, just ask.

Submission Policies

I do not give extensions. In this course, however, you have the option of submitting any one assignment up to three days late: that is, either your research paper prospectus, or your research paper. If you submit an assignment more than three days late, or if you submit a second assignment late, I penalize late papers—submitted after class ends on the due date—at a rate of 5% daily for the first two days, and 1% daily thereafter, excluding weekends and university holidays. (For example, a paper due on Wednesday the 10th that you submit on Monday the 15th would be penalized 11%.)

The only legitimate excuse for late submissions is a documented medical emergency—as opposed to less drastic misfortunes like the deaths of beloved family pets. Last-minute technological malfunctions (mail servers, printers) are your own responsibility, but you can prevent them from costing you marks by finishing before the due date.

N.B. Please make all efforts to submit printed papers **directly** to me, **in class**. If that is impossible, submit your assignment using Dropbox. *Always keep a copy* in case of loss.

For all electronic submissions, it is your responsibility to ensure that files are not corrupted or otherwise unreadable. Use the 'Save As' function to create at least **two different formats** of any file you submit. All documents should be in RTF, DOC, and/or PDF formats to avoid compatibility problems.

Laptop Policy

Laptop computers will be allowed in the seminar only if you use them to take notes, follow along with classroom demonstrations, or for other course-related purposes. Those who cause a distraction by using them for other purposes will have this privilege withdrawn.

Resources

For information about these resources, and links to their web sites, see the **External Links** page in Bb:

- Prof. Ullyor's guide to Effective Critical Writing
- The English Department Website
- The Department's guide to essay presentation
- Academic regulations and schedules
- Guidelines on e-mail etiquette
- Grade appeals
- Deferral of term work and final examinations:
- Academic accommodation
- Students Union representatives
- English Literature Students Society
- Safewalk Program

Academic Integrity

Using any source whatsoever without clearly documenting it is a serious academic offence. If you submit an assignment that includes material (even a very small amount) that you did not write, but that is presented as your own work, you are guilty of plagiarism. The consequences include **failure** on the assignment or in the course, and **suspension** or **expulsion** from the university. For details, see www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k-2-1.html

Please read the following information carefully. The penalty routinely recommended by the English Department for documented plagiarism is **failure** of the course in which the offence occurred; academic probation is also routinely applied at the Faculty level. Suspension or expulsion can result from severe or repeated plagiarism.

The **University Calendar** states:

1. Plagiarism - Essentially plagiarism involves submitting or presenting work in a course as if it were the student's own work done expressly for that particular course when, in fact, it is not. Most commonly plagiarism exists when:
 - (a) the work submitted or presented was done, in whole or in part, by an individual other than the one submitting or presenting the work (this includes having another impersonate the student or otherwise substituting the work of another for one's own in an examination or test),
 - (b) parts of the work are taken from another source without reference to the original author,
 - (c) the whole work (e.g., an essay) is copied from another source, and/or,

(d) a student submits or presents work in one course which has also been submitted in another course (although it may be completely original with that student) without the knowledge of or prior agreement of the instructor involved.

While it is recognized that scholarly work often involves **reference** to the ideas, data and conclusions of other scholars, intellectual honesty requires that such references be **explicitly and clearly noted**.

Plagiarism occurs when direct quotations are taken from a source without **specific acknowledgement**, or when original ideas or data from the source are not acknowledged. **Citing your sources in a bibliography is not enough**, because a bibliography does not establish which parts of a student's work are taken from other sources. MLA (Modern Language Association) documentation or other recognized forms of citation must be used for this purpose.

Advice on adequate documentation can also be found at the following web sites:

www.dianahacker.com/resdoc/

owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/

Department of English Statement on Principles of Conduct

According to the University Calendar (*www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/j.html*), "The University of Calgary community has undertaken to be guided by the following statements of purpose and values: to promote free inquiry and debate, to act as a community of scholars, ..., to respect, appreciate, and encourage diversity, [and] to display care and concern for community". The Department of English, like the university as a whole, is committed to a "positive and productive learning and working environment." This environment is characterized by appreciation and encouragement of diversity and respect for the dignity of all persons: students, support staff, and faculty. The department will not tolerate unacceptable behaviour, such as threatening gestures, threatening or abusive verbal or written communication (including e-mails), or any conduct that "seriously disrupts the lawful education and related activities of students and/or university staff". Any cases of such misconduct should be reported immediately to the department Head, who, depending on the nature and severity of the incident, may then take further appropriate action.

English 609 Course Schedule | Fall 2011

Meetings	Primary texts	Secondary texts	Assignments
Sept 13	--	Holmes, "Proper Study?"	
Sept 20	Roper, <i>Life of More</i>	Conrad, "Manipulating Reputations"	
Sept 27	Foxe, <i>Book of Martyrs</i> : Hugh Latimer and Nicholas Ridley; Thomas Cranmer	Dickens, "Martyrs" Knott, <i>Discourses of Martyrdom</i>	
Oct 4	Foxe, <i>Book of Martyrs</i> : William Tyndale; John Rogers; The Guernsey Martyrs; Lady Elizabeth	King, "Guides to Reading"	
Oct 11	Spenser, <i>Tears of the Muses; Ruins of Time</i>	Huntington, "Furious Insolence"	
Oct 18	Spenser, <i>Astrophel; Daphnaïda</i>	Woudhuysen, Sidney (ODNB) Hager, "Exemplary Mirage"	
Oct 25	Gorges, <i>The Olympian Catastrophe</i>	Gibson, "Gorges Mourning" Sutton, Henry (ODNB)	
Nov 1	Chapman, <i>Epicade</i>	Wallerstein, "The Death of Prince Henry"	Research paper topic
Nov 8	<i>Catch-up class</i>	--	
Nov 15	Cornwallis, <i>Discourse of Henry Haydon</i> , <i>True Picture</i>	Ullyot, "Life Abridged"	Research paper prospectus
Nov 22	Aubrey, <i>Brief Lives</i> : Introduction, Letter, Aubrey-Holder (1-164)	Donaldson, "National Biography" Pritchard, "Brief Lives: Fuller and Wood"	
Nov 29	--	--	Work-in-progress talk
Dec 6	Aubrey, <i>Brief Lives</i> : Holland-Zouche (164-332)	Pritchard, "Brief Lives: Aubrey"	
Dec 12	--	--	Research paper