HU2538
British Literature I
Fall Semester 2008

The literature of any nation or race is a graphic reflection of the values, concerns, perceptions and culture of the civilization which produced it. When the civilization is that which shaped and determined the course of the western world in general and our own nation in particular, the lessons to be learned and the insights to be gained increase greatly. This course examines the literature of the early centuries of British history. Since the culture of the British Isles is so closely related to the literature which survives, we will also attempt to integrate the history, politics and popular movements into our discussions and considerations.

The required texts are: THE NORTON ANTHOLOGY OF ENGLISH 1 edited by Abrams, Donaldson, et al.
W.W. Norton
Geoffrey Chaucer, THE CANTERBURY TALES
Trans. By Nevill Coghill, Penguin Classics
William Shakespeare, A MIDSUMMER NIGHT’S DREAM Signet Editions.

During the course of this semester, we will be reading and discussing examples of British Literature in the forms of poetry, drama, and prose fiction against the background from which they are taken. This class will be a mixture of lecture and discussion
with each student expected to contribute to the proceedings. Several times in the next fourteen weeks, every one of you will be asked to discuss briefly and report on a character, location, object or incident which appears in the works we will be covering. Sometimes, you will be given advance warning so that you can prepare, while at others, the reports will be more extemporaneous, so it would be prudent to keep up with the assigned readings. Towards the end of the course, there will also be group reports on assigned readings which will be scheduled ahead of time.

In addition to the individual and group oral reports (200 pts.), the other work of the course will include:

- Three hour exams (one during fifth week, one during tenth week and one at the end of the fourteenth week). The first of these will cover all material introduced up to and including the week of the exam, while the second will be over all the readings since the first test as will the third; i.e. none of the test will be comprehensive. 100 pts each = 300pts. These exams are given ONLY when they are scheduled: there will be NO make-ups, but if you have a legitimate excused absence, they can be taken early if arrangements are made.

- Fifteen reading quizzes over the material assigned for the day. Sometimes these are announced; most times they are not. The lowest score will be dropped. 10 pts each = 140 pts. Theses are usually given at the beginning of the hour: they also CANNOT be made up.

- Two papers (5-7 pages each) one in the first seven weeks on the backgrounds of the literature; one during the remaining seven
weeks analyzing a selected work of literature. 100 pts each = 200 points.

-Class participation: if you merely sit in this room for fourteen weeks, you will receive none of these points. If you answer questions and contribute to the discussion, you might earn all of them while if you are really active, you can even earn bonus points. = 100+

-Readings will be assigned on a day-to-day basis: you are responsible for ALL required works so that if you miss a day, be sure to note the upcoming assignment.