

The Catholic University of America  
Department of English

**Literature and Religion in Early Modern England**  
**ENG 744, spring 2009**

**Instructor:** Prof. Tobias Gregory  
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A study of English religious literature from Reformation to Restoration, including poetry, sermons, dialogues, spiritual autobiography, biblical translation, and popular homiletics. Authors will include More, Spenser, Donne, Herbert, Alabaster, Browne, Bunyan, and Milton. We will discuss the religious energies of texts such as *The Faerie Queene* and Donne's *Holy Sonnets*; we will also examine the literary properties—rhetorical, formal, and metaphorical—of texts more commonly read as religion than as literature, such as the *Book of Common Prayer* and the several English Bibles. We will read writers from across the period's confessional spectrum, including conformists, puritans, Roman Catholics, and sectarian radicals; we will also think critically about the uses and limitations of these terms. Students will develop a working knowledge of early modern English history along the way.

**Assigned texts** (available at CUA bookstore)

- Browne, *Religio Medici, Hydriotaphia, and the Letter to a Friend* (Echo)
- Bunyan, *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners*, eds. Stachniewski and Pacheco (Oxford World's Classics)
- Cressy and Ferrell, eds., *Religion and Society in Early Modern England*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Routledge)
- Donne, *Major Works*, ed. Carey (Oxford)
- Herbert, *The Complete English Poems*, ed. Tobin (Penguin Classics)
- Milton, *Samson Agonistes*, ed. Prince (Oxford)
- More, *A Dialogue of Comfort Against Tribulation*, ed. Gottschalk (Scepter)
- Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, Book I, ed. Kaske (Hackett)

Additional readings will be made available online or in Marist 326.

**Course requirements**

60% of the course grade will be based on an essay of 12-15 pages; the remainder will be based on presentations, class work, and a 2000-word book review.

**Schedule of readings and assignments**

1-13 Introductory

1-20 Inauguration Day: no class

1-27 Tyndale, from the New Testament (1534): Daniell, introduction; “WT unto the reader”; “William Tyndale, yet once more to the Christian Reader”; Prologue and First Epistle of St John; 1 John in Geneva (1560), Rheims (1582) and AV (1611) translations; Tyndale, *Answer unto More*, pp 3-29

2-3 More, *Dialogue of Comfort*, Book 2; O’Donnell, “Cicero, Gregory the Great, and Thomas More: Three Dialogues of Comfort”

2-10 Cressy and Ferrell, parts I and II (pp. 1-95); Baldwin, *Beware the Cat*

2-17 Cressy and Ferrell, part III (pp. 96-146); Dent, from *The Plaine Mans Path-Way to Heaven*; Haigh, from *The Plain Man’s Pathways to Heaven*

2-24 Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, Book I 1-6; **book reviews due**

Spring break

3-10 Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, Book I 7-12; Berger, “Spenser’s *Faerie Queene*, Book I: Prelude to Interpretation”

3-17 Alabaster, “Over the brook of Cedron Christ is gone,” “’Tis not enough over the brook to stride,” “Upon the Crucifix,” “Away, fear, with thy projects!,” “A Preface to the Incarnation,” “O wretched man, the knot of contraries,” *Alabaster’s Conversion*: <http://www.philological.bham.ac.uk/alabconv/>; Murray, “Now I ame a Catholique”

3-24 Cressy and Ferrell, part IV (pp 147-168); Donne, “The Progress of the Soul”; from *Pseudo-Martyr* (Carey ed. pp.190-2); from *Ignatius His Conclave* (pp.202-4); sermon excerpts (pp. 263-269); “Death’s Duel”

3-31 Donne, “Holy Sonnets”; Stachniewski, from *The Persecutory Imagination*

4-7 Cressy and Ferrell, part V (pp.169-200) ; Herbert, “Perirrhannerium,” “The Sinner,” “Easter,” “Sighs and Groans,” “Giddiness,” “The Bunch of Grapes,” “The Collar”; *A Priest to the Temple, or the Country Parson*

4-14 Browne, *Religio Medici*; Shuger, “The Laudian Idiot”

4-21 Cressy and Ferrell, part VI (pp. 201-244); Bunyan, *Grace Abounding; A Relation of the Imprisonment of Mr. John Bunyan* ; Norwood, *Confessions* ; *A Short History of the Life of John Crook* ; Clarkson, *The Lost Sheep Found* ; *The Narrative of the Persecution of Agnes Beaumont*

4-28 Milton, *Samson Agonistes*; Carey, “A Work in Praise of Terrorism?”; Gregory, “The Political Messages of *Samson Agonistes*”

5-4 5 PM: **essays due**