***OBJECTIVES***

LECTURE  
The series of lectures focuses on the origins and development of English early modern literature (poetry, prose, drama) from approximately the late fifteenth to the end of the seventeenth century.  It includes an explanation of the growth of humanism, print and theatre culture, and the religious controversies of the time. Shakespeare’s plays and those of his predecessors and successors are analysed in some detail. The latter part of the series includes the main writers of the mid- to late-seventeenth century, such as Milton and the Restoration satirists. The principal objective is not only to survey the main trends but to explain them in their historical, literary and cultural contexts.

Attendance at the lecture is not required but highly recommended, as it enables students to acquire a comprehensive perspective on the texts studied in detail in the seminars. As part of the three semester cycle of lectures Literatures on the British Isles I – III, it also contributes to an overall picture of British literature.

SCHEDULE

**WEEK 1.       1.10.    (Helena Znojemská)**Manuscript to bookprint  
Literature in medieval manuscript culture: recap. Late manuscript culture, text as commodity: scribal workshops, new manuscript formats (booklet). Late medieval literature: towards synthesis – collections, compilations, compendia. *Brut*; Malory's *Morte*d’Arthur; Lydgate; Gower; Chaucer. Caxton's early prints – thematic and generic range. Caxton as translator and editor: Recuyell *of the Historyes of Troye, Eneydos,*Malory's *Morte*d’Arthur. Caxton and the idea of English literary canon.

**WEEK 2.       8.10.    (Helena Znojemská)**

Poetry.  
“Private” and “public” genres; manuscript circulation and print; literary “circles” and patronage. Hierarchy of genres. The sonnet and the epic. The sonnet: early translations, formal experiments, transformations of the Petrarchan model - Wyatt, Surrey, Sidney, Spenser.  The epic: classical and continental models. Translations: Surrey, Chapman. Spenser's “programmatic” works: *The Shepheardes Calender*, *The Faerie Queene*.

**WEEK 3.       15.10. (Martin Procházka**)  
Humanism and Renaissance Prose  
Introduction to European Humanism (Italy and Transalpine Movements). Erasmus of Rotterdam and Sir Thomas More. Utopia. The importance of translation: religious and secular. Rhetoric (George Puttenham), Euphuism (John Lyly, George Petty, William Painter) and defence of poetry against Puritan critics (Sir Philip Sidney). Beginnings of novel, pastoral novel (Sidney’s *Arcadia*). Book marketing. Pamphlets and pamphlet wars.

**WEEK 4. 22.10. děkanský den (no class)**

**WEEK 5. 29.10. (Soňa Nováková**)  
Development of English Drama and Tudor Experimentation  
Origins in Christian religion (tropes, miracle, mystery plays). Allegory and the roots of comedy in morality plays (e.g. *Everyman*) and interludes. The heritage of Ancient Greek and Roman drama (Terence, Plautus, Seneca). Drama as part of the humanist education practice. Bridge between medieval religio-allegorical drama and the secular and realistic themes of the Elizabethan era (Henry Medwall, John Heywood, John Bale, Thomas Sackville). The first tragedy (*Gorboduc*). The first chronicle play (*King John*).  The first comedy (*Ralph Roister Doister*). Shakespeare’s predecessors: Thomas Kyd (developing the revenge tragedy) and the University Wits (John Lyly’s court drama; Christopher Marlowe’s titanic heroes; Robert Greene and George Peele). The Elizabethan theatre: public and private theatres, acting companies, staging.

**WEEK 6.       5.11. (Soňa Nováková)**

Shakespearean comedy and romance  
Conventions of Elizabethan comedy. Literary sources and Roman influence. Elementary typology (e.g. city comedy, romantic comedy). Shakespeare’s transformations from the Plautus inspired *Comedy of Errors* and the complexities of *Love’s Labour’s Lost* to the typical romantic comedies of *Midsummer Night’s Dream*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Twelfth Night*, *As You Like It* and later to the dark comedies (problem plays) as *Measure for Measure* and *All’s Well That Ends Well*. Origins of comedy in fertility rituals, carnivals and crossdressing. Relating concepts of romantic and festive comedies. Romance as a dramatic genre: tragicomedy, ideas of space and time (the late plays, e.g. *The Winter’s Tale*, *The Tempest*).

**WEEK 7.         12.11. (Martin Procházka)**

Shakespeare’s Tragedies

Transformations of the sources: Senecan Tragedy, Tragedy of Revenge, Moralities (*Titus Andronicus*, *Richard III*). Problems of Tragedy under Christianity. New Concepts of Tragedy: love tragedy (*Romeo and Juliet*, *Othello*), tragedy of Renaissance intellect (*Hamlet*), tragedy of monarchy/state (*Macbeth*, *King Lear*). Tragedies in a historical setting: love tragedy (*Antony and Cleopatra*), tragedy of state (*Julius Caesar*, *Coriolanus*, *Timon of Athens* – also tragedy of intellect).

**WEEK 8.  19.11.    Humanities week (no class)**

**WEEK 9 26.11. (Helena Znojemská)**

History plays.  
*Holinshed's Chronicles* and the genre of chronicle play in context. Fashioning history. *Henry VI* to *Henry V*: from an account of the past to an analysis of the technology of power. *Richard II*, *Henry V* and rhetoric of kingship. “I am Richard II; know ye not that?”: the history plays and English politics.

**WEEK 10.      3.12. (Martin Procházka)**

Drama of Shakespeare’s Contemporaries and Successors  
Ben Jonson and his project of Theatre: royal authority and popular education. Court masque. *Bartholomew Fair*, *Volpone*. Thomas Dekker and Thomas Middleton – other versions of city comedy (*The Shoemaker’s Holiday*, *A Chaste Maid of Cheapside*), Jacobean tragedy, tragicomedy and comedy (John Webster, Philip Massinger, Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher), Caroline drama (John Ford’s *Perkin Warbeck*).

**WEEK 11.       10.12. (Martin Procházka)**

The House Divided: Versions of Religious Poetry and Puritan Prose  
Downfall of the Traditional Cosmic Order and Metaphysical Poetry (John Donne, George Herbert, Henry Vaughan, Richard Crashaw). Figurative Language and Religious Doctrine. Predestination and Other Doctrinary Roots of Puritanism. Puritan Introspection: Autobiography and Allegory (John Bunyan).

**WEEK 12.     17.12.  (Soňa Nováková)**

Restoration Drama  
Re-opening the theatres. The stage, acting, audience. Main new dramatic forms: heroic drama (couplet, blankverse, exotic, yet related to contemporary politics; John Dryden, Thomas Otway) and comedy (Restoration comedy and comedy of manners). Two generations of writers (Etherege, Wycherley; Vanbrugh, Farquhar, Congreve). Objects of satire, characterisation (types, e.g. gallant, beau, fop; strong female heroine), language, difference between the comedy of humours and the comedy of manners. The first professional woman playwright: Aphra Behn (complicating the heroic Cavalier myth; early novel).

Restoration Poetry  
Pre-Restoration Cavalier Poetry (limitation of the emotional lyric; seduction poems, carpe diem, song in Robert Herrick, Andrew Marvell, Thomas Carew, Sir John Suckling, Richard Lovelace). Restoration satire: anti-Puritan burlesque in Samuel Butler’s *Hudibras*; movement away from heroics and idealism to a more cynical attitude and mockery in the libertine poetry of Sir John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester; the significance of John Dryden (dramatic/literary theory, literary satire, political allegory).

**WEEK 13.       7.1.2025 (Helena Znojemská)**

Milton  
Classical studies and the Italian experience. Milton's Protestant theology, Civil War engagement and political writings. *Areopagitica*. Transformation of the epic - from *Arthuriad*and *Adam Unparadised*to *Paradise Lost*: epic conventions; rhetoric; politics and theology; the issue of the hero and elements of drama. *Paradise Regained*. Milton's dramatic pieces: *Comus*and *Samson Agonistes*.