ENG 365 Literature in an Age of Revolution: Seventeenth-Century Poetry and Prose

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Charles I in Three Positions (the Triple Portrait of Charles I) by Van Dyck, 1635 or 1636, Royal Collection. Wikipedia.

Course description:

Seventeenth-century England has been variously described as a ‘century of genius’ and a ‘century of revolution.’ In terms of genius, it saw luminaries such as Shakespeare, Bacon, Donne, Herbert, Marvell, Hobbes, and Milton. In terms of revolution, it witnessed major transformations in politics, science and culture. It was also a period when women began publishing literature in higher numbers than in previous periods, including at least one who dared to rewrite the Bible in order to counter the claims of patriarchy. All of these changes helped engender some of England’s greatest literary works, giving rise to one of the most exciting periods in British cultural history. Yet even as the period saw major changes across many different areas of human endeavour, it still remained vitally concerned with the authority of the past and with the ongoing force of classical and Christian traditions. This course is a study in the complex play of tradition and innovation in seventeenth-century English literature.

Proposed assignments:

1. Essay One: Literature in Context. (1,000-1,200 words plus annotated bibliography). 15%
2. In Class Test: Identification Passages and Short Answer Questions. 10%
3. Essay Two: (1,500-2000 Words plus annotated bibliography). 30%
4. Commonplace Book/Reading Journal 10% (All satisfactory reading journals receive 100%)
5. Final Exam. Essay Question Given in Advance. 25%.
6. Participation 10%
Required Texts:

1. *The Broadview Anthology of Seventeenth-Century Poetry and Prose*
3. Peter C. Herman, *A Short History of Early Modern England: British Literature In Context*