

Engl 330 – British Authors to 1800 “Fierce Wars and Faithful Loves in Early Modern England”

<u>Time</u>	<u>Days</u>	<u>Sec</u>	<u>Faculty</u>	<u>Class#</u>
1100a-1215p	TR	101	Buhler, S	

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Aim: This course will explore many of the primary works written by members of the Sidney family and their circle of influence. Sir Philip Sidney produced one of the first great sonnet sequences in the English language and also the first great prose romance. Mary Sidney Herbert, Philip’s sister, experimented brilliantly with verse forms while completing Philip’s proposed translation of the Psalms, crafted an influential translation of a French classical tragedy, and patronized the literary arts more generally. Edmund Spenser, friend and admirer of Philip and Mary, similarly experimented with verse and the sonnet sequence (creating his own sonnet structure) and produced the first great epic in Early Modern English, *The Faerie Queene* (creating his own stanza form along the way). Mary Wroth, niece to Mary and Philip, wrote her own sonnet sequence – one of the first from a woman’s perspective – and her own prose romance and her own pastoral comedy. Aemilia Lanyer, admirer of Mary Sidney and beneficiary (briefly) of patronage networks, published a poetic retelling of the Passion story in 1611 and helped to establish the “country house” poetic genre. Spenser proclaims “Fierce wars and faithful loves” as the major themes for his romance epic – and reconsiderations of heroism, devotion, and gender can be found throughout the works of all five of these innovative authors.

Teaching Method: Discussion; in-class exercises and reports.

Requirements: Responses to “leading questions” each class meeting; Commonplace Book with reflection papers.

Tentative Reading List: Sir Philip Sidney, from *Astrophil and Stella* and *Arcadia*; Mary Sidney Herbert, Countess of Pembroke, from her translations of Robert Garnier’s *Antonius* and the Old Testament *Psalms*; Edmund Spenser, from *Amoretti* and *The Faerie Queene*, Book 3; Lady Mary (Sidney) Wroth, from *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus* and *Urania*, also *Love’s Victory*; Aemilia Lanyer, from *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum*.