

ENGL 350C.001: Autobiographical Poetry, 1573–1667

Credits: 3

Instructor: Marie H. Loughlin, PhD

Course Description:

Early modern autobiography has benefitted recently from a more expansive and flexible definition of ‘autobiography’ as ‘life-writing,’ ‘self-writing,’ ‘egodocuments,’ and ‘self-narration,’ which are just as legitimate modes of ‘writing the self’ as the classic autobiography: “A retrospective account in prose that a real person makes of [their] own existence stressing [their] individual life and especially the history of [their] personality” (Lejeune qtd. Smith and Watson 2). In this course, we will examine how and why the earliest poetic life-writing came into being, considering the early modern poetic “autobiographical or life narrative [...] as a historically situated practice of self-representation” (Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson, *Reading Autobiography* 2). We will be examining nine early modern English poets who wrote their lives in verse: Thomas Tusser, Martha Moulsworth, Isabella Whitney, Thomas Wyatt, Philip Sidney, Lady Mary Wroth, Richard Barnfield, Mary Maitland, and Katherine Philips.

Reading List:

There is no required textbook for this course. The texts we are reading can all be found in the Required Reading folder on Canvas, and in the weekly content folders.

Week 2: Thomas Tusser (c. 1524–80), “The Author’s Life.” From his *Five hundred points of good husbandry, united to as many of good huswifery* (1573, 1580)

Week 3: Martha Moulsworth (1577–1646), ‘The Memorandum of Martha Moulsworth, Widow’ (c. 1632)

Week 4: Isabella Whitney (fl. 1566–73), selections, *A Sweet Nosegay* (1573)

Week 5-6: Sir Thomas Wyatt the Elder (1503–1542), selections, ‘Poetry’

Week 7-8: Philip Sidney (1554–86), selections, *Astrophil and Stella* (comp. c. 1582; publ., 1591)

Weeks 10, 12: Mary (Sidney) Wroth (1587–1651/3), selections, *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus* (1621)

Week 13: Richard Barnfield (ca. 1574-1620), selections, *Cynthia, with Certain Sonnets* (1595)

Week 13: Mary Maitland (d. 1596), “Poem 49.” *The Maitland Quarto Manuscript* (1586)

Week 14: Katherine Philips (1632–1664), selections from *Poems* (1667)

Other: **Assignments:** 1 research paper proposal, tentative thesis, and research synthesis (about 400-500 words, 15%); 1 research paper (2,500 words, 20%); 1 public scholarship (editing) project (400-500 words, 20%); Participation (oral & written, 5%); 4 reading quizzes: multiple-choice and/or short answer (via Canvas quizzes): 3 @ 4% and 1 @ 3% for 15% total; 1 final examination (variable length, scheduled in-person by the Registrar, 25%). **Public Scholarship Project:** For more information on this project, which will involve editing and introducing a short piece of early modern prose or poetry related to one of our required texts, see my UBCblog site: *Autobiography in Verse, 1573-1667* at <https://blogs.ubc.ca/autobiographicalpoetry/>