

ENG 2228F: Literary and Cultural Texts Pre-1700
Mondays 3:30-5:30pm & Wednesdays 2:30-3:30pm
Instructor: Dr. Amanda Di Ponio



Hieronymus Bosch, *The Garden of Earthly Delights* (ca. 1490-1510)

In this course, students will have the opportunity to study some of the greatest known – and lesser known – literary and cultural texts written from the Medieval, Renaissance, and Restoration periods. These periods are marked by a shift in perspective and understanding, from the supremacy of the divine to the emergence of the prodigious human being and, most importantly, his/her potential to incite change. While this understanding may appear fundamental to us in the 21st century, this new way of thinking caused great upheaval in individual and collective life, socially and politically, and led to the beginning of the *early* modern period. To fully understand these awesome changes, we will not only delve into the literary achievements of the period, but also the historical events and cultural practices that inspired them, including but not limited to cycles of carnival/purgation, the Protestant Reformation, outbreaks of Bubonic plague, and the invention of the Gutenberg Press (ca. 1440), the event which propelled the *Rinascimento* – literally, the “rebirth” – for it enabled the accessibility of these texts, the tools for empowering the human mind. Crucially, in our critical investigations, we will be mindful of human life which is persistently marginalized during this time.

Literature – long and short narratives, dramas, poetry, pamphlets, – will include works by familiar masters such as Geoffrey Chaucer, William Shakespeare, and Aphra Behn, and perhaps the not-as-familiar, such as Guillaume de Lorris, Thomas Dekker, and Mary Pix. Literary texts specifying varied global *rinascimenti* will also be studied, in addition to visual (Albrecht Durer, Hieronymus Bosch, Artemisia Gentileschi, etc.) and aural (Gregorian, Baroque, etc.) forms of artistic expression. Theory is supplied by Mikhail Bakhtin’s *Rabelais and His World*.

Questions? adiponi@uwo.ca