English 520

Representations of London in Early Modern English Literature

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**Participation (5%)**

**General**

Graduate seminars are driven largely by student discussion. You will need to be well prepared for each class. If medical or personal circumstances necessitate your absence, you must inform me of the situation as soon as possible; otherwise, attendance is required. Courtesy, common sense, and the joy of sharing ideas with other people will incline you, I hope, to listen attentively and respond respectfully to your peers. The following statement was approved by the Senate for inclusion in all syllabi: “The University of Victoria is committed to promoting, providing, and protecting a positive, supportive, and safe learning and working environment for all its members.” Let us strive as a class community to realize this ideal in our interactions.

The participation grade for the course as a whole is 5%; it will be based partly on your questions and answers. I tend to assign this grade at the end of the course but will offer earlier feedback upon request.

**Basic Instructions for Questions and Responses**

For two separate class meetings, you will formulate and pose two questions. For two other class meetings, you will be a respondent, ready to address the questions formulated by your peer(s). For most of our class sessions, we will have two questioners and two respondents. Our discussions will be more interesting if the two people posing questions consult with each other to ensure that we have four distinct questions. Please send your questions via email to the class 24 hours before our class meeting. To avoid software problems, just paste your questions into the body of an email and send it to everyone.

**Suggestions**

Please draw on readings from prior weeks as seems appropriate, especially the Kagan, de Certeau, and Foucault readings. One of our aims is to make ongoing connections as we work our way through the readings.

“Yes/No” questions are not effective unless you genuinely want to poll the class, in which case you need a follow-up question or suggestion that invites justification and debate of positions taken.

Pose “What do you think of…” questions sparingly.

“Who” usually needs a follow-up question, as in “Who are the winners and the losers at the end of the play? Who gains power and how?”

“How” and “For what reason…” questions usually work well. It is often helpful if you provide a little bit of context.

“Why” questions are useful if you want to get at matters that may not be articulated fully or that may form a subtext.

Keep in mind that our course is focussed on primary materials and that we are interested generally in questions of “What is London?” and generic innovation as a means of finding new ways of representing the city. Questions of audience, purpose, aesthetic pleasure, cultural work, and intertextuality will help us answer the larger questions. It will help us if your questions direct us to specific literary aspects of the primary works (character, form, diction, rhetoric, inclusions, and exclusions) and/or to specific passages you wish to analyze.

**Responses**

On the day you are making a response, you are responsible for being exceptionally well prepared for class that day and for ensuring that each of the questions receives a response. You are welcome to consult with the other respondent for that day, if there is one. I too will bring questions and discussion points to each class. I will usually give the respondent(s) the opportunity to speak first, but you are welcome to “pass” until later in the conversation, particularly if we have a long “speakers’ list” developing.