

ENGLISH 438: SHAKESPEARE'S RIVALS (REVISED 10/4/2014)
CRN 16421
Tuesday/Thursday W 8:30-9:50, 185 Lillis

Professor George Rowe
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Course Description

By 1600 the population of London likely numbered about 200,000 persons (an increase of some 140,000 inhabitants from its population only 50 years before), approximately 25,000 of whom attended the theater each week—and not necessarily to see a play by Shakespeare. In this course we will examine representative plays by five of Shakespeare's contemporaries and rivals, all of whom were also engaged in feeding their culture's extraordinary appetite for theatrical entertainment. In the process I hope we will be able to 1) gain preliminary understanding of each playwright's own particular achievements and connections, if any, with Shakespeare; 2) investigate some of the reasons behind the power and popularity of a theater that was by its very nature illegitimate and suspect—the actors of Shakespeare's time were often categorized by London authorities as “vagabonds” (and thus subject to imprisonment), and the playhouses, themselves, were mostly located amidst bear-baiting pits, brothels, and lazar-houses in the “liberties,” an area beyond the jurisdictional and policing powers of London authorities; and 3) explore why the works of these dramatists have resonated so strongly during the past 100 years—both as acknowledged models for such important and influential modernists as T. S. Eliot, Antonin Artaud, and Bertolt Brecht, and as unacknowledged, yet almost uncanny, forerunners of the mixture of sexual obsession, violence, and grotesque humor characteristic of certain aspects of popular culture today (for instance, the films of Quentin Tarentino).

The course's more general goals include helping you develop two related skills: 1) the ability to read literary texts with discernment and with an understanding of their formal conventions and cultural (historical) contexts; and 2) the ability to compose focused, analytical essays that employ logic, creativity, and interpretive skills to produce persuasive arguments conveyed in clear, grammatical prose.

Required Texts

Francis Beaumont, *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* (Bloomsbury Academic)
Ben Jonson, *Five Plays* (Oxford)
Christopher Marlowe, *Complete Plays* (Penguin)
Thomas Middleton, *Five Plays* (Penguin)
John Webster, *The Duchess of Malfi* (A+C Black)

Note: There are many acceptable *recent* editions of the plays that we will be reading this term, and there is likely a fairly extensive selection of used copies at the Smith Family Bookstore. If you have access to (or wish to purchase) editions other than those listed above, please make sure that the editions are

relatively recent (within the past 25 years), include at least some explanatory notes, and have line numbers. If you have any questions about a particular edition, please don't hesitate to bring it by so that I can take a look at it. All of the course handouts (including the syllabus) are on Blackboard.

Schedule of Readings, Discussion Topics, and Assignments

INTRODUCTION TO THE ELIZABETHAN AND JACOBEAN STAGE

September 30-Oct. 7 A Brief History of Drama in English c. 900-1590
Players, Theaters, and Stage Conditions 1576-1625

Handouts:

Timeline
Selection from *De Spectaculis* (Tertullian)
The Double Birth of European Drama
Map of London
Selection from *The Gull's Hornbook* (by Thomas Dekker)

STAGING THE EXOTIC

Oct. 9-16 Marlowe, *Tamburlaine*, Part 1
Marlowe, *The Jew of Malta*

Handouts: Edward Alleyn as Tamburlaine
Contemporary Comments on Marlowe

Shakespearean Analogues: *Richard III*, *The Merchant of Venice*

JACOBEAN POTBOILERS: REVENGE, VIOLENCE, AND SEXUAL OBSESSION

October 21-23 ? *The Revenger's Tragedy* (in Middleton, *Five Plays*)

Handout: Revenge

Shakespearean Analogues: *Titus Andronicus*, *Hamlet*

October 28-30 Webster, *The Duchess of Malfi*

Shakespearean Analogue: *Antony and Cleopatra*

November 4 **Last Date for Handing in the Final Response Paper**

November 4-6 Middleton, *The Changeling*
Shakespearean Analogue: *Romeo and Juliet*

STAGING THE CITY

November 11-13 Beaumont, *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*
Shakespearean Analogue: *Twelfth Night*

November 18-25 Jonson, *The Alchemist*
Jonson, *Bartholomew Fair*
Handouts: Jonson on His Contemporaries
Body Types and the Civilizing Process
Opening of Marlowe's *Hero and Leander*
Shakespearean Analogues: *The Winter's Tale*, *The Tempest*

December 2-4 Middleton, *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside*
Shakespearean Analogue: *The Merry Wives of Windsor*

December 4 **Long Paper Due**

12 noon, Wednesday,
December 10 **Take Home Final Due in 207 Alder**

Additional Course Requirements

Attendance: Regular attendance is required. Unexcused absences will result in the course grade being lowered one-half grade (e.g. B to B-) for each of the first four unexcused absences. Five or more unexcused absences will result in a failing grade. If you do miss class, it is your responsibility to find out what you have missed (including handouts). *Remember: If you are an English Major you must receive a grade of C or higher in order for this course to count toward fulfilling major requirements.*

Leading Class Discussion: Two (or, in some cases, three) members of the class, in collaboration with one another, will be responsible for *initiating* our discussion of each of the plays assigned above. This will include identifying a topic (or, more likely, set of topics) that you think worthy of exploration and constructing a set of questions that will help us to investigate that topic or topics for most, if not all, of a single class meeting.

Papers:

- 1) Two short response papers (750-1000 words or so). **Both** must be completed no later than **November 4**. Each of the papers must deal with a different play, and each must be handed in on the first day in which we will be discussing the play that is its topic. As with any essay, these responses should examine in clear and effective prose an issue that you think is important and instructive. (Assume that your audience has read the play that you are discussing.) No secondary sources; no late papers will be accepted without *prior* authorization. (Note: *late* = after the beginning of class on the day the paper is due.)
- 2) A longer (1500-2000 word) essays on a topic of your own choosing. (I will also be happy to suggest topics as well.) No secondary sources unless approved by me. No late papers will be accepted without *prior* authorization, etc., etc. With my approval (and you *must* meet with me to secure it), the paper may develop a topic that you considered in one of the response papers. **Due no later than December 4**.

Quizzes: I would like to avoid giving reading quizzes, if possible, but that depends upon everyone in the class having read the assigned plays by the first class meeting in which they are to be discussed. If quizzes become necessary, they will be given on the first day that we discuss each of the plays covered in the course. Make-up quizzes will not be allowed unless you have made arrangements with me beforehand.

Exam: A take home final exam only. It will be comprehensive.

Course Grade: Response Papers (25% total); longer paper (25%); final exam (25%); contributions to class discussion, including the assignment described above (25%).

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

Academic Misconduct

Academic misconduct is defined in detail in the University Student Conduct Code (conduct.uoregon.edu). Academic misconduct includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, knowingly furnishing false information, and fabrication. All work submitted in this course must be the student's own and produced exclusively for this course. Students should not give or receive (or attempt to give or receive) unauthorized help on any assignment or examination without express permission from the instructor. Students should properly acknowledge and document every single source of information (e.g. quotations, paraphrases, ideas) and use only the sources and resources authorized by the instructor. The instructor will not stop a student suspected of committing academic misconduct from starting or completing an assignment or examination. The instructor has the right to apply an academic sanction (one example is a grade penalty) if the student at any time admits to academic misconduct. Students who admit to or are found responsible for academic misconduct more than once will likely be suspended from the University. The instructor must report all credible allegations or admissions of academic misconduct to the Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards. The University encourages students to discuss academic integrity with the instructor. Students can learn more about avoiding plagiarism at www.libweb.uoregon.edu/guides/plagiarism/students.

Documented Disability

Appropriate accommodations will be provided for students with documented disabilities. If you have a documented disability and require accommodation, arrange to meet with the instructor within the first two weeks of the term. The documentation of your disability must come in writing from the Disability Services in the Office of Academic Advising and Student Services. Disabilities may include (but are not limited to) neurological impairment, orthopedic impairment, traumatic brain injury, visual impairment, chronic medical conditions, emotional/psychological disabilities, hearing impairment, and learning disabilities. For more information on Disability Services, please see <http://ds.uoregon.edu/>.

Sexual Violence and Survivor Support

The UO is committed to providing an environment free of all forms of discrimination and sexual harassment, including sexual assault, domestic and dating violence and gender-based stalking. If you (or someone you know) has experienced or experiences gender-based violence (intimate partner violence, attempted or completed sexual assault, harassment, coercion, stalking, etc.), know that you are not alone. UO has staff members trained to support survivors in navigating campus life, accessing health and counseling services, providing academic and housing accommodations, helping with legal protective orders, and more.

Please be aware that all UO employees are required reporters. This means that if you tell me about a situation, I may have to report the information to my supervisor or the Office of Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity. Although I have to report the situation, you will still have options about how your case will be handled, including whether or not you wish to pursue a formal complaint. Our goal is to make sure you are aware of the range of options available to you and have access to the resources you need.

If you wish to speak to someone confidentially, you can call 541-346-SAFE, UO's 24-hour hotline, to be connected to a confidential counselor to discuss your options. You can also visit the SAFE website at safe.uoregon.edu.

In Case of Inclement Weather

In the event the University operates on a curtailed schedule or closes, UO media relations will notify the Eugene-Springfield area radio and television stations as quickly as possible. In addition, a notice regarding the university's schedule will be posted on the UO main home page (in the "News" section) at <http://www.uoregon.edu>.

If an individual class must be canceled due to inclement weather, illness, or other reason, a notice will be posted on Blackboard or via email. During periods of inclement weather, please check Blackboard and your email rather than contact department personnel. Due to unsafe travel conditions, departmental staff may be limited and unable to handle the volume of calls from you and others.