

English 630: Shakespeare's Contemporaries

CRN 32139
Tuesday 9-11:50
253 PLC

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Course Description:

This course attempts to provide a general overview of the drama of the English Renaissance. It has several goals: 1) to explore the characteristics and cultural context of what is arguably the most successful commercial theater known to us; 2) to examine the dramatic accomplishments of some of Shakespeare's contemporaries and rivals; and 3) to reclaim thereby a Shakespeare who neither arose out of, nor wrote within, a historical and literary vacuum. (It thus assumes some familiarity with a representative selection of Shakespeare's plays.) We will also look briefly at some classical and Medieval antecedents (a tragedy by Seneca; *Mankynd*), as well as consider the ways in which Early Modern drama might be viewed as an unacknowledged forerunner of the mixture of sexual obsession, violence, and grotesque humor characteristic of certain areas of popular culture today.

Required Texts:

Beaumont, *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* (New Mermaids)
Dekker, *The Shoemaker's Holiday* (New Mermaids)
Jonson, *Five Plays* (Oxford)
Marlowe, *Complete Plays* (Penguin)
Maus, ed., *Four Revenge Tragedies* (New Mermaid)
Webster and Ford, *The Duchess of Malfi, The White Devil, The Broken Heart, and 'Tis Pity She's a Whore* (Penguin)

Note: Other modern *scholarly* editions may be used in place of the above for plays we will be reading and discussing. If you have questions about the suitability of a particular edition of a play or plays, please come and see me. In the list of assignments that follows, texts followed by an asterisk (*) will be available on Canvas in .pdf format.

Schedule of Readings and Discussion Topics

March 29

Introduction: Native and Classical Traditions, The Theaters of London

Primary Texts: Anonymous, *Mankynd**
 Seneca, *Medea**
 Dekker, Selection from *The Gull's Hornbook**

Secondary Texts: Braden, From *Anger's Privilege**
 Mullaney, From *The Place of the Stage**

Shakespearean Analogues: *Titus Andronicus, Othello*

April 5

Plays Early and Late(r): The Aesthetics of Revenge

Primary Texts: Kyd, *The Spanish Tragedy*
 Middleton, *The Revenger's Tragedy*

Secondary Texts: Altmann, From *The Tudor Play of Mind* (pp. 31-63 only:
 "The Moral Cultivation of Ambivalence")*
 Mazzio, "Staging the Vernacular"*

Shakespearean Analogues: *Titus Andronicus; Hamlet*

April 12

Plays Early and Late(r): The Theater, the Market, and the Self

Primary Texts: Marlowe, *The Jew of Malta*
 Jonson, *Volpone*

Secondary Texts: Agnew, From *Worlds Apart**
 Greenblatt, "Marlowe, Marx, and Anti-Semitism"*

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

April 19

Plays Early and Late(r): Power as Spectacle and Rhetoric, Power as Absence

Primary Texts: Marlowe, *Tamburlaine, Part I*
 Jonson, *Sejanus*

Secondary Texts: Barbour, From *Before Orientalism**
 Cartelli, From *The Economy of Theatrical Experience**
 Patterson, From *Censorship and Interpretation**

Shakespearean Analogue: *Julius Caesar*

April 26

Plays Early and Late(r): Sexuality, Gender

Primary Texts: Marlowe, *Edward II*
Middleton and Dekker, *The Roaring Girl*
Anonymous, *Hic Mulier; or, The Man-Woman** and
*Haec-Vir: Or the Womanish Man**

Secondary Texts: Orgel, “Nobody’s Perfect”^{*}
Traub, “Desire and the Difference it Makes”^{*}

Shakespearean Analogues: *Richard II; Twelfth Night; Troilus and Cressida*

May 3

London According to Middleton and Jonson

Primary Texts: Jonson, *The Alchemist*
Middleton, *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside*

Secondary Texts: Gowing, “The Freedom of the Streets”^{*}
Paster, “Leaky Vessels”^{*}

Shakespearean Analogues: *Merry Wives of Windsor; Measure for Measure?*

May 10

London According to Dekker and Beaumont

Primary Texts: Dekker, *The Shoemaker’s Holiday*
Beaumont, *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*

Secondary Texts: Archer, “Material Londoners”^{*}
Walsh, “Performing Historicity”^{*}

Shakespearean Analogue: *The Merry Wives of Windsor*

May 17

London According to Jonson (2)

Primary Texts: Jonson, *Bartholomew Fair*

Secondary Texts: Barish, “Prose as Prose” (from *Ben Jonson and the Language of Prose Comedy*)^{*}
Parker, “Literary Fat Ladies”^{*}

Shakespearean Analogues: *The Winter’s Tale, The Tempest*

May 24

Jacobean Obsessions 1: Desire, Adultery, Incest, Violence

Primary Texts: Webster, *The Duchess of Malfi*
Middleton, *Women Beware Women*

Secondary Texts: Moretti, "The Great Eclipse" (from *Signs Taken for Wonders*, pp. 56-82 only)*
Whigham, From *Seizures of the Will**

Shakespearean Analogues: *Macbeth*, *Antony and Cleopatra*

May 31

Jacobean Obsessions 2: Rewriting *Romeo and Juliet*

Primary Texts: Middleton, *The Changeling*
Ford, *'Tis Pity She's a Whore*

Secondary Texts: Artaud, From *The Theater of Cruelty**

Shakespearean Analogue: *Romeo and Juliet*

ADDITIONAL COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Guiding Discussion

Beginning on April 12th a member of the class will select key issues/passages from the readings assigned for that day and prepare a plan/series of questions that will enable us to explore those issues/passages in depth. Each of you will do this once during the term. (I will distribute a sign-up sheet at the beginning of Week 2.) The issues that you choose may involve the secondary materials as well as the plays that are our primary focus, but—in all cases—they should stem from your own careful and thoughtful engagement with the materials we will be covering in that class. They should also be complex/interesting enough to require a substantial amount of class discussion.

Papers

1. Three short response papers (2 pages at most using 12 pt. Times Roman font, 1" margins, and double spacing). Each essay must be handed in on the day that the materials with which it deals will be discussed. Each essay must also deal with materials from a meeting other than the one for which you are preparing questions. (In essence that means that each of you will be providing some sort of response to the readings 4x during the term.) I will comment upon, but not grade, these responses.
2. A term paper approximately 12-15 pages in length (12 pt. Times Roman font; 1" margins, double spaced). You must discuss your topic with me **no later than May 24th**. This long essay must also make selective use of (relevant) secondary materials. Note: secondary materials = critical

essays/books, not the *OED*, Biblical Concordances, Mythological Handbooks, etc. **It is due no later than June 8th.**

COURSE GRADE

25% class performance; 75% long paper.

TIMELINE FOR THE EARLY MODERN STAGE

Date	Dramatists and Plays	Shakespeare	Other Events
c. 54 BCE	<i>Medea</i> (Seneca)		
c. 1460	<i>Mankynd</i> (anon.)		
c. 1497	<i>Fulgens and Lucrece</i> (Medwell; first secular play in English)		
1517			Reformation Begins
1529			Ottoman Siege of Vienna
1535			Thomas More Executed Henry VII establishes Church of England
1558			Elizabeth I Crowned
1564	Marlowe Born	Shakespeare Born	
1571			Ottoman Fleet Defeated at Lepanto
1576			“Theatre” Built (first permanent public theater in London)
1585			1 st Roanoke Colony
1587?	<i>The Spanish Tragedy</i> (Kyd)		

1587-88	<i>Tamburlaine</i> (Marlowe)		
1588			Defeat of Armada
1591-92	<i>Edward II</i> (Marlowe)		<i>Faerie Queene I-III</i>
1592?		<i>Titus Andronicus</i>	
1593	Marlowe murdered		
1596-97		<i>The Merchant of Venice</i>	
1598			Globe Theater Built
1599	<i>The Shoemaker's Holiday</i> (Dekker)		
1599-1600		<i>Julius Caesar, Hamlet</i>	Death of Spenser
1601	Additions to <i>Spanish Tragedy</i>		
1603	<i>Sejanus</i> (Jonson)		Death of Elizabeth James I Crowned Jonson Imprisoned
1605	<i>A Trick to Catch the Old One</i> (Middleton)	<i>King Lear</i>	Bacon's <i>Advancement of Learning</i>
1606	<i>Revenger's Tragedy</i> (Middleton?) <i>Volpone</i> (Jonson)	<i>Macbeth</i>	
1607	<i>Knight of the Burning Pestle</i> (Beaumont)	<i>Antony and Cleopatra</i>	
1607-10?	<i>The Roaring Girl</i> (Dekker and Middleton)		
1610	<i>The Alchemist</i> (Jonson)	<i>The Winter's Tale</i>	
1611	<i>Chaste Maid in Cheapside</i> (Middleton)	<i>The Tempest</i>	
1612	<i>The White Devil</i> (Webster)	Retires to Stratford	
1614	<i>The Duchess of Malfi</i>		Globe Destroyed by Fire

	(Webster) <i>Bartholomew Fair</i> (Jonson)	
1616	<i>Works of Ben Jonson</i> Published	Death of Shakespeare
1620s?	<i>Women Beware Women</i> (Middleton)	
1622	<i>The Changeling</i> (Middleton)	
1623		First Folio Published
1629?	<i>'Tis Pity She's a Whore</i> (Ford)	
1642		Theaters in London Forced to Close (until 1660) English Civil War Begins
1667		<i>Paradise Lost</i>