

Not Shakespeare: Deviants, Rogues and Men of Blood on the Renaissance Stage



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Time and Place: Monday 3:00-3:50; Wednesday 2:00-3:50

Office Hours TBA

William Shakespeare is such a towering presence in the modern literary canon that his works often leave his contemporary playwrights--with the possible exception of Marlowe--languishing in obscurity. This influence distorts our view of early modern theater, because despite the often radical questions Shakespeare's plays pose, they also often cater to conservative literary tastes, dwelling on monarchies and marriages, the nation and God. Shakespeare, however, did not write in a vacuum, but from within a vibrant literary and theatrical scene, a scene that is often far wilder, madder, weirder, and closer to the stench and scandals of life in early modern London than can be appreciated from exclusively focusing on Shakespeare. The intention of this class is to introduce you to that scene, and to examine the visceral, often blasphemous, and always pluralistic character of early modern drama.

Assessment

Response Papers 20%

Adopt a Play Project 40%

- Author Biography and Publication/Stage History (10%)
- Annotated Bibliography (10%)
- Final Paper (8-10pp) (20%)

Participation 10%

Final Exam 30%

Response Papers: You are required to write one, one-page response paper every two weeks. You can write these whenever and on whatever you wish, so long as you turn one in every two weeks. So, for example, you'll write one response paper sometime over weeks 1 and 2. 6 in total over the course of the semester. These can either be single or double-spaced, but they must not exceed one page. Do not hope to rely on Sparknotes for these assignments! You will be graded on your ability and effort to **closely read** the text.

Adopt a Play Project: Over the course of the semester, every student will adopt a play of their own, on which you will write a final term paper. Every student should choose a unique play (no overlapping!), either from the list at the end of the syllabus or another play, depending on your interests. Do a little research into the different plays before you pick, and feel free to see me if you need guidance. After choosing your play the project will fall out in installments. First, you will write a **short biography** of the author(s) of your play (approximately one single-spaced page), in which, if pertinent, you will discuss any authorship issues and controversies. Next, write a summary of your play's **publication and stage history**; when was it first performed and first published? Has it been staged since? How many editions did the play go through in the early modern period? Next, you will write an **annotated bibliography** of around 6-7 scholarly and critical sources for your play. Entries should summarize the arguments of these sources and critically respond to them. Finally, a **final paper** will be due at the end of the term.

Participation: You will be judged on your active participation in class and demonstration that you've read the material under discussion carefully and closely.

Final Exam: In lieu of weekly quizzes, a comprehensive final exam will test the extent to which you've made your best effort to engage in the class. There will be no essay on this exam: you will be graded on your knowledge of the plays. To do well, you will need to have read the material, and to have taken an active part in the class.

Weekly Schedule

Week 1: The Marlovian Moment

Monday (18/9): Introduction to the Elizabethan Stage

Wednesday (20/9): Christopher Marlowe, *Tamburlaine Part 1* (1590), Acts 1-2

Week 2

Monday (25/9): *Tamburlaine*, Acts 3-4

Wednesday (27/9): *Tamburlaine*, Act 5

Week 3: City Comedy

Monday (2/10): Ben Jonson, *The Alchemist* (1610), Acts 1-3

Wednesday (4/10): *The Alchemist*, Acts 4-5

Week 4

Monday (9/10): *The Alchemist*

Wednesday (11/10): Thomas Middleton and Thomas Dekker, *The Roaring Girl* (1610),
Acts 1-3

****Adopt your play by Week 4****

Week 5

Monday (16/10): *The Roaring Girl*, Acts 4-5

Wednesday (18/10): *The Roaring Girl*

****Author Biography and Stage History Due****

Week 6: Revenge Tragedy

Monday (23/10): *The Roaring Girl*

Wednesday (25/10): Thomas Kyd, *The Spanish Tragedy* (~1582-92), Acts 1-3

Week 7

Monday (30/10): *The Spanish Tragedy*, Acts 4-5

Wednesday (1/11): *The Spanish Tragedy*

Week 8

Monday (6/11): Thomas Middleton, *Women Beware Women* (~1612-1620), Acts 1-3

Wednesday (8/11): *Women Beware Women*

Week 9

Monday (13/11): *Women Beware Women*, Acts 4-5

Wednesday (15/11): *Women Beware Women*

****Annotated Bibliography Due****

Week 10

Monday (20/11): Thomas Middleton and William Rowley, *The Changeling* (1622), Acts 1-3

Wednesday (22/11): *The Changeling*, Acts 4-5

Week 11

Monday (27/11): *The Changeling*

Wednesday (29/11): *The Changeling*

Week 12: Romance

Monday (5/12): John Fletcher, *The Island Princess* (~1619), Acts 1-3

Wednesday (7/12): *The Island Princess*, Acts 4-5

Week 13

Monday (12/12): *The Island Princess*

Wednesday (14/12): *The Island Princess*

****Final Paper Due In Class, 14/12****

****Final Exam TBA****

Recommended Plays to Adopt

Anonymous, *Arden of Feversham*

Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher, *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*

Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher, *The Maid's Tragedy*

Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher, *A King and No King*

Richard Brome, *A Jovial Crew*

Elizabeth Cary, *The Tragedy of Mariam*

George Chapman, *Bussy d'Ambois*

Henry Chettle, *The Tragedy of Hoffman*

Samuel Daniel, *Philotas*

Thomas Dekker, *The Shoemaker's Holiday*

John Fletcher, *The Woman's Prize*

John Fletcher and William Shakespeare, *Henry VIII or All is True*

John Fletcher and William Shakespeare, *Two Noble Kinsmen*

John Ford, *Perkin Warbeck*

John Ford, *'Tis Pity She's a Whore*

Robert Greene, *Friar Bungay and Friar Bacon*
Fulke Greville, *Mustapha*
Thomas Heywood, *The Fair Maid of the West*
Thomas Heywood, *A Woman Killed with Kindness*
Ben Jonson, *Bartholomew Fair*
Ben Jonson, *Volpone*
Ben Jonson, *Sejanus*
Ben Jonson, *Every Man in his Humour*
John Lyly, *Galatea*
Christopher Marlowe, *The Jew of Malta*
Christopher Marlowe, *Tamburlaine Part 2*
Christopher Marlowe, *Edward II*
Christopher Marlowe and Thomas Nashe, *Dido Queen of Carthage*
Christopher Marlowe and William Shakespeare, *Henry VI, Parts 1-3*
Thomas Middleton, *A Mad World, My Masters*
Thomas Middleton, *The Revenger's Tragedy*
Thomas Middleton, *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside*
Thomas Middleton and Thomas Dekker, *The Bloody Banquet*
Thomas Middleton and William Rowley, *The Old Law*
Thomas Middleton and William Shakespeare, *Timon of Athens*
John Marston, *Antonio's Revenge*
John Marston, *The Dutch Courtesan*
John Marston, *The Malcontent*
Philip Massinger, *The Roman Actor*
Philip Massinger, *A New Way to Pay Old Debts*
William Rowley, Thomas Dekker, and John Ford, *The Witch of Edmonton*
Cyril Tourneur, *The Atheist's Tragedy*
John Webster, *The Duchess of Malfi*
John Webster, *The White Devil*