

English 305: Shakespeare and His Contemporaries

Tuesdays/Thursdays 12:30-1:45, Tawes Hall 1106

Professor: Scott Trudell
trudell@umd.edu

Office hours: Tuesdays/Thursdays 3:00-4:00 and by appointment
Tawes Hall 3243

The flourishing theatrical culture of Elizabethan and Jacobean England involved many playwrights. Shakespeare borrowed from Thomas Kyd, revered Christopher Marlowe, competed with Ben Jonson, and collaborated with Thomas Middleton. This course places Shakespeare alongside the other dramatists of his era, exploring connections between early modern plays and contextualizing them in their historical moment. We will ask how the theater became such a vibrant and commercially successful artform in the course of the 1590s, how it expanded and changed during the reign of King James, what makes Shakespeare unique among his peers, and what themes and philosophies emerge across the drama of the period.

I expect you to read every text on the syllabus closely and carefully before the assigned day. There will be a reading quiz at the beginning of each class to reward you for thorough preparation. You will be writing regularly on our course blog and submitting two formal papers. You will also be attending a theater production and writing about Shakespeare in performance today - and drawing connections between the early modern period and our own cultural moment.

Books:

- Katherine Eisaman Maus, ed. *Four Revenge Tragedies*. Oxford University Press, 2008. ISBN: 0199540535.
- Christopher Marlowe. *Doctor Faustus and Other Plays*. Ed. David Bevington and Eric Rasmussen. Oxford University Press, 2008. ISBN: 0199537062.
- William Shakespeare. *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Ed. Russ McDonald, Stephen Orgel and A. R. Braunmuller. Pelican, 2000. ISBN: 0140054693.
- William Shakespeare. *Hamlet*. Ed. G. R. Hibbard. Oxford University Press, 2008. ISBN: 0199535817.
- Ben Jonson. *The Alchemist and Other Plays*. Oxford University Press, 2009. ISBN: 0199537313.
- Thomas Middleton, Cyril Tourneur and John Webster. *Three Revenge Tragedies*. Penguin, 2005. ISBN: 0141441240.
- William Shakespeare. *The Tempest*. Ed. Stephen Orgel. Oxford University Press, 2008. ISBN: 0199535906.

Check www.addall.com and www.amazon.com for used copies. You may use Pelican, Signet, Folger, Norton, Oxford, Cambridge or Riverside editions of the Shakespeare plays. If you already own other editions of any of the course texts, please check with me. Online editions are not acceptable.

Additional required texts will be available for download as pdfs on our ELMS course site. Make sure to download and print them in advance.

Shakespeare Today:

- This semester you will have a unique opportunity to think and write about Shakespeare in contemporary performance. There will be two exciting productions of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* available to you inexpensively: you won't want to miss them.

I have arranged for discounted (70% off) tickets to *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at The Shakespeare Theatre Company in Washington. Tickets are \$29, which is an excellent value.

Please make every effort to attend this performance on the evening of Thursday, November 15. The Shakespeare Theatre's audience enrichment manager has agreed to discuss the performance with us on that date. In order to reserve your ticket, please pay me \$29 (exact cash or check) by Thursday, September 13.

There will also be a bilingual (English and Chinese) production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at the Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center from September 27-30. Student tickets are \$10.

I strongly encourage you to attend one or both of these productions. If you have unavoidable conflicts, you may attend another production of Shakespeare instead. One way or another, you are required to attend a production of Shakespeare by November 15.

Course requirements:

- Active participation in class discussion (10%)
- Reading quizzes at the beginning of each class (10%)
- Weekly blog submissions (15%)
- First paper, 4-5 pages (20%)
- Second paper, 6-7 pages (25%)
- Final exam (20%)

Policies

- Come to every class, and come on time. Reading quizzes begin on time at the beginning of every class, and they cannot be made up.
- If you have an unavoidable absence, please post a reaction to that day's readings on the blog. A substantial post will help offset a missed quiz. This is in addition to your weekly required blog posting. Make the post on the day you have missed, or before.
- Your participation grade is not based on the number of times that you comment during class. It is based on your sustained engagement in our discussions throughout the semester. Your participation grade improves (for example) when you are attentive to your peers, when you ask a thoughtful question, when you suggest a new topic and when you try out a new idea. It's okay to make mistakes and change your mind: what that tells me is that you are processing new ideas and pushing yourself.

- Turn off phones and computers completely (not to vibrate or silent) and leave them in your bag.
- You are responsible for following the university code on academic honesty. If I detect plagiarism, I will report it to the Honor Council, and you will be subject to receiving an "XF" for the course, with the notation on your transcript, "Failure due to academic dishonesty." For information on plagiarism, visit: <http://www.lib.umd.edu/guides/citing.html>

Bookmark our course blog and sign up for email alerts:

<http://english305fall12.wordpress.com/>

You are required to contribute to the blog at least once per week. Vary your entries so that some are posts and some are comments. Each week's contribution should add up to one substantial post, or a few shorter comments.

I encourage you to be informal and creative. Try posting further thoughts about something that came up during class discussion. Or, bring up a passage that we didn't discuss in class. Or, try out an idea you have been mulling over in a paper. Experiment with pairing texts on the syllabus with texts from other courses, literature of other periods, or media from contemporary culture. For example, you might link to a clip on YouTube that helps to illuminate something at stake in an early modern play. Make sure to explain how your pairing helps us understand the course text in a new way.

I will occasionally provide blog prompts, but in general I would like you to generate the discussion. Any topic that relates to the issues of the course is welcome. Your grade will depend upon how thoughtfully you respond to your classmates as well as the quality of your own posts.

Please complete your contribution by 5PM Monday every week. Make sure to check the blog regularly.

One of your blog posts will be a lengthier (500-word) response to Shakespeare in performance. I will discuss my expectations for your two formal papers early in the semester.

If you have a disability that needs accommodation, please let me know during the first two weeks of class.

Thursday, August 30

- Introduction
- Marlowe: from *Tamburlaine the Great* (handout)

Tuesday, September 4

- Stephen Gosson: from *The School of Abuse* (download)
- Philip Sidney: from *The Defense of Poesy* (download)
- *The Spanish Tragedy*: Act 1

Thursday, September 6

- *The Spanish Tragedy*: Act 2

Tuesday, September 11

- *The Spanish Tragedy*: Act 3
- Introduction to the Oxford volume, ix-xviii

Thursday, September 13

- \$29 due for Shakespeare Theatre Company tickets
- *The Spanish Tragedy*: Act 4

Tuesday, September 18

- *Doctor Faustus*, A-text: Act 1
- Introduction to the Oxford Marlowe, vii-xvii

Thursday, September 20

- *Doctor Faustus*, A-text: Acts 2-3
- Andrew Gurr, "Shakespeare's Playhouses" (download)

Tuesday, September 25

- *Doctor Faustus*, A-text: Acts 4-5
- *Doctor Faustus*, B-text: 5.2-5.3
- 1-page abstract due

Thursday, September 27

- *A Midsummer Night's Dream*: Acts 1-2
- Dorothea Kehler, "Marion McClinton's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at the La Jolla Playhouse, 1995: Appropriation Through Performance" (download)

Tuesday, October 2

- *A Midsummer Night's Dream*: Act 3

Thursday, October 4

- *A Midsummer Night's Dream*: Acts 4-5

Tuesday, October 9

- Marlowe: "The Passionate Shepherd to His Love" (download)
- Sidney: *Astrophel and Stella*, Sonnet 1 (download)
- Shakespeare: Sonnets 18, 73, 129, 130, 138 (download)

Thursday, October 11

- Donne: "The Bait," "The Good Morrow," "The Flea," "Valediction Forbidding Mourning" (download)
- Jonson: "To My Book," "On Court-Worm," "To John Donne" (XCVI), "On Something, That Walks Somewhere," "On My First Son," "Inviting a Friend to Supper," "Song To Celia," "To the Memory of My Beloved, the Author, Mr. William Shakespeare, and What He Hath Left Us" (download)

Tuesday, October 16

- Isabella Whitney: "The Manner of Her Will" (download)

- First paper due

Thursday, October 18

- *Epicoene*: Act 1-2
- Introduction to the Oxford Jonson, vii-xiii and xv-xvi

Tuesday, October 23

- *Epicoene*: Acts 3-4

Thursday, October 25

- *Epicoene*: Act 5

Tuesday, October 30

- *Hamlet*: Act 1

Thursday, November 1

- *Hamlet*: Acts 2-3

Tuesday, November 6

- *Hamlet*: Acts 4-5
- Michael Neill, "Hamlet: A Modern Perspective"

Thursday, November 8

- *The Changeling*: Act 1

Tuesday, November 13

- *The Changeling*: Acts 2-4

Thursday, November 15

- *The Changeling*: Act 5
- Shakespeare Theatre Company performance

Tuesday, November 20

- Writing workshop: bring 3 copies of 4-5 pages

-- Thanksgiving Break --

Tuesday, November 27

- *The Tempest*, Act 1
- William Strachey, from *True Repertory of the Wrack* (download)
- Sylvester Jourdain, from *A Discovery of the Barmudas* (download)

Thursday, November 29

- *The Tempest*, Acts 2-3

Tuesday, December 4

- *The Tempest*, Acts 4-5

Thursday, December 6

- Second paper due
- Andrew Marvell: "Bermudas," "The Garden" (download)
- Michel de Montaigne, *Of the Cannibals* (download)

- Anne Bradstreet: "The Author to Her Book" and "Before the Birth of One of Her Children" (download)

Tuesday, December 11

- Review

Tuesday, December 18 at 1:30 PM

- Final Exam