

English 305: Shakespeare and His Contemporaries

Mondays/Wednesdays 3:30-4:45, Tawes Hall 1320

Professor: Scott Trudell
trudell@umd.edu

Office hours: Mondays/Wednesdays 12:30-1:30 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 during the reign of Elizabeth I, how it expanded and changed under James I, what makes Shakespeare unique among his peers, and what themes and philosophies emerge across the drama of the period. We will also draw connections between Shakespearean England and contemporary culture, asking why and how the drama of this period raises pressing questions about our own historical moment.

Books:

- Cary, Elizabeth. *The Tragedy of Mariam*. Bloomsbury, 2012. ISBN: 9781904271598.
- Clare, Janet, ed. *Four Revenge Tragedies*. New Mermaids, 2014. ISBN: 9781408159606.
- Knowles, James, and Eugene Giddens, eds. *The Roaring Girl and Other City Comedies*. Oxford University Press, 2001. ISBN: 9780199540105.
- Marlowe, Christopher. *Doctor Faustus and Other Plays*. Ed. David Bevington and Eric Rasmussen. Oxford University Press, 2008. ISBN: 0199537062.
- Shakespeare, William. *Hamlet*. Ed. Barbara Mowat and Paul Werstine. Folger Shakespeare Library, 2003. ISBN: 9780743477123.

Check www.bookfinder.com and www.amazon.com for used copies. If you already own other editions of any of the course texts, please check with me. Online editions are not acceptable for this course.

Additional required texts will be available for download as pdfs on our ELMS course site. **You are required to bring all required reading in hardy copy on the days we discuss it.** I strongly advise purchasing a printer if you do not already own one.

Course requirements:

- Preparedness and active participation in class (20%)
- Weekly blog submissions (20%)
- Wikipedia assignment (20%)
- 5-6 page paper (20%)
- Final exam (20%)

What to expect:

The Englishe is according to the tyme it was written in, and the fence somewhat darcke, but not so hard; but that it maye be vnderstaunde of such as wyll not sticke to breake the shell of the nutte for the kernelles sake,

-Robert Crowley on *Piers Plowman*, 1550

This course requires no previous experience with early modern English. We will work on reading comprehension in class. Just make sure to put in the effort right away, especially by reading aloud (my #1 tip for getting the hang of it) and by going through and re-reading the language once you understand the plot. Work on it, hang in there, and you will see rapid improvement.

I sometimes give unannounced reading quizzes; the only preparation necessary is to complete the assigned reading for each class. Failing quizzes after having done the reading may be a warning sign of comprehension problems, or it may be a warning sign that you have not read closely enough. If you are having reading comprehension trouble, email me to make an appointment or drop into my office hours.

The final exam will take the form of five short essay questions, each asking you to pair two texts on the syllabus. The exam touches on many texts and rewards those who have read attentively throughout the course. I will provide a sample exam so that you are able to practice your responses on the blog and on your own. You will be allowed to use your books and your marginal notes (but not notebooks or loose sheets of paper) on the exam, so it is to your advantage to take notes in your books over the course of the semester (using post-it notes if you don't want to write in them).

Your first writing assignment will take place on Wikipedia, where our goal as a class will be to improve the article on *The Shoemaker's Holiday*. All components of this assignment will be laid out for you in a detailed course module developed through the Wiki Education Foundation: make sure to register and keep up to date with the module **beginning February 18**.

Your second writing assignment will be a paper of 5-6 pages on a topic that emerges out of your set of interests. You will meet with me in person to discuss your approach and background reading: please arrange to come to my office hours or schedule an appointment **by April 11 at the latest**.

Please pay close attention to the due dates on the syllabus: most of your assignments have deadlines outside of class, in electronic form.

Blog requirement:

Blogging will be a key part of this course: you will do a lot of your writing in this format, and class discussion will emerge from what you say online. By Sunday night each week, you are required to make a blog post about the upcoming week's readings and to make at least one comment on peer's post.

Please bookmark the blog here and sign up for email updates:

<<https://english305spring18.wordpress.com>>

The first step will be responding to an auto-generated invitation that you will receive via email. Check for messages from a Wordpress email address, accept the invitation, and follow the instructions for registering with the site.

Remember to make a post of your own **and** at least one comment per week. To make a post, it is best to use the "Write a new post" link, in the "Get to work" column on the right (using the drop-down menu sometimes leads to confusion). Your grade will reflect how thoughtfully you engage with fellow students, so you will need to read the blog each week and respond to your classmates' ideas.

I will occasionally provide blog prompts, but in general I prefer for you to generate the discussion. Your posts will be the starting points for your papers; they will respond to and inspire threads of discussion in class; and they will allow you to draw connections between course texts and contemporary culture.

Posts should generally focus on the reading for the coming week. This means that you will need to have completed the reading by Sunday night each week. That said, it's okay to pick up on something that came up during the previous week's discussion. Try connecting the upcoming reading to what we discussed in class, for example. It's also okay to focus on something from the previous week that we did not have time to discuss in class. Just make sure that most of your posts touch on new material.

I encourage you to experiment with pairing texts on the syllabus with texts from other courses, literature of other periods, or digital media. For example, try linking to a clip on YouTube that helps to illuminate something at stake in that week's reading. Make sure to explain how your pairing helps us understand the course text in a new way.

Any topic that relates to the upcoming week's readings is welcome. This is your chance to set the agenda for discussion: if there are characters or issues you'd like to talk about in class, you should bring them up on the blog!

Policies:

- Attendance and participation are extremely important in this course.
- I grade participation based on thoughtful, consistent engagement with the class. This is not simply about speaking often: more important is how you listen and respond to your peers.
- I take attendance daily. Absences that are not excused will result in failing participation grades. You may submit written documentation of excused absences before class begins or during my office hours. For the University policy on absences, see <<http://www.ugst.umd.edu/courserelatedpolicies.html>>

- If you miss class for any reason, follow these steps:
 - 1) Send me a brief email before class begins to let me know that you cannot attend.
 - 2) Post a reaction to that day's readings on the course blog. Make-up posts are in addition to your weekly blog posts: they do not count as your post for the week. Post within three days of the class you missed and title it "Make-up post." Failing to submit make-up posts will result in lower or failing grades for participation and blog performance.
 - 3) Obtain notes. Find a partner and exchange contact information early in the semester to help with this.
- Turn off phones and computers completely (not to vibrate or silent) and leave them in your bag. Some students may require an exception: see me if this is the case.
- 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."
- If you have a disability that requires accommodation, please let me know during the first two weeks of class.
- If there are hardships that will affect your course performance, I encourage you to let me know early in the semester. We can discuss strategies for succeeding.
- For further information on course policies and related resources, see <<http://www.ugst.umd.edu/courserelatedpolicies.html>>

Course schedule:

Wednesday, January 24

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

Sunday, January 28

- Set up your Wordpress account
- Blog post due by midnight

Monday, January 29

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

Wednesday, January 31

- *The Spanish Tragedy*: Act 2

Sunday, February 4

- Blog post due by midnight

Monday, February 5

- *The Spanish Tragedy*: Act 3

Wednesday, February 7

- *The Spanish Tragedy*: Act 4 and "The Additions"

Sunday, February 11

- Blog post due by midnight

Monday, February 12

- *The Shoemaker's Holiday*

Wednesday, February 14

- *The Shoemaker's Holiday* (continued)
- Jonathan Gil Harris, Introduction to the Oxford edition

Sunday, February 18

- No blog post due this week. Instead, see the Wikipedia assignment prompt and: 1) Create a Wikipedia account and register with our course module; 2) Read the pdfs on Editing and Evaluating Wikipedia; 3) Complete the training on "Wikipedia Essentials" and "Editing Basics."

Monday, February 19

- Wikipedia workshop. Come to class up to date on the module and prepared to discuss questions including: Who might read an article on a play by Thomas Dekker, and why? Why would the article on *The Shoemaker's Holiday* need updating? What can we do to improve it? What kind of expertise do we need?

Wednesday, February 21

- *The Shoemaker's Holiday* (continued)
- Henry Turner, "Corporate Life in Thomas Dekker's *The Shoemaker's Holiday*" (course reserves)
- Natasha Korda, "'The Sign of the Last': Gender, Material Culture, and Artisanal Nostalgia in *The Shoemaker's Holiday*" (course reserves)
- Stay up to date with Wikipedia training

Sunday, February 25

- Wikipedia team proposals due: team representatives should them on the blog by midnight

Monday, February 26

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

Wednesday, February 28

- Donne: "The Bait," "The Good Morrow," "The Flea," "Valediction Forbidding Mourning" (ELMS)

- 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" (ELMS)
- Stay up to date with Wikipedia training
- Begin drafting Wikipedia contributions

Sunday, March 4

- Blog post due by midnight

Monday, March 5

- *Tragedy of Mariam*
- First draft of Wikipedia contributions due

Wednesday, March 7

- *Tragedy of Mariam* (continued)

Sunday, March 11

- No blog post: concentrate on your Wikipedia assignment

Monday, March 12

- *Tragedy of Mariam* (continued)
- Wikipedia peer review and copyediting due

Wednesday, March 14

- Isabella Whitney: "The Manner of Her Will" (ELMS)
- Wikipedia assignment check-in

-- Spring Break! --

Sunday, March 25

- Blog post due by midnight

Monday, March 26

- *Edward II*

Wednesday, March 28

- *Edward II* (continued)
- Final day to make Wikipedia edits

Sunday, April 1

- Wikipedia reflection essay due: post on the blog by midnight

Monday, April 2

- *Edward II* (continued)
- Emma Katherine Atwood, "'All Places Are Alike': Marlowe's *Edward II* and English Spatial Imagination" (course reserves)

Wednesday, April 4

- *Hamlet*

Sunday, April 8

- Blog post due by midnight

Monday, April 9

- *Hamlet* (continued)

Wednesday, April 11

- *Hamlet* (continued)
- Seth Lerer, "Hamlet's Poem to Ophelia and the Theater of the Letter" (course reserves)
- Deadline to meet with me to discuss your paper topic

Sunday, April 15

- Paper hypothesis due: post on the blog by midnight

Monday, April 16

- *Eastward Ho!*

Wednesday, April 18

- *Eastward Ho!* (continued)

Monday, April 23

- *Eastward Ho!* (continued)
- W. David Kay, "Parodic Wit and Social Satire in Chapman, Jonson, and Marston's *Eastward Ho!*" (course reserves)

Wednesday, April 25

- Writing workshop: bring a copy of your draft

Sunday, April 29

- Blog post due by midnight

Monday, April 30

- *Tis Pity*

Wednesday, May 2

- *Tis Pity* (continued)

Sunday, May 6

- No blog post: papers due by midnight

Monday, May 7

- *Tis Pity* (continued)

Wednesday, May 9

- Review

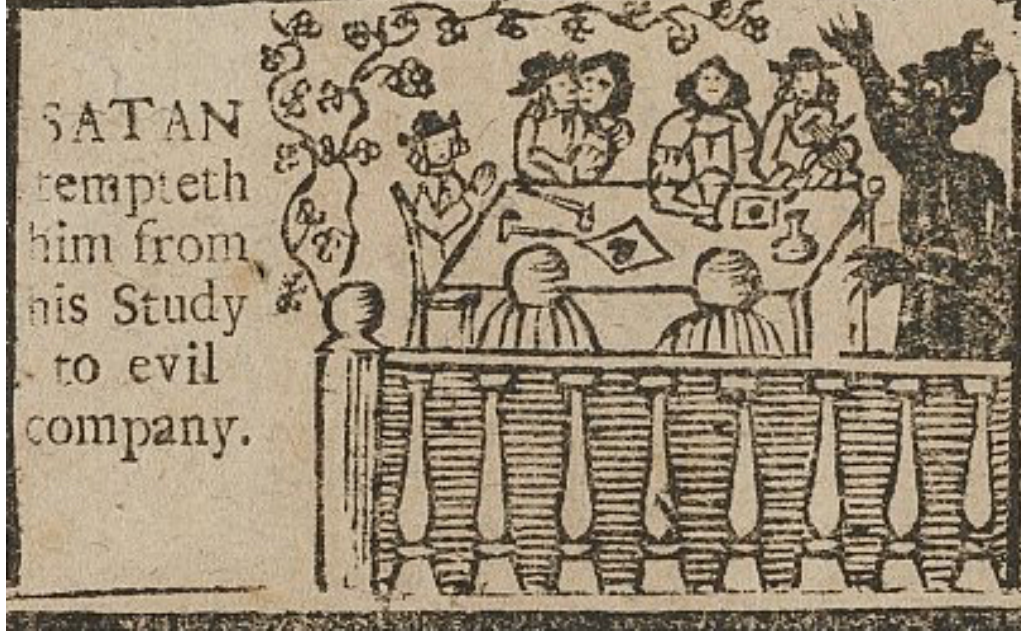
Tuesday, May 15 at 1:30 PM in our regular classroom

- Final Exam: open-book



The Virtu-
ous Student

Now is the Way, and straight is the Gate, that



SATAN
tempteth
him from
his Study
to evil
company.