

Summer 2017

AP/EN 4536 6.0A (SU) *Advanced Elizabethan and Jacobean Drama*

Course Director:

Brian Whittaker

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Course consultation hours: a half hour before and after each class, at the classroom.

Delivery Format:

Lecture

Time:

Lecture: Tuesday and Thursday 7-10pm

Description:

This course should be of interest to English, Theatre, Film, Visual Arts, History and Education majors. Our approach will be interdisciplinary. We shall analyse the play as literature, as theatrical performance, as film and as the hybrid genre of a film of a stage performance. Learning to scan and speak the lines will be a part of this process. Performances and depictions are themselves analyses of the plays and will be compared with literary analysis. We shall explore ways of studying, discussing, performing and teaching drama that take into account theories and practices from antiquity through the Renaissance to the present time. We shall also interpret the plays in relation to traditions of literature, philosophy, history and the visual arts, from antiquity to the renaissance, that were available to the playwrights on the course and to their audience.

The course will focus on a detailed critical analysis of some of the great plays of the English Renaissance, particularly the late Sixteenth and early Seventeenth Centuries. We shall explore the interrelationships among the developments of the genres of city comedy, city tragedy, court comedy, Roman political tragedy, and revenge tragedy during the reigns of Queen Elizabeth I and King James I. (The Latin form of James is Jacobus, hence the adjective Jacobean.) We shall examine the style and structure of the plays in connection with the broader questions of their relationships to earlier and contemporary texts, and to the traditions of contemporary and later performance.

Some of these plays were performed in commercial theatres, some at court, some in schools and some in private homes. Some were performed in theatres open to the sky, others in enclosed theatres with artificial lighting. Some were

written by men, some by women, one by an informer and one by a convicted murderer. Some were written to be performed by men, some by women, some by boys and some by girls. Theatre, film and education students may be particularly interested in the detailed coverage of performance history and film analysis built into our discussions of the plays. We shall consider the contrast between the largely male, financially precarious world of the commercial theatre and the increasingly female, lavishly funded, world of theatrical performance in the royal and aristocratic courts. We shall analyse selected scenes from film versions of plays with a view both to placing each version in the context of film history and to exploring how such technical elements as design, camera angle and editing contribute to the interpretation of the scene. We shall also draw connections between the plays and the political history, the visual arts and the music of the period.

The readings will include all of the Shakespearean plays to be performed at the Stratford Shakespearean Festival in Stratford, Ontario during the current season, namely Romeo and Juliet, Timon of Athens, and Twelfth Night. (web site: stratfordfestival.ca). As the web site shows, the Festival offers tickets with a variety of discounts, as well as special buses from Toronto directly to the theatre. Seeing one or more of these plays in performance would be of great value.

Category:

C

Area:

4.1 or 6

Period:

1

Historical Requirement:

Period 1 (pre -1700)

Requirements:

Seminar Report and preliminary Annotated Bibliography 20%

Written feedback on other students' reports 10%

Class Participation 10%

Major Essay 30%

First In-class Test 15%

Second In-Class Test 15%

The class participation grade will reflect such factors as preparedness and quality of participation.

Reading List:

S.P. Cerasano and Marion Wynne Davies, eds, *Renaissance Drama by Women: Texts and Documents* (Routledge).

Ben Jonson, *Five Plays*, ed. G.A. Wilkes (Oxford University Press).

Katherine Maus, ed., *Four Revenge Tragedies* (Oxford University Press).

Seneca, *Four Tragedies and Octavia*, ed. E.F. Watling (Penguin).

William Shakespeare, *The Complete Works* (also known as *The Oxford Shakespeare*) ed. Stanley Wells, Gary Taylor, et al. (Oxford University Press).

Terence, *Comedies*, trans. Betty Radice (Penguin).

Students should also be familiar with the most recent edition of *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*. This book provides the standard format for essays and other assignments in university English courses.

Playlist: the plays to be studied, in roughly the following order, from the books listed above:

New Comedy or Sex, Money and the City: *Terence's Phormio*; *The Girl from Andros*; Shakespeare's *Taming of the Shrew*, *Merchant of Venice*, *Merry Wives of Windsor*; Jonson's *Bartholomew Fair*.

City Tragedy: Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*; *Timon of Athens*.

Courtly Comedy: Shakespeare's *Much Ado about Nothing*, *As You Like It*, *Twelfth Night*.

Roman Tragedy: the anonymous Roman play *Octavia*; Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*; Mary Sidney's *The Tragedy of Antonie* (in Cerasano); Ben Jonson's *Sejanus*.

Revenge Tragedies: Seneca's *Thyestes*; Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy* (in Maus); Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus*, *Hamlet*; Middleton (or Tourneur) *The Revenger's Tragedy* (in Maus).

Open To:

Yr 3 & 4 Honours