

Lit 434 / 634.001
Fall 2014, EQB 209
T, F: 2:35 – 3:50 PM
Office Hours:
T, F: 12 – 2, and by appointment

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Revenge Drama and City Comedy: Shakespeare's Contemporaries

Satanic bargains, murder, dismemberment, rape, adultery, virginity tests, theft—these are a few of the theatrical devices you will encounter in this introduction to English Renaissance drama. The violence and betrayal of the plays occurring abroad—in Spain, Germany, and Italy—are tempered by the comedies situated in London, where money and sex drive the plot and commerce is both celebrated and criticized. Both genres share a delight in deception—and the great acting upon which a successful con depends. Reading these plays will give you a sense of the rollicking theatrical scene that Shakespeare and his contemporaries created in the half-century preceding the English revolution and the overthrow of the monarchy when the playhouses were shut down.

Objectives

The chief purpose of the course is to help you become better acquainted with the Golden Age of Renaissance drama. Many of you will already be familiar with some of Shakespeare's plays. This course should go some way in filling out your knowledge of this important period's literature. As a side benefit, by reading works that Shakespeare himself probably saw, you will come to a better understanding of his own plays and milieu. You may also discover surprising resonances with later literature and film! (How about Thomas Pynchon and Quentin Tarantino?)

In terms of your writing, the course will focus on four skills: 1) heightening your awareness of how evidence is used in building arguments; 2) improving your ability to analyze and assess the rhetoric of ethical reasoning; 3) understanding the implications for a text of multiple audience interpretations; and 4) increasing your sensitivity to the rhythms and sounds of highly patterned language. Overall, the writing assignments aim to teach you—through practice—how to structure interpretive arguments through close-reading. This is an eminently transferable skill, useful in many areas. Hence, discussions will often be structured around specific scenes and passages. In class, I encourage questions. Asking good questions is a fine art, also transferable. My hope is that by listening to one another and debating, you will learn to frame incisive and worthwhile inquiries.

Requirements

(i.e. failure to deliver on any one of the following means risking failure for the course)

You **MUST** buy the anthology of Renaissance Drama edited by Arthur Kinney (Blackwell, 2005) that I have ordered for you through the university bookstore. You **MUST** bring it to class. I mention this first because it's the most important requirement—crucial to your success in this class. Students who bypass buying the print version of the book end up with (much) worse grades.

Quizzes (15%)

In order to facilitate discussion and keep you caught up on the reading, there will be 8 quotation quizzes, one on each play, administered during the last 15 minutes of the last class devoted to a given play. If you read the assigned work carefully, highlighting the passages we discuss in class, identifying the quotations will be easy. If not, the quizzes will be difficult. *Nota bene*: I will drop your lowest quiz grade.

Presentation (5%)

These presentations (5 – 8 minutes) involve your explaining an important scene or passage from the play we are reading. Your explanation involves answering two questions. (1) What is the scene or speech trying to accomplish? (2) What literary techniques or linguistic strategies are being used to achieve this? Be attentive to poetic aspects of the language (e. g. meter as well as metaphor, simile, personification, anaphora, antithesis, chiasmus, etc.) as well as themes and speech-acts (e. g. persuasion). Do not go over 10 minutes, as this will impinge on my lesson plan and curtail review of other matters.

Short Paper (15%)

You will write on *The Shoemaker's Holiday* and consider how Thomas Dekker “transforms” his source, Thomas Deloney’s prose novella, *The Gentle Craft* (6-8 pages).

Long Paper (20%)

You will write on a play or theme or scene of your choice (10-12 pages). You’re required to consult with me about your topic and to have a 200 word abstract ready to hand in on November 11. The select bibliography appended to this syllabus (with the library call numbers helpfully provided) is designed to help you think through this longer paper.

Alternative Research Project – Presented in the Digital Medium

This topic is open only to students with excellent research and writing skills who would like to contribute to The Map of Early Modern London (mapoflondon.uvic.ca). You can do this in lieu of the final paper, but you must receive special permission from me.

Because we will be doing a place-based reading of Ben Jonson’s *Bartholomew Fair*, much of which occurs in a part of London called Smithfield, we have been asked to contribute an encyclopedia entry on **Smithfield**. It should shed light both on the play and on this important geographical and cultural London location. The play is wonderfully rich in toponyms, most of which have already been extracted (see <http://mapoflondon.uvic.ca/BART2.htm>). Any of the stubs for toponyms identified in those dramatic extracts are fair game so long as we /you do a full-length article on Smithfield. Nearby streets and sites that you might also want to tackle are Chick Lane, Cow Bridge, Pie Corner, Long Lane, Holy Trinity Churchyard, Smithfield Market, and Smithfield Bars. Other possibilities include one of the Inns of Court, Moorfields (mentioned in *Knight of the Burning Pestle*), Guildhall (a setting in *Shoemakers' Holiday*), or a [topics](#) essay on fairs and markets in general.

You are not responsible for the encoding, but you must provide a schematic of how you want your pages to be linked to each other. Hand in a digital copy of the text, Word files (via email attachment), and any images or other resources you want to add. Ask me for advice on how to organize your project. I want to work closely with you on this. Note that writing for the internet is not the same as writing a linear

argumentative essay. Headers, links, images, and short pithy sentences are stylistically desirable on the internet.

Exams **(the mid-term @ 15%, the final @ 20%)**

You can expect a combination of identifications, definitions, short answer questions and essays. If you have read carefully not only the plays but also the assigned secondary reading, taken notes in class, and are prepared to think on your feet, you will do fine.

Participation (10%)

The class will be livelier and more fun if students take risks, jump in, play devil's advocate, and dare to disagree with me or each other. Perfect attendance does not guarantee an A for participation; only regular thoughtful contributions do, along with perfect attendance. Let's suppose you attend every class but never say a word, you will earn no higher than a B. Suppose you say interesting things but are absent more than a couple of times, you will earn no higher than a B. If you're silent and absent more than a few times, you will earn a C. The point is that I take attendance for granted and look for the kind of participation that enhances our learning community; it's not a matter of how many words come tumbling out of your mouth so much as offering interpretations and opinions that help us think and learn about the plays. But if you're shy or worried that a question is trivial or off-topic, feel free at any time to turn in a slip of paper on which you ask a question about something you don't understand or find confusing. This will help me help you. I hope it will also encourage you to ask questions *viva voce*.

Penalties

Attendance

If you miss a class, you miss the explanation of an assignment, a quiz, analysis of a key scene, or the opportunity to help a classmate. You are responsible for what goes on in class, whether you are present or not, so, if you are absent, seek out another student for an explanation of what was covered that day. Do not expect me to respond to queries about what you missed over e-mail or after class; instead, come to my office hours or make a special appointment. More than three unexcused absences will have a terrible effect on your grade. **Six absences will be grounds for failure.**

Late Papers

Documented medical emergencies are your best excuse for turning in work late. Otherwise, your grade will go down a letter per week.

Plagiarism

If another's ideas or words are helpful to you in your writing for this class, give credit in notes or a "works consulted" list. The unacknowledged use of another person's language or thoughts in your writing is a serious offense against the university's commitment to open exploration and trust. Should you be confused about this, please consult the university's Academic Integrity Code. Copies of the Code are available from the Registrar's Office or can be downloaded at <http://www.american.edu/academics/integrity/code.cfm>.

The Code contains the university's policies about academic dishonesty and plagiarism. **These include, but are not limited to, plagiarism, cheating on exams, multiple submissions, and unauthorized collaboration.** If you have any questions about whether some action may violate these standards, talk to me beforehand. Standards of academic integrity are strictly observed in this class, and violations will be reported to the authorities. Expect no mercy if I catch you.

If you are tempted to cut corners because you're afraid to ask for an extension and are under the gun for some reason, think again and ask for the extension. If you turn in a paper on Friday that was due Tuesday, I will mark you down half a grade—from a B+ to a B, say, a far better outcome than finding yourself branded as dishonest on your transcript.

Bonuses

Rewrites

I will grant a rewrite of the first paper if you have received a C or lower and only under the following conditions—that you talk to me about your revision so that we agree about how you will respond to my comments. When you turn in your revision (at a mutually agreed upon date), you must include **the original paper with my penciled marginalia and the paper-clipped final comment**. I will average the grades of the two papers.

Make-ups

Administering make-up tests is an inconvenience, logistically difficult to arrange and interfering with office hours, committee work, etc. Therefore, there will be **no make-ups on quizzes**—hence, my dropping the lowest quiz grade. However, if you have more than one zero on a quiz, **you may do the following substitute assignment once**: evaluate a Renaissance drama-related web-site of your choice. If you're very sick on the day of the mid-term or final exam and can document your illness, then a make-up for these important tests is possible; but remember that you must initiate the scheduling of the make-up at a mutually agreeable time. Please do not ask for special scheduling because you wish to travel or attend a social function.

Tips

- Bring your book to class and mark the passages we discuss; some will turn up on tests.
- Save my handouts so that you can review them before tests.
- Check Blackboard from time to time—especially the electronic grade book.

If you have a registered disability that will require accommodation, please see me soon.

Schedule*

Aug. 26: Introduction; “On revenge” by Francis Bacon
Homework (hereafter HW): pp. 145-65 (through Act 2).

Aug. 29: Thomas Kyd, *The Spanish Tragedy* (ca. 1587)
Presentation: 1.1 (the Ghost of Andrea) _____
HW: pp. 165-84 (Act 3)

Sept. 2: *The Spanish Tragedy*
Presentation: 3.2.1-52 (Hieronimo's grief) _____
HW: 184-191.

Sept. 5: *The Spanish Tragedy* (in class quotation quiz)
HW: 195-214

[Sept. 8: Last Day to Add / Drop incurring no penalties]

Sept. 9: Christopher Marlowe, *Doctor Faustus* (1592)

Presentation: 1.1.1-64 (Faustus's opening speech) _____
HW: 215-26

Sept. 12: *Doctor Faustus* (in class quotation quiz)
Presentation: 13.68-125 (Faustus's last speech) _____
HW: E-reserves, all of Deloney

Sept. 16: Thomas Deloney, *The Gentle Craft, Part One* (1597)
Paper #1 Instructions distributed
HW: 367-90 (through scene 8)

Sept. 19: Thomas Dekker, *The Shoemakers' Holiday* (1599)
HW: 390-408

Sept. 23: *The Shoemakers' Holiday* (quotation quiz)
HW: 411-40

Sept. 26: John Marston, *The Malcontent* (ca. 1603)
Presentation: the Induction (ll. 1-163) _____
HW: 440-47

Sept. 30: *The Malcontent*
Presentation: 3.3 _____
Paper #1 due
HW: 447-65

Oct. 3: *The Malcontent* (quotation quiz)
HW: Tanya Pollard, "Tragedy and Revenge" in *The Cambridge Companion to English Renaissance Tragedy*, chapter 5 (pp. 58-73) on E-reserves (Bb).

Oct. 7: **Mid-Term Exam**
HW: 523-38.

FALL BREAK

Oct. 14: Francis Beaumont, *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*
Paper #2 Instructions distributed.
Presentation: Induction _____
HW: 539-56

Oct. 17: *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*
Presentation: 3. 512-631 (Merrythought's music) _____
HW: 556-69
[Last Day to Drop a Course or Change a Grade Option]

Oct. 21: *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* (quotation quiz)
Presentation: 5.327-78 (Rafe's final speech) _____
HW: 591-611 (through 2.2)

Oct. 24: Thomas Middleton, *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside* (ca. 1613)
Presentation: 1.2.12-57 (Allwit's opening speech) _____

HW: 611-26

Oct. 28: *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside*

Presentation: 3.2.1-221 (the christening scene) _____

HW: 626-36

Oct. 31: *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside* (quotation quiz)

HW: 701-722

Nov. 4: Ben Jonson, *Bartholomew Fair* (1614)

Presentation: Induction (1-205) _____

HW: 723-37 (through 3.3)

Nov. 7: *Bartholomew Fair*

Presentation: 3.3 (Justice Overdo) _____

HW: 737-59

Nov. 11: *Bartholomew Fair*

Abstract of Paper #2 due

Presentation: 3.6 (Zeal-of-the-Land Busy) _____

HW: 759-73

Nov. 14: *Bartholomew Fair* (quotation quiz)

Presentation: 5.4. 124-380 (the puppet show) _____

HW: 787-806 (Acts 1 and 2)

Nov. 18: Thomas Middleton and William Rowley, *The Changeling* (1622)

Presentation: 2.2.57-155 (a deadly exchange) _____

HW: 806-24 (Acts 3 and 4)

Nov. 21: *The Changeling*

Due: Annotated Bibliography (for LIT 634 students)

HW: 824-32 (Act 5)

Nov. 25: *The Changeling* (quotation quiz)

THANKSGIVING

Dec. 2: Final Paper Presentations

Dec. 5: Wrap-up and Exam Review

Final Paper Due

Dec. 9: Final Exam 2:35 to 5:05

***This schedule may change. Please read the board every day and check Blackboard so that changes do not catch you by surprise.**

Select Bibliography

- Allman, Eileen. *Jacobean Revenge Tragedy and the Politics of Virtue* (1999) #PR678.R45 A55 1
 Bowers, Fredson Thayer. *Elizabethan Revenge Tragedy, 1587-1642* (1940 /1959) #PR658.T7 B6
 Camoin, Francois Andre. *The Revenge Convention in Tourneur, Webster, and Middleton*. #PR658.R45
 C3 1972
- Clare, Janet. *Revenge Tragedies of the Renaissance*. (2006) #PR1263.C53 2006
 Griswold, Wendy. *Renaissance Revivals: Revenge Tragedy and City Comedy in the London
 theater, 1576-1980*. #P4596.L6 G78 1986
- Hallett, Charles A. and Elaine S. Hallett, *The Revenger's Madness: A Study of Revenge Tragedy Motifs*.
 (1980) #PR658.R45 R48 2001
- Howard, Jean. *Theatre of a City: The Places of London Comedy, 1598-1642*. #PN 2596.L6 H597 2007
 Kerrigan, John. *Revenge Tragedy: Aeschylus to Armageddon*. #PN56.R48 K47 1996
 Leinwand, Theodore B. *City Staged: Jacobean Comedy, 1603-1613*. (1986) #PR658. C6 L44
 McMahon, Chris. *Family and the State in Early Modern Revenge Drama: Economies of Vengeance*.
 #PR658.R45 M35 2012
- Mehl, Dieter, Angela Stock, eds. *Plotting Early Modern London: New Essays on Jacobean City Comedy*.
 #PR678.L58 P58 2004
- Rist, Thomas. *Revenge Tragedy and the Drama of Commemoration in Reforming England*.
 #PR658.R45 R57 2008
- Sanders, Julie. *The Cultural Geography of Early Modern Drama, 1620-1650* #PR658.L35 S36 2011
 Simkin, Stevie, ed. *Revenge Tragedy: Contemporary Critical Essays* #PR658.R45 R48 2001
 Smith, Emma and Garrett A. Sullivan, Jr. *The Cambridge Companion to English Renaissance Tragedy*.
 #PR658.T7 C36 2010
- Wong, Katrine K. "A Dramaturgical Study of Merrythought's Songs in *The Knight of the Burning
 Pestle*." *Early Theatre* 12.2 (2009): 91-116.
- Woodbridge, Linda. *English Revenge Drama: Money, Resistance, Equality*. #PR658.R45 W66 2010
 Zucker, Adam. *The Place of Wit in Early Modern English Comedy*. #PR658.C6 Z83 201

Graduate / Honors Supplement for LIT 634

We will meet every two or three weeks in my office (schedule to be arranged at mutually convenient times) to discuss the following articles, about which you will have written a summary and response, to be turned in at the time of the meeting.

Meeting #1:

- Colón Semenza, Gregory M. "The Spanish Tragedy and Metatheatre" in *The Cambridge
 Companion to English Renaissance Tragedy*, chapter 11, on E-reserves.
 Dollimore, Jonathan. "Doctor Faustus (1589-92) Subversion and Transgression" in *Radical Tragedy:
 Religion, Ideology and Power in the Drama of Shakespeare and his Contemporaries* (1986), on
 E-reserves

Meeting #2:

- Hutson, Lorna. "Rethinking 'the Spectacle of the Scaffold': Juridical Epistemologies and English
 Revenge Drama." *Representations* 89 (2005): 30-58.
 Woodbridge, Linda. *English Revenge Drama: Money, Resistance, Equality* (2010), pp. 29-42

Meeting #3:

Osborne, Laurie E. "Female Audiences and Female Authority in *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*." *Exemplaria* 3.2 (1991): 491-517.

Smith, Joshua S. "Reading Between the Acts: Satire and the Interludes in *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*." *Studies in Philology* 109.4 (2012): 474-95.

Meeting #4:

Alwes, Derek B. "The Secular Morality of Middleton's City Comedies." *Comparative Drama* 42.2 (2008): 101-119.

Miller, Shannon. "Consuming Mothers/Consuming Merchants: The Carnavalesque Economy of Jacobean City Comedy," *Modern Language Studies* 26.2-3 (1996): 73-95.

Meeting #5:

Dolan, Frances E. "Re-reading Rape in *The Changeling*." *JEMCS* 11.1 (2011): 4-29.

McMullen, Gordon. "*The Changeling* and the Dynamics of Ugliness" in *The Cambridge Companion to English Renaissance Drama*, chapter 17, on E-reserves.

Your first and second papers will be 5-7 pages longer than those of the 432 students and will involve research. Your annotated bibliography (relating to your final paper) will be due Friday, Nov. 21, in class.

The grade breakdown for you will be as follows: Quizzes 10%; Midterm 10%; Final Exam 10%; Responses to the Criticism 10%; Annotated Bibliography 5%; Final Paper 25%. (The short paper, participation, and presentation will be 15%, 10% and 5% respectively, as for LIT 434 students.)