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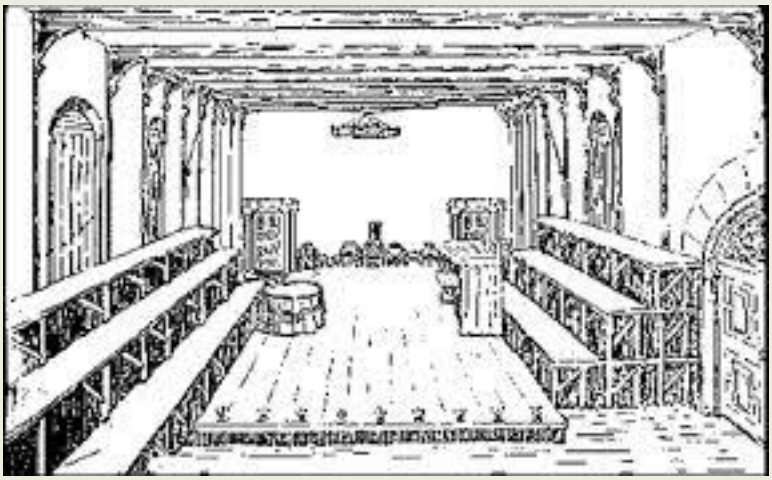
Office Hours: M 10:30-11:30 and by appointment
English 534 M 12-2:50 AH 3150
Spring 2014

English 534: Historicizing Shakespeare and the Blackfriars Theater



1/27: *Titus Andronicus*; Secondary Reading, "Early Modern Theories of Tragedy" (Blackboard).

2/3: *The Taming of the Shrew; The Taming of a Shrew* (Blackboard); Secondary Reading: *A Homily of the State of Matrimony*.

2/10: *Romeo and Juliet*; Secondary Reading: "The Correspondence of the Bagot Family."

2/17: *A Midsummer Night's Dream*; Secondary Reading, "Early Modern Theories of Comedy" (Blackboard); William Harrison, "Of Degrees of People," and excerpt from Stow on dearth.

24: *Merchant of Venice*; Secondary Reading, excerpts from William Thomas and Thomas Coryate," section on finance.

3/3: *Richard II*; Secondary Reading, chapter 2, *A Short History*, excerpt from Richard II's parliamentary indictment (Blackboard); **Essay 1 Due**

3/10: *I and II Henry IV*; Secondary Reading, David Kastan, "'Proud Majesty Made a Subject': Shakespeare and the Spectacle of Rule," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 37 (1986): 459-475.

3/16: class trip to see *The Winter's Tale*, Old Globe Theater, 2 p.m.

3/17: *As You Like It*; TBA

3/24: *Macbeth;* Secondary Reading, excerpts from Holinshed, Simon Forman, "The Jacobean Theory of Kingship," and "Resistance in Theory." Read also the section on "Government" in *Short History*.

3/1-4/5: **Chavez Day-Spring Break**

4/7: *Measure for Measure*; Secondary Reading: excerpts on equity (Blackboard)

4/14: *King Lear*; read both Quarto and Folio versions

21-25: *King Lear*

28-5/2: *The Winter's Tale*; Secondary Reading, the summary of Anne Boleyn's trial

5/5-9 *The Tempest*; Secondary Reading, excerpts from Montaigne, *Of Cannibals* and de las Casas, "Letter to Philip"

Essay 2 due Monday, May 12 by 5 p.m. This essay **must** be e-mailed to me.

Texts

Peter Herman, *A Short History of Early Modern England*.

William Shakespeare, *The Norton Shakespeare*, volume 1, ed. Stephen Greenblatt et al.,

------, *The Taming of the Shrew*, ed. Frances E. Dolan.

------, *Romeo and Juliet*, ed. Dympna Callaghan.

------, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, ed. Gail Kern Paster and Skiles Howard.

------, *The Merchant of Venice*, ed. Lindsay Kaplan.

------, *As You Like It*, ed. Pamela Brown and Jean E. Howard.

------*, Macbeth*, ed. William Carroll.

------, *Measure for Measure*, ed. Karen Raber and Ivo Kamps.

------*, King Lear*, ed. Stephen Orgel (Penguin).

------, *King Lear: The 1608 Quarto and 1623 Folio Texts*, ed. Stephen Orgel (Penguin),

------, *The Winter's Tale*, ed. Maro DiGangi.

------*, The Tempest*, ed. Gerald Graff and James Phelan.

All secondary readings are from the Texts and Contexts editions unless otherwise noted, and those will be available on Blackboard.

Class Mission Statement

This class has two purposes. The first is to investigate the relationship between Shakespeare's plays and some of the relevant contexts, otherwise known as "historicizing" the plays. The assumption is that Shakespeare did not write in a vacuum, and that his plays are more profitably read by looking at what Shakespeare could assume his audience knew before entering the theater. In all likelihood, since both church attendance on Sunday and reading from the Book of Homilies were both mandatory, most people had heard the Homily on Matrimony at least once in their lives before paying sixpence to see Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew*. As we will see, Shakespeare's comedy looks very different when we put the two texts together. We will also be looking at some of the seemingly dull editorial issues (one critic calls this approach "The New Boredom") involved with the publication of Shakespeare's plays (which to be clear, Shakespeare never authorized).

The second purpose is more experimental: the class will collectively write a substantive article on Blackfriars Theater for the *Map of Early Modern London* (http://mapoflondon.uvic.ca) using Blackboard's wiki function. We will examine this theater's ecclesiastical history, its place in London, which companies used it, who attended, and generally situate Blackfriars in the world of early modern England. The point is to give students first-hand experience in actual research. We will use both secondary sources (i.e., books and articles published on Blackfriars) and primary sources (i.e., books published in the early modern period as well as manuscripts). The end product will be published on the *Map of Early Modern London* site, and everyone will be credited.

As the class is about three hours long, we will spend the first two hours on the plays, and the remaining time talking about and editing the article.

Evaluation

- Blackboard posts: 15%
- Essay 1: 25%
- Essay 2: 30%
- Contribution to Blackfriars article: 30%

Evaluation will be in four parts. First, Blackboard posts: each week, by 8 pm. Sunday night, everyone will post a comment on the Blackboard discussion board about that week's reading. The comment can be about anything that strikes your fancy: something about the reading you don't understand, something about the reading that strikes you as particularly interesting, a reaction to something one of your colleagues wrote. Really, anything that demonstrates both intelligence and that you have done the reading. Next, two essays. The first, a shorter one (5-7 pages) that will connect the themes of a play with one of the various contexts we will be looking at. The second, longer (10 pages), will be a research paper that uses both primary and secondary sources. Please note that this paper is due after the class has finished, and that you need to e-mail me the paper. This requirement is for two reasons: 1.) ease of getting the paper to me; and 2.), I will grade the paper electronically, and then send it back to you quickly. Finally, your contribution to the Blackfriars article counts for 30% of your grade.

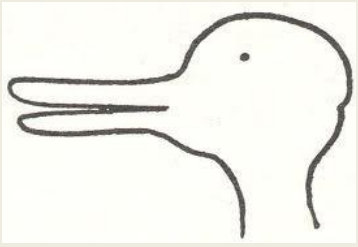
Please also note:

- There is no opportunity for extra-credit.
- Grades may be explained, but are not negotiable.

Classroom Etiquette

Unless I indicate otherwise, please turn off all electronica while in class. If you can turn it on, it goes off, and that includes laptops. The reason for banning the use of these devices is not my technophobia, but because "multitasking" is a myth, as demonstrated in a March 25, 2008 article in the *New York Times* summarizing recent studies of productivity in business settings. Researchers found that after responding to email or text messages, it took people *more than 15 minutes* to re-focus on the "serious mental tasks" they had been performing before the interruption. Other research has shown that when people attempt to perform two tasks at once (e.g., following what's happening in class while scanning your Facebook or Tumblr page), the brain literally *cannot do it*. One has to give up one of

the tasks in order to effectively accomplish the other. For example, look at the following illustration:



Is this a duck? Or a rabbit? You can see only one at a time; you cannot see both simultaneously. Hidden behind all the hype about multi-tasking is this sad truth: *it makes you slower and dumber*. For this reason alone you should seek to avoid the problem of divided attention when you are in class (or behind the wheel of a car; according to a recent study, texting while driving increases the chances of a collision by 700%).

But there is another reason: technology often causes us to lose our senses when it comes to norms of polite behavior and as a result, perfectly lovely people become unbelievably rude, self-centered, and offensive. Once more, the problem is not my supposed fear of technology, but behavior that gets in the way of learning. Studies and much anecdotal evidence have shown that a flashing screen will distract everyone around you. Surfing the web or checking your Twitter account thus not only significantly diminishes your ability to learn, it diminishes everyone else's too.

E-mail Etiquette

While I usually answer e-mails quickly, please wait 48 hours before resending your message. Also, please do not send messages asking questions about issues that are in the syllabus (e.g., essay due dates), and please observe conventional spelling, grammar, and syntax. Writing something along the lines of "yo prof whassup wht hppnd n class 2day anythng important?" will not get an answer.

Attendance and Late-Paper Policy

You have three unexcused absences to play around with. Any more without a really, really good explanation (i.e. medical and very little else) and you will be asked to drop the course. And even with a good explanation, if you miss more than three classes, you really should drop the course. Please also note that arriving significantly late or leaving early without prior permission will count as an absence. One further point: because this class meets only once a week, it is hard to maintain momentum and a sense of being connected to what is going on. Missing one class is like missing an entire week of school, so attendance really is important.

As for late papers, I do not accept them. Period. Next to no exceptions (e.g., major surgery and very little else).

Computers

Since SDSU has graciously provided computer facilities for everyone, the old excuse

of "My dog ate my paper" has been replaced with "My computer crashed" or "My computer ate the disk" or some such thing. Therefore, as you are writing, *always* save your file on some sort of storage device as frequently as possible (every paragraph or so). In addition, make back-up copies of your final product, whether on a flash drive or the cloud is irrelevant, as well as always keep a hard (printed) copy of your writing. *Never* hand in your only copy. Be forewarned that computer failure does not constitute a viable excuse for a late paper.

Electronic Submission of Papers

Unless otherwise noted, if you submit your paper via e-mail, I *must* receive it prior to 8 p.m. of the night before the paper is due. Do not assume I have received the paper until I send an acknowledgement.

Blackboard

This course will utilize Blackboard for posting grades and other class-related material (e.g., the syllabus, various handouts, the Blackfriars article wiki). Please ensure that SDSU has your correct e-mail address and that you check it regularly, since that is how class announcements and professor-student communications will be handled.

Nota Bene 1: I *do not* re-arrange examinations and paper deadlines to accommodate anyone's vacation plans.

Nota Bene 2: Like the weather, syllabi can be notoriously unpredictable, especially given that the goals of this class are somewhat experimental, and although I will strive to stick to it as closely as possible, be forewarned that there may very well be some slippage, depending on how quickly or slowly we move, and whether we need to spend more time on the Blackfriars article.

Nota Bene 3: All assignments are due at the beginning of class, which I define as the first fifteen minutes. To pass the course, you must hand in all assignments.

Nota Bene 4: Should you need to miss class or an essay due to an athletic event, you must let me know by **September 12.** Telling me the week before that your coach has just told you that you have a competition is not acceptable, and will not result in any accommodation.

Nota Bene 5: Plagiarism

Please note that the rules have changed concerning plagiarism. According to the CSU Chancellor's Office, all instances of academic dishonesty *must* be reported to the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities. Be advised that any instance of plagiarism will be punished to the utmost degree, and failing this course is the least you may expect. Furthermore, if I suspect that a paper is not your work (if, for

example, there is a radical difference in style, grammar, and content between class work and the paper), I reserve the right to question you further on it, either orally or in writing, or both, to see rough drafts, and to take whatever means I deem necessary and reasonable to ascertain the paper's origin. Be also advised that it is not necessary for me to produce a smoking gun to prove plagiarism.

The following constitutes plagiarism:

I—Submitting essays, or portions of essays, written by other people as one's own. This includes cut-and-pasting from websites without attribution.

II—Failing to acknowledge, through proper footnotes and bibliographical entries, the source or sources of ideas essentially not one's own.

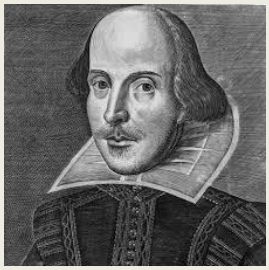
III—Failing to indicate paraphrases or ideas or verbatim expressions not one's own through proper use of quotation and footnotes.

IV—Submitting an essay for one course to a second course without having sought prior permission from both instructors.

Plagiarism and the Web

Unhappily, the web has become not only a source of "information," but also of papers that students can download, sometimes for a fee, sometimes not. The temptation to plagiarize is now that much greater, and so, therefore, must our vigilance. *Consequently, be advised that downloading a paper, or cut and pasting from a website without due attribution, constitutes plagiarism under definition I above*.

In sum, if you did not write it and you hand it in under your name, you have committed plagiarism. No ifs, ands, or buts.

If there is any doubt in your mind concerning plagiarism, consult me *before* you hand in your paper. Afterwards is too late.

Your remaining in this class constitutes acceptance of these conditions.