

Dr. Kathryn Jacobs
email: kathryn.jacobs@tamuc.edu
phone: 903 366 9130
office hours: 10:00 – 11:30 MW
3:00 – 4:00 MW

English 697: Early Modern Drama

Syllabus: Fall 2013

Week 1: August 25 – 31

Kyd: The Spanish Tragedy

Week 2: September 1– 7

Marlowe: The Jew of Malta

Week 3: September 8 – 14

Marlowe: Dr. Faustus, 1616 Version (longer second version)

Week 4: September 15 – 21

Marlowe: Edward II

Week 5: September 22 – 28

Exam #1.
Historical Notes Due on Passage from Dr. Faustus.

Week 6: September 29 – October 5

Jonson: Volpone

Week 7: October 6 – 12

Jonson: Alchemist

Week 8: October 13 – 19

Middleton: The Changeling

Week 9: October 20 – 26

Beaumont: Knight of the Burning Pestle

Week 10: October 27 – November 2

Tourneur:* Revenger's Tragedy (authorship uncertain)

Week 11: November 3– 9

Paper Proposal
Dekker and Middleton:* The Roaring Girl (authorship uncertain)

Week 12: November 10 – 16

Exam #2
Historical Notes Due on Passage from The Alchemist

Week 13: November 17 – 23

Webster: The Duchess of Malfi

Week 14: November 24 – 30

Beaumont and Fletcher: A King and No King

Week 15: December 1– 7

Ford: 'Tis Pity She's a Whore
Turn in Research Paper.

Week 16: December 8 – 14

Exam #3. Congreve: Way of the World.
(Read this play for Comparison for comparison purposes.)

* Extra Credit Play: Chapman: Bussy D'Ambois (see me if you are interested in this option. Alternatively, this play is also available to those who wish to analyze it in their research paper).

Course Description: Early Modern Drama
Fall 2013: Dr. Kathryn Jacobs

Text: Gutenberg Project (online).

One of the most wonderful things about the internet today is the availability of free texts – and the Gutenberg Project is at the heart of the shift towards open information movement. Gutenberg has its limitations of course; for instance, it is subject to modern copyright law, and so includes no footnotes or endnotes more recent than (at most) the early 1920s. For the most part then, the texts you read for this class will be unaccompanied by the explication standard in undergraduate texts. On the other hand, as graduate students you are now largely beyond the limitations of pre-selected crutches. And in an online class, it is up to you whether you wish to print the texts, or access them online.

Bear in mind however that you are not alone. Most of you are not experts in Early Modern Drama, and even the best of you may occasionally be in need of explication. Bear mind therefore that the Oxford English Dictionary is available on line through the Texas A & M – C library, and that the OED allows you to look up the meanings current in the 16th and 17th century. When you need help, just look up the word and scan for examples circa 1600.

Occasionally even the OED may not be enough – and here is where you show yourselves graduate students. Show me that you have the research skills capable of supplementing a text with the historical and social information available to your author. Be selective when choosing your sources. For instance, Wikipedia is a good place to start, but don't STOP there. Check the citations they include, etc.

For teachers the Gutenberg Project has an additional advantage; neither you or your students are limited to the editorial decisions of the only two editors whose collections were still in print (as my own professors were limited, when they taught me). *You* decide which plays to include, and what secondary texts (if any) would be helpful. In short, the world is your oyster; enjoy!

Course Objectives

Welcome to Early Modern Drama. Drama is (as most of you know) a supremely populist art form composed entirely of dialogue. To this extent it is (like the novel) an inherently social art form. To survive at all then, drama had to appeal to a wide spectrum of urban society: apprentices, merchants and merchants' wives, gentry, prostitutes and transients. In many ways it was even more populist than the novel (the dominant social/verbal art form of the nineteenth century). To enjoy a novel after all it was necessary to read. To enjoy a play however, it was only necessary to pay one penny, stand in “The Pit,” and cheer or boo accordingly.

Most student today (even graduate students) have read very little drama in this period, apart from Shakespeare. And yet this period was the heyday of dramatic literature: had Shakespeare never existed, Renaissance drama (or Early Modern, or Elizabethan and Jacobean drama) would still be considered the high point of the genre. Unlike 20th and 21st century drama however, poetry was an integral part of early modern drama. This does not mean that the plays were written entirely poetry. On the contrary, clowns and merchants spoke predominantly in prose. Modern readers however often fail to notice whether a speaker is using blank verse or prose – whereas this is a critical social nuance in the 16th and 17th century.

Because modern students have been exposed to so little Renaissance drama, relatively speaking, the preeminent goal of this class will simply be to expose you to a wide variety of plays and forms, while simultaneously asking you to read them as carefully and knowledgeably as possible. In general then, you will read one play a week. On exam weeks you will be asked to do historical and social research in passages which are hard to understand without that background (this information will then be shared with the class as a whole). Finally, students will be asked to write an original paper on play (or plays) of their choice. Students should feel free to link these papers to some other research interest outside of the period, as long as the focus of the paper must be early modern.

Student Learning Outcomes

1. Student will be able to master the literary diction specific to Renaissance Dramatic texts.
2. Students will be able to analyze the historical, scientific and ethical assumptions inherent in the the Renaissance world view: assumptions no longer current today.
3. Students will be able to produce a sophisticated literary argument that takes into account the research current in the field. Students will demonstrate this by producing a comprehensive bibliography, and by demonstrating what their argument contributes to the body of knowledge.

Grading Criteria:

Class Discussion	15%
Historical Notes #1	10%
Historical Notes #2	10%
Exam #1	15%
Exam #2	15%
Exam #3	15%
Research Paper:	20%

Grading Criteria, Expanded:

Class Discussion: This is a graduate class, so thoughtful, developed ideas are a must. Show me 1) that you can rebut or explicate or defend the ideas of those who wrote before you, 2) that you are capable of explaining your ideas in detail, and (at least occasionally) in paragraph form, and 3) that you know that text *well*. It is okay to compliment someone who wrote before you – but **DO NOT STOP THERE**; add significantly to any idea you single out. Class discussions should be challenging – exciting. Friendly back and forth is fine – but it is not the goal, and not enough.

All students are expected to make a meaningful contribute to class discussion at least **twice a week** – and yes, I WILL keep track. To be specific: I expect everyone to make

- 1) at least one substantial contribution between Sunday and Wednesday morning of each week. I expect
- 2) a second substantial contribution between Wednesday afternoon and Saturday evening (before midnight) of each week.
- 3) Finally, contributions **must** be on different days; those of you who make one contribution Wednesday morning and another in the same afternoon – even if

both are serious and interesting – will be given only one contribution credit, not two. In short, plan on logging in at least twice a week.

Generally, I will wait until Wednesday at noon to read your contributions, and I will read them again at the end of the week. Generally I will also comment twice a week. At the very least however, I will make comments on what you have said at end of each week. Please plan therefore on checking my comments at least once a week.

Historical Notes: Twice during the course of the semester I will take a passage from Marlowe or Jonson, assign individual lines to each student, and ask you to play professor. Give me any historical background we might need to understand these passages. Feel free to give any social, linguistic or scientific background we might need – but remember, you may NOT focus on the modern age here; the goal is to fill in the reader on any background he or she may need to achieve a more nuanced understanding of your text. All students will be expected to include a brief bibliography. Please note that while grades or comments will be private (sent via email), all the notes contributed will be shared as a class.

Research Paper: Assume you are writing an exciting and innovative conference paper. This is your first serious presentation on the subject however, so you want to write a paper roughly 1/3 longer than you could deliver aloud, and then cut it down to size. Aim in other words for 13 -15 pages. Aim your paper for other teachers, assume we know the play and have read some of the criticism on the subject, and show me exactly how your paper contributes to the body of knowledge available. Remember, this is a research paper. So while you may cite other primary sources, focus on scholarly discourse – peer-reviewed secondary sources. Do not cite encyclopedias, monarch notes, or any other non-peer reviewed sources. There is nothing wrong with reading these sources; they are simply not on the level required here.

Exams: show me that you know the texts well, that you have mulled them over thoughtfully, and that you can compare and contrast them knowledgeably. Exams will include both essays, short essays, and short-answer questions, and will focus on the subjects of class discussion and lectures. No secondary sources are required.

Plagiarism

Instructors in the Department of Literature and Languages do not tolerate plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty (including collusion and selling academic products). Instructors uphold and support the highest academic standards, and students are expected to do likewise.

Penalties for students guilty of academic dishonesty include disciplinary probation, suspension, and expulsion. (Texas A&M University-Commerce Code of Student Conduct 5.b [1,2,3])

Courtesy Statement:

"All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment." (See Student's Guide Handbook, Policies and Procedures, Conduct).

Students with Disabilities:

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

Office of Student Disability Resources and Services

Texas A&M University-Commerce

Gee Library

Room 132

Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835

Fax (903) 468-8148

StudentDisabilityServices@tamuc.edu