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Course Objectives

- To explore an astounding period of English life and drama, that is, the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, called the early modern period in England
- To study selected plays of that period—mainly tragedies—by Marlowe, Jonson, Webster, and Ford, with an emphasis on the work of Shakespeare
- To investigate in these plays, and especially in their characters, issues of race, ethnicity, religion, and gender, as well as other concerns that create or compromise the moral life as it is experienced in the modern world
- To enhance the literary and theatrical study of this dramatic literature by drawing upon complementary or rival perspectives, including the historical, psychological, philosophical, and theological, as well as the always helpful view of the fine arts
- To identify and understand better the personal values each reader or audience member brings to his or her judgment of a play or a character
- To develop analytical, oral, and writing skills
- To strengthen the listening and viewing skills of a practiced audience member at readings and performances

Required Texts

Beckerman, Bernard, ed. Five Plays of the English Renaissance. New York: Penguin, 1993.

Shakespeare, William. Measure for Measure, ed. by S. Nagarajan, 2nd rev. ed. New York: Penguin Putnam, 1998.

_____. The Merchant of Venice, ed. by Kenneth Myrick, 2nd rev. ed. New York: Penguin Putnam, 1998.

_____. Othello, ed. by Alvin Kernan, 2nd rev. ed. New York: Penguin Putnam, 1998.

Note: The Beckerman anthology is out-of- print. The College has acquired a sufficient number of used copies in good condition that will be loaned to the students for the duration of the course. The Shakespeare texts are available in the College Bookstore.

Course Requirements

- Each student will keep an electronic journal of her or his reactions to the readings and videos for the course, writing at least 250 words each week, except for the week of fall break, for a total of 14 responses (two for each play studied). Each response will be e-mailed to student colleagues in the course and to the instructor at any time during a given week but no later than midnight on Saturday. Each response can earn 5 points (one point each for being on time, being at least 250 words long [include a word-count at the end of each response], focussing on a specific moral issue, including a relevant reference to the text, and demonstrating thoughtful consideration) for a total of 70 points. At the end of the semester, on December 10, the entire journal and a 500-word concluding essay (worth 30 points) reflecting on a personal moral position or positions that you have strengthened, questioned, and/or changed through journals written, read, or discussed in class will be compiled and submitted to the instructor in hard (paper) copy form for a grade worth 20% of the final grade.
- After the first class meeting, quizzes will be a feature of most class meetings except September 11 and October 11. Each class member will sign-up for a class meeting on which to serve as “quizmeister.” The quizmeister will prepare, administer, and grade a five-question quiz on the assigned reading for the day and, no later than the next class meeting, submit to the course instructor a copy of the quiz questions and correct answers, the list of quiz scores, and the graded quiz sheets. Quiz questions may be posed in a variety of forms: identification, multiple-choice, true-or-false, fill-in-the-blank, or short-answer. They may be projected on a screen for the quiz administration, read aloud to the class, or duplicated and distributed to the class. The average of quiz scores will count as 20% of each student’s final grade, so quizmeisters are expected to prepare testing instruments that are substantive and fair and to administer and grade them responsibly.
- A mid-term examination on October 11 will be worth 20% of the final grade. There will be no final examination.
- A research paper dealing with a moral issue in a play studied for the course will be due on November 29. Each student will identify at least three critical essays addressing the issue and will integrate these essays with her or his own perspective. The citation (in MLA style, as it will appear on the works-cited page of the finished draft of the research paper) and a brief summary (100 words) of one critical essay will be due on September 20, a second on October 18, and a third on November 15. The ultimate draft will coherently present these three points of view, demonstrating the student's understanding of each argument and the relationships among the three arguments, and then take a position on them, asserting and supporting the student's own approach to the criticism and the play. It will include appropriate documentation in the MLA style. The final paper will be 8-10 word-processed, double-spaced pages in length, including documentation, and will count as 20% of the final grade.

Academic Honesty

Students in this course should refer to the statement on academic honesty at Moravian College in the current *Student Handbook*. It is also available online at <http://www.moravian.edu/StudentLife/handbook/academic2.htm>

Students must retain copies of all written work submitted to the instructor, as well as all notes, drafts, and materials used in preparing assignments. These are to be made available for inspection by the instructor at any time.

Questions about appropriate collaboration, proper documentation, and other honesty issues can be confusing. If in doubt, ask the instructor.

N.B.

- This syllabus, including the schedule of readings and written assignments that follows, is subject to change.
- To be successful, students should expect to work at least six hours per week outside of class preparing for this class.
- Students with disabilities who believe that they may need accommodations in this class are encouraged to contact the Learning Services Office as soon as possible to enhance the likelihood that such accommodations are implemented in a timely fashion.

Schedule of Readings and Written Assignments

Aug.	28	Introduction to the course
	30	Christopher Marlowe, <i>Doctor Faustus</i> , Acts I-II
Sept.	04	<i>Faustus</i> , Acts III-IV
	06	<i>Faustus</i> , Act V and Appendix
	11	Lecture by Dean James V. Skalnik on the historical context of the plays
	13	William Shakespeare, <i>The Merchant of Venice</i> , Acts I-II
	18	<i>Merchant</i> , Acts III-IV
	20	<i>Merchant</i> , Act V; summary of first critical essay due
	25	William Shakespeare, <i>Othello</i> , Acts I-II
	27	<i>Othello</i> , Act III
Oct.	02	<i>Othello</i> , Act IV
	04	<i>Othello</i> , Act V
	11	Mid-term examination
	16	William Shakespeare, <i>Measure for Measure</i> , Acts I-II
	18	<i>Measure</i> , Act III; summary of second critical essay due
	23	<i>Measure</i> , Act IV
	25	<i>Measure</i> , Act V
Nov.	30	Ben Jonson, <i>Volpone</i> , Acts I-II
	01	<i>Volpone</i> , Acts III-IV
	06	<i>Volpone</i> , Act V
	08	John Webster, <i>The Duchess of Malfi</i> , Act I-II
	13	<i>Duchess</i> , Act III
	15	<i>Duchess</i> , Act IV; summary of third critical essay due
	20	<i>Duchess</i> , Act V
	27	John Ford, <i>'Tis Pity She's a Whore</i> , Acts I-II
	29	<i>'Tis Pity</i> , Act III; research paper due
Dec.	04	<i>'Tis Pity</i> , Act IV
	06	<i>'Tis Pity</i> , Act V
	10	Journal due

