

English 360 Dramatic Literature and the Moral Life 1580-1642

Fall 2010

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Course Objectives

- To study selected plays of the early modern period in England that pose moral problems for the characters
- 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 through readings and performances
- English 360 meets the U2 (Moral Life) requirement for LinC and satisfies the English major requirement of a course dealing with a genre. It may also serve as an English elective in the major.

Required Texts

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

Shakespeare, William. Measure for Measure: Texts and Contexts, ed. by Ivo Kamps and Karen Raber. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2004.

_____. The Merchant of Venice: Texts and Contexts, ed. by M. Lindsay Kaplan. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2002.

_____. Othello: Texts and Contexts, ed. by Kim F. Hall. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2007.

Note: The Beckerman anthology is out-of- print. The College has acquired a sufficient number of used copies in fair 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

- Journal. 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*, 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], focusing on a specific moral issue [include it as a title or heading], quoting a passage from the text relevant to the main idea of the response, and demonstrating thoughtful consideration) for a total of 70 points. At the end of the semester, the entire journal and a 30-point, 500-word essay rebutting a moral position taken by another student in a previous posting [include the posting] or offering an alternative to or extension of another student's analysis of a play's moral content will be compiled and submitted to the instructor in hard copy on December 7 for a grade worth 20% of the final grade.

*No journal entry will be due the week of September 26, but two will be due the week of November 7. See Schedule of Assignments, below.

- Quizzes. Peer-generated quizzes will be a feature of most class meetings. Each class member will sign-up for a class meeting on which to serve as quizmaster. The quizmaster 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 quizmasters are expected to prepare testing instruments that are substantive and fair and to administer and grade them responsibly. Each quizmaster will also be responsible for making a brief oral presentation (no more than 5 minutes) of an interdisciplinary insight into the play under consideration. An interdisciplinary insight will be information or an understanding about some aspect of the play from the perspective of a discipline other than literary analysis or theater study. Finally, quizmasters will provide other classroom support as directed by the instructor.
- Mid-term examination. A mid-term examination on October 19 will be worth 20% of the final grade. There will be no final examination.
- Paper. A research paper addressing the moral relevance of a play studied for this course to today's reader or audience will be due on December 16 at 1:30 p.m. (the final exam period assigned to this course). Throughout the semester, each student will identify three critical essays about the play or serious reviews of specific productions that, in some way, support or dismiss its contemporary moral value. A

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 (no more than 100 words) of the significant argument of one critical essay will be due on September 30, a second on October 28, and a third on November 30. At least two additional sources (for a minimum of five total secondary sources) will ultimately contribute to the development of the paper's thesis. A workshop in class on December 7 will provide an opportunity for sharing and feedback. The final paper will be 8-10 word-processed, double-spaced pages in length, including documentation in the MLA format, and will count as 20% of the final grade.

- Visual Analysis of a Character. Each student will choose a character from the play under consideration at the class meeting to which the student has committed on the sign-up sheet circulated for the purpose of scheduling oral presentations. The student will present orally to the class a visual analysis of the principles, behavior, moods, motives, ideas, feelings, etc., involved in that character's moral life, using a non-representational painting both to drive and to illustrate the analysis. The student will conclude with a practiced reading of a speech by the character, selected for its illustrative and/or revelatory significance. The entire presentation, including the brief reading and an opportunity for audience questions, should not exceed 15 minutes. A companion essay—two word-processed, double-spaced pages of written analysis summarizing the oral presentation—will be submitted to the instructor immediately following the oral presentation. The oral and written aspects of the visual analysis will together be worth 20% of the final grade.

Special Events

- Guest Speaker: On Tuesday, September 14, Dean James V. Skalnik, historical scholar of the early modern period in Europe, will provide an historical context for our study.
- Fall Convocation: On Thursday, September 23, the instructor and class members will meet in the assigned classroom and together proceed to the Fall Convocation of the College, which will feature a keynote address by NPR London Bureau Chief Rob Gifford, author of *China Road*. The following week class discussion will focus on Venetian merchant-explorer Marco Polo in conjunction with our study of *The Merchant of Venice* and the European confrontation with "the other."

Grading

The final grade will, in general, be computed according to the percentages noted above. Late work will be penalized. Missed quizzes cannot be re-scheduled, but a mathematical adjustment will be applied if a quiz is missed for a valid, documented reason (for example, a medical or family emergency or a college-related commitment approved by

the instructor by prior arrangement). A mid-term examination missed for a valid, documented reason may be re-scheduled at the discretion of the instructor. Absences will be noted and may negatively affect a final grade. In addition to formal oral presentations, contributions to class discussions and participation in other class activities will be considered in assigning the final grade. The instructor will apply both quantitative and qualitative judgments in determining grades for individual assignments and for the course.

Grading equivalents:

A+	98	B+	88	C+	78	D+	68
A	95	B	85	C	75	D	65
A-	92	B-	82	C-	72	D-	62
						F	55

Academic Honesty

Students in this course should refer to the statement on academic honesty at Moravian College in the current *Student Handbook*, available online.

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 in preparation.
- Students who wish to request accommodations in this course for a disability should contact Mr. Joe Kempfer, Assistant Director of Learning Services for Disability Support, 1307 Main Street (extension 1510). Accommodations cannot be provided until authorization is received from the office of Learning Services.

Schedule of Assignments

- **Journal responses** are due electronically by midnight on:

September

4 (*Faustus*)
 11 (*Faustus*)
 18 (*Merchant*)
 25 (*Merchant*)

October

9 (*Othello*)
 16 (*Othello*)
 23 (*Measure*)
 30 (*Measure*)

November

6 (*Volpone*)
 13 (two entries: *Volpone* and *Duchess*)
 20 (*Duchess*)
 27 (*Pity*)

December

4 (*Pity*)

Hard copies of responses and a final journal essay are due in class on December 7.

- A **visual analysis** of a character (oral presentation and accompanying paper) is due on the date for which a student signed up.
- Each student is responsible for administering a **quiz** and delivering an **interdisciplinary insight** on the date for which she or he signed up.
- Also, see next page.

Aug.	31	Introduction to the course
Sept.	02	Christopher Marlowe, <i>Doctor Faustus</i> , Acts I-II
	07	<i>Faustus</i> , Acts III-IV
	09	<i>Faustus</i> , Act V and Appendix
	14	Lecture by Dean James V. Skalnik on the historical context of the plays
	16	William Shakespeare, <i>The Merchant of Venice</i> , Acts I-II
	21	<i>Merchant</i> , Acts III-IV
	23	Fall Convocation; attendance required; meet in classroom
	28	<i>Merchant</i> , Act V
.	30	Antonio, Marco Polo, and the Other; summary of first critical essay due
Oct	05	William Shakespeare, <i>Othello</i> , Acts I-II
	07	<i>Othello</i> , Acts III-IV
	12	Fall break—no class
	14	<i>Othello</i> , Act V
	19	Mid-term examination
	21	William Shakespeare, <i>Measure for Measure</i> , Acts I-II
	26	<i>Measure</i> , Acts III- IV
	28	<i>Measure</i> , Act V; summary of second critical essay due
Nov.	02	Ben Jonson, <i>Volpone</i> , Acts I-II
	04	<i>Volpone</i> , Acts III-IV
	09	<i>Volpone</i> , Act V
	11	John Webster, <i>The Duchess of Malfi</i> , Acts I-II
	16	<i>Duchess</i> , Acts III-IV
	18	<i>Duchess</i> , Act V
	23	John Ford, <i>'Tis Pity She's a Whore</i> , Acts I-II
	25	Thanksgiving—no class
	30	<i>'Tis Pity</i> , Acts III-IV; summary of third critical essay due
Dec.	02	<i>'Tis Pity</i> , Act V
	07	Research essay workshop; conclusions; journal due
	16	Research paper due at 1:30 p.m. in Zinzendorf 306