

English 360 Dramatic Literature and the Moral Life 1580-1642

Fall 2013

Instructor: Dr. Martha Reid
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Office hours: MWF 10:30-11:30 a.m. and TR 2:30-3:30 p.m.; also by appointment

Course Objectives

- To gain an understanding of the dramatic literary genre and of a major literary theme by studying selected plays of the early modern period in England that pose moral problems for the characters
- 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 by investigating 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 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

Bevington, David, ed. *English Renaissance Drama*. New York: Norton, 2002.

Coriolanus. Dir. Ralph Fiennes. Perf. Ralph Fiennes and Vanessa Redgrave. Weinstein, 2011. Film.

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

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

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

Note: The film *Coriolanus* will be screened in its entirety in class and is also available on Blackboard for viewing on campus. Also available on Blackboard are film productions of *Doctor Faustus*, *Measure for Measure*, *The Merchant of Venice*, and *Othello*.

Course Requirements

- Quizzes. Unannounced quizzes will be administered at the start of ten class meetings. A quiz will assess basic familiarity with the assigned reading for that day. Quiz questions may be posed in a variety of forms: identification, multiple-choice, true-or-false, fill-in-the-blank, or short-answer. Each quiz will be worth 10 points, and the combined total of points earned will be worth 10% of the final course grade.
- In-class responses. Unannounced, impromptu responses will be written at the start of ten class meetings. Each student will write a brief, thoughtful commentary on a short text selected by the instructor from the assigned reading for that day, focusing on a moral issue addressed in the text. Each written response can earn up to 10 points, and the combined total of points earned will be worth 10% of the final course grade.
- Interdisciplinary insight. Each student will sign up for a date on which to make a brief oral presentation (5-10 minutes) of an interdisciplinary insight into the play under consideration. An interdisciplinary insight will provide knowledge or information from the perspective of a discipline other than literary analysis or theater study that broadens our understanding of some aspect of the play. Both value of information and quality of oral communication will be considered in grading the presentation, which will be worth 10% of the final course grade.
- Performances. Each student will sign up for a date on which to offer a practiced reading of a monologue of 15-20 lines spoken by any character in the play under consideration at that class meeting. The speech will be read twice, preceding and following a brief explanation of its significance, especially with regard to the character's moral life. The two readings and explanation together must not exceed 10 minutes, and the performance will be worth 10% of the final course grade.
- Visual Analysis of a Character. Each student will sign up for a date on which to present orally to the class a visual analysis of any character in the play under consideration at that class meeting. Using a non-representational painting both to drive and to illustrate the analysis, the student will explore the principles, behavior, moods, motives, ideas, feelings, etc., involved in that character's moral life. The presentation, including 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. Both value of analysis and quality of communication will be considered in assigning a grade that will encompass both the

oral and written aspects of the visual analysis. The grade will be worth 20% of the final course grade.

- Period examination. A period examination on October 17 will be worth 20% of the final course grade. There will be no final examination.
- Paper. Why should a 400-year-old play be read or produced today? A research paper addressing the moral relevance to today's reader or audience of an aspect or aspects of a play studied for this course will be due in Zinzendorf 306 on December 12 between 8:30 a.m. and noon. Throughout the semester, each student will identify three critical essays about the play or serious reviews of specific productions that provide information or analysis supporting or dismissing the play's 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 or review will be due on September 26, a second on October 24, and a third on December 3. These three sources (or later substitutions) and at least two additional sources (for a minimum of five total secondary sources) will ultimately contribute to the development of the paper's thesis. 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 course grade.

Guest Speaker

On Thursday, September 10, Dean James V. Skalnik, historical scholar of the early modern period in Europe, will provide an historical context for our study.

Grading

The final grade will, in general, be computed according to the percentages noted above. Late work will be penalized. Missed quizzes or in-class responses cannot be re-scheduled, but a mathematical adjustment may be applied at the discretion of the instructor to accommodate no more than two quizzes and two in-class responses 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 period 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 a 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	F = 55
A = 95	B = 85	C = 75	D = 65	
A- = 92	B- = 82	C- = 72	D- = 62	

Academic Honesty

Students in this course are expected to adhere to the accepted practices of academic honesty such as those outlined in the statement on academic honesty at Moravian College in its current *Student Handbook*, available online. (Search AMOS, keywords “honesty policy.”)

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.
- Assigned readings should be completed prior to the class meeting noted on the following schedule.
- To be successful, students should expect to work at least six hours per week outside of class in preparation.
- In preparation for creating an English Major Portfolio in the senior capstone seminar, English majors are advised to save both digital and hard copies of work written for English 360, including drafts with peer and instructor comments.
- Students who wish to request accommodations in this class for a disability should contact Elaine Mara, Assistant Director of Learning Services for Academic and Disability Support, at 1307 Main Street or by calling 610 861-1510. Accommodations cannot be provided until authorization is received from the Academic Support Center.

Schedule of Readings, Examinations, and Written Assignments

Aug.	27	Introduction to the course
	29	Christopher Marlowe, <i>Doctor Faustus</i> , Acts I-II
Sept.	03	<i>Faustus</i> , Acts III-IV
	<u>05</u>	<i>Faustus</i> , Act V
	10	Lecture by Dean James V. Skalnik on the historical context of the plays
	<u>12</u>	William Shakespeare, <i>The Merchant of Venice</i> , Acts I-II
	17	<i>Merchant</i> , Acts III-IV
	<u>19</u>	<i>Merchant</i> , Act V
	24	William Shakespeare, <i>Othello</i> , Acts I-II
	<u>26</u>	<i>Othello</i> , Acts III-IV; summary of first critical essay due
	01	<i>Othello</i> , Act V
	<u>03</u>	William Shakespeare, <i>Measure for Measure</i> , Acts I-II
Oct.	08	<i>Measure</i> , Acts III- IV
	<u>10</u>	<i>Measure</i> , Act V
	<u>17</u>	Period examination
	22	William Shakespeare's <i>Coriolanus</i>
	<u>24</u>	Conclusion of <i>Coriolanus</i> ; summary of second critical essay due
	29	Discussion of <i>Coriolanus</i>
	<u>31</u>	Ben Jonson, <i>Volpone</i> , Acts I-II
	05	<i>Volpone</i> , Acts III-IV
	<u>07</u>	<i>Volpone</i> , Act V
	12	John Webster, <i>The Duchess of Malfi</i> , Acts I-II
Nov.	<u>14</u>	<i>Duchess</i> , Acts III-IV
	19	<i>Duchess</i> , Act V
	<u>21</u>	John Ford, <i>'Tis Pity She's a Whore</i> , Acts I-II
	03	<i>'Tis Pity</i> , Acts III-IV; summary of third critical essay due
	<u>05</u>	<i>'Tis Pity</i> , Act V
	<u>12</u>	Research paper due between 8:30 a.m. and noon in Zinzendorf 306