

ENL ###: Early Modern Drama Queer Theory & Performance

TERM, YEAR

Section ###, CRN #####

Day & Time, Location ###

Instructor Contact Information:

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Office Hours

Location:
Day & Times:

This course will explore early modern drama and performance through the lens of queer theory. We will examine relationships and characters for the complicated, the taboo, the unexpected, and the odd—with an eye toward what it is about drama as a genre that is complicated, taboo, unexpected, and odd.

We will group our work into three thematic units: (1) desire, identities and homoeroticism, (2) bodies, drag, and proto-trans figures, and (3) affect, excess, and camp. Each week we will read (or see) one early modern play, and follow up the next course day with a pairing of contemporary work in sexuality studies both in and out of the Early Modern field.

Objectives:

This course will hone transferable critical research skills to help you produce original arguments. Students will:

- practice navigating digital, print, and performance archives
- produce a working bibliography
- employ critical arguments to support their claims
- work collaboratively to produce a comprehensive and specialized performance history
- position their own arguments within a larger critical conversation

Course Grade Breakdown & Assignments:

5% Research Bootcamp Worksheet

5% Annotated Bibliography – 5 entries

15% Short Research Paper (approximately 5 pages)

15% Midterm Exam

15% Group Project: Performance History Presentation

20% Performance History Argument (approximately 7 pages)

15% Final Exam

10% Attendance

Course Schedule:

Unit 1: Desire

Day 1: Syllabus & Course Introduction

Introduction to historicist debates

- Vin Nardizzi et al. "Backward Gaze" introduction *Queer Renaissance Historiography*

Day 2: No Homo: Was Shakespeare Gay/Who Cares

- Eve Sedgwick "Axiomatic" from *Epistemology of the Closet*

Day 3: William Shakespeare, *Coriolanus*

Day 4: Homoerotics

- Bruce Smith "Combatants & Comrades" from *Homosexual Desire in Shakespeare's England* (excerpt)
- Mario DiGangi "Wounded Alpha Bad Boy Soldier" from *Shakespeareer* ed. Madhavi Menon

Day 5: John Ford, *'Tis Pity She's A Whore*

Day 6: Un/natural

- Maureen Quilligan "Stopping the Traffic in Women" (excerpt) from *Incest and Agency in Elizabeth's England*
- Georges Batailles *Eroticism: Death & Sensuality* (excerpt)

Unit 2: Bodies

Day 7: Thomas Middleton & Thomas Dekker, *The Roaring Girl*

Day 8: Queer Looks

(in appendix matter of Norton edition):

- Jonathan Dollimore "Subjectivity, Sexuality, and Transgression"

Annotated Bibliography Due

Day 9: Margaret Cavendish, *The Convent of Pleasure*

Day 10: Drag, Performance, Performativity

- Judith Butler "Melancholy Gender/Refused Identification"

- *Paris is Burning* (dir. Jennie Livingston, film available on Netflix & in Library Reserves—contact me if you have any access issues)

Research Paper Due

Day 11: Midterm Exam

Day 12: Queer Performance

Read for Class:

- Amanda Bailey “Monstrous Manner: Style and the Early Modern Theatre”

Unit 3: Affect

Day 13:

TBD Live Performance, and/or

Boston American Repertory Theatre’s *The Donkey Show*

Day 14: Queer Geographies

- Samuel Delaney *Times Square Red/Times Square Blue* excerpt
- Esther Newton *Mother Camp* introduction

Day 15: Cyril Tourneur, *The Atheist’s Tragedy*

Group Presentations in first half of class

Day 16: Camping

- Rick Bowers “Hysterics, High Camp, and Dido Queen of Carthage”

Group Presentations in first half of class

Day 17: Frances Beaumont, *Knight of the Burning Pestle*

Day 18: Feelings

- Heather Love “Emotional Rescue: The Demands of Queer History” from *Feeling Backward*

Day 19: Peer Review Day

(in-class reverse outline exercise)

Day 20: Final Exam Review