

ENGL 2202
Spring Quarter, 2012
4.0 Credits
On-line course

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**Renaissance Poetry & Prose:
DIGITAL ARCHIVES**

COURSE URL: <http://blackboard.du.edu/>

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

What happens when Shakespeare's six quartos of *Richard II* and digital media collide? How and why does the digitization of archival materials from the 16th and 17th centuries transform the significance of literary works and their related cultural documents? This electronic course provides a dynamic exploration of texts and contexts that define key issues and events from earlier times (such as the trial and public execution of King Charles I in 1649) and that also provoke critical reflection upon the diversified media (print, visual, electronic) which shape the fields of knowledge. This class integrates digital archival research with interdisciplinary investigations of two important Renaissance literary works—*Richard II* and the *Eikon Basilike*—that portray major challenges against the monarch's divine right of rule. As part of that inquiry, the sovereignty of the archive will itself be questioned by our collaborative work with digital technologies that facilitate new levels of access to and interaction with canonical and non-canonical literary and cultural documents.

This course will examine the transformation of literary texts into cultural documents (and vice-versa) when those materials are taught, researched and interpreted within and against the resources of subscription digital projects, such as Early English Books On-Line, specialized digital collections, such as the Bodleian Library Broadside Ballads, and digital finding aids, such as the National Archives catalogue and its research guides.

How and why does electronic access to archival materials reconfigure the teaching and study of literary texts (canonical or non-canonical), related cultural documents, and methodologies for disciplinary and interdisciplinary research and interpretation? How and why do digital technologies, such as Wikis and RSS feeds, do more than simply provide access to information; how and why do such electronic tools engender new objects of study, new ways of questioning, and new vehicles for learning? Those are some of the fundamental questions at the heart of this class.

Digital collections of books, articles, and images, online national archives catalogs, online finding aids from archives and special collections, print and microform facsimiles, and standard editions of letters and diaries contribute to the depth of this class. That range of resources cultivates a rich learning environment in which archival research is grasped as immediate and integral rather than as remote and mysterious. By interweaving intellectual inquiry and the research process, this electronic class makes the discovery and interpretation of primary and secondary sources of central importance and enriches the students' understanding of the complexity of early modern print and visual cultures.

METHODOLOGY:

This course will be shaped by discovery, innovation, and synergy. In general terms, we will be studying relationships among literary and non-literary documents *diachronically*—across time, from the fourteenth through the seventeenth century, thereafter leaping ahead to recent times—and also *synchronically*—within specific eras, such as the 1640s. On a daily and weekly basis, we will investigate canonical literary texts as works of art that emerge from and engage with cultural contexts; that comparative analysis will thus involve the interdisciplinary study of related non-canonical literary works and major and minor texts and artifacts from other fields of knowledge, such as: art history, religion, politics, history, print culture, and social history. We will be working with an array of print and electronic materials at each step along the way (manuscripts, printed texts, images, etc.), studying each and every resource we find and use vis-à-vis a three-point, recursive analysis:

Access: What is it? Where is it coming from? What's the target audience? What degree of authority informs the resource? What are the strengths and limitations? How and why has the point-of-access been constructed?

Form/Content: How and why does the material work within and against a larger context of information? How and why does the resource make a contribution to a particular field of knowledge?

Integration: What happens when we reflect upon the inter-relationships among questions about access and form/content? How and why does the medium of information shape not only the message, but also the changing field(s) of knowledge and object(s) of investigation?

"Like the printed book, film, and television before it, the computer is not a neutral space for conveying information. It shapes the information it conveys and is shaped in turn by the physical and cultural worlds in which it functions." (Bolter, Jay David, and Diane Gromala, *Windows and Mirrors: Interactive Design, Digital Art, and the Myth of Transparency*, Cambridge: MIT, 2005, p.77)

F2F MEETINGS: We will have one face-to-face (F2F) meeting during Week Six (4/30-5/4). Date, time, and location TBA. All students are required to attend this one F2F meeting, which will address research topics and strategies. Absence from this meeting will be graded as a missing assignment.

E-TEXTS & OTHER MATERIALS: A diversified gathering of electronic editions, documents, images, and other digital resources (as noted on the syllabus and in the assignment guidelines). These materials will be made available at no cost on a daily/weekly basis.

BOOKS REQUIRED FOR PURCHASE: These books are available for purchase at the DU Bookstore, <http://www.dubookstore.com/denver/>.

Eikon Basilike. Ed. Jim Daems and Holly Faith Nelson. Toronto: Broadview, 2006. ISBN: 1551115948; \$23.95.

Jacobsen, Mogens, and Morten Sondergaard, eds. *Re_Action: The Digital Archive Experience*. Roskilde, Denmark: Museum of Contemporary Art, 2009. ISBN: 978-87-7307-952-2; \$38.91.

Shakespeare, William. *King Richard II*. Ed. Charles R. Forker. London: Thomson, 2002. ISBN: 1903436338; \$13.99.

ASSIGNMENTS & GRADING:

3 Essays (5 pages each): 30%

10 Discussion Board Postings (each between 250 and 500 words): 40%

1 Research Project: 30%

Note on late work: Late work will receive a deduction of -0.5 per day.

Note on plagiarism: Evidence of plagiarism will result in an automatic final grade of F.

Comments/Evaluations/Grades: You will receive comments, evaluations & grades on your assignments within 48 hours of their submission. Comments & grades on the Essays will be distributed individually via e-mail. Comments & grades on the Discussion Board Postings will be distributed via the Discussion Board system in Blackboard. Comments & grades on the Research Project will be distributed individually via e-mail.

Revision Policy: Essays and Discussion Board Postings will be designed with an automatic, one-time revision policy. If a higher mark is sought, the work may be revised and re-submitted once (within 48 hours after evaluations have been distributed).

3 Essays: Each of your three Essays will be guided by an assignment document. Be sure to follow those guidelines, which may vary slightly from one Essay to the next. Essays will be graded on a standard letter scale (as noted below). Essay guidelines will be designed as progressive steps toward the Research Project.

10 Discussion Board Postings: Each of your Discussion Board Postings will be guided by a prompt (or a set of questions, or guidelines). These should be completed and posted weekly on Sundays before 6:00 pm. Discussion Board Postings will be engaged as part of our on-going effort to study recursively, integrating each day's and week's levels of investigation with the next. Discussion Board Postings will be graded with an informal check system (as noted below). Discussion Board guidelines will also be designed as progressive steps toward the Research Project.

1 Research Project: One Research Project to be determined by each student in consultation with the Professor. Proposals (informal, not graded) due during week seven will be discussed (via Blackboard) and must be approved. Essays and Discussion Board Postings may contribute to the Research Project. Research Projects will be graded on a standard letter scale (as noted below). Innovative disciplinary and/or interdisciplinary approaches involving the use of print and/or digital media will be encouraged. Guidelines will be distributed and discussed in advance.

Note on grading: Your Discussion Board Postings will be graded with a check system that will follow these guidelines. A check plus on all your Discussion Board Postings will translate into a grade of 4.0/A for that percentage of your overall grade in the course. Each check on a Discussion Board Posting will reduce your grade for that component of your overall grade in the course by -0.5. Each check minus, by -1.0; each missing Discussion Board Post, by -2.0. The letter grade system (for your combined Discussion Board Posts, for each of your three Essays, and for your Research Project) will follow this scale: A (4.0-3.9), A- (3.8-3.5), B+ (3.4-3.2), B (3.1-2.9), B- (2.8-2.5), C+ (2.4-2.2), C (2.1-1.9), C- (1.8-1.5), D+ (1.4-1.2), D (1.1-0.9), D- (0.8-0.5), F (0.4-0).

CALENDAR (subject to changes):

Week 1	3/26-4/1	<i>Richard II: Text, Literature & History</i>
	Discussion Board Postings #1	
Week 2	4/2-4/8	<i>Richard II: Context, History & Politics</i>
	Essay #1	
	Discussion Board Postings #2	
Week 3	4/9-4/15	<i>Richard II: Field, Cultural & Social History</i>
	Discussion Board Postings #3	
Week 4	4/16-4/22	<i>Digital Archives 1: Text, Context, Field</i>
	Discussion Board Postings #4	
Week 5	4/23-4/29	<i>Eikon Basilike: Text, Literature & History</i>
	Discussion Board Postings #5	
Week 6	4/30-5/6	<i>Eikon Basilike: Context, History & Politics</i>
	F2F Meeting: Friday, May 4, 11:00 – 12:50, SH 353	
	Essay #2	
	Discussion Board Postings #6	
Week 7	5/7-5/13	<i>Eikon Basilike: Field, Cultural & Social History</i>
	Research Project Proposals	
	Discussion Board Postings #7	

Week 8 **5/14-5/20**
Discussion Board Postings #8

Richard II & Eikon Basilike: Text, Context, Field

Week 9 **5/21-5/27**
Essay #3
Discussion Board Postings #9

Digital Archives 2: Text, Context, Field

Week 10 **5/28-6/1**
Research Projects
Discussion Board Postings #10

Archives on Trial: Windows and Mirrors