

ENGL 4200: Early Modern Special Topic

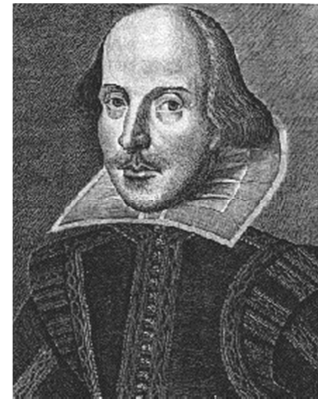
***SIMULACRE:
the poetics & praxis of adaptation***

Winter Quarter, 2017
Wednesdays: 4:00 – 7:50 p.m.
Sturm Hall 496

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“To the Reader”

This Figure, that thou here seest put,
It was for gentle Shakespeare cut,
Wherein the Graver had a strife
With Nature, to out-doo the life:
O, could he but have drawne his wit
As well in brasse, as he hath hit
His face; the Print would then surpasse
All, that was ever writ in brasse.
But, since he cannot, Reader, looke
Not on his Picture, but his Booke.



—Ben Jonson’s commendation of Martin Droeshout’s portrait of William Shakespeare in the 1623 *First Folio* of Shakespeare’s works. For digital copies, see <http://www.du.edu/~showard/jonson.gif> & <http://www.du.edu/~showard/shake.jpg>

Course Description: This course investigates the poetics and praxis of adaptation through a range of literary forms (drama, poetry, prose) and related fields (cinema, philosophy, visual art). While our primary focus concerns the 16th and 17th centuries, the scope of our studies covers an international and interdisciplinary field from Classical times through the early modern and into the modern & postmodern eras. Within that capacious context, we will pay special attention to important schools of thought, cultural developments, and artistic practices that have deep roots in earlier times, such as: materialist philosophy; the poetics of the sublime; and various theories of indeterminacy, contingency, and eidetic making. We will also recover an almost forgotten conversation about poetic fictions and simulacra.

Research projects may include a variety of critical, theoretical, and creative approaches. As with any trans-historical class offered at the graduate level, the Department’s default policy is that the student’s research project may determine the matching distribution requirement and/or program concentration.

Students are requested to be prepared to discuss the following works at the first meeting: Plato's *Republic*, Books 7 – 10; Aristotle's *Poetics*; Shakespeare's *Hamlet*; and Guy Debord's *The Society of the Spectacle*—all of which are freely available on the web through a variety of open-access sites. Beyond those, the course will investigate the poetics and praxis of adaptation through a range of works, including: Margaret Cavendish's *Blazing World* (1666) and Danielle Dutton's *Margaret The First* (2015); John Milton's *Paradise Lost* (1667-74) as illustrated by John Martin (1823), Carlotta Petrina (1933), and Mary Elizabeth Groom (1937) among others, and as reimagined by William Blake's *Milton: A Poem* (1804-18) and Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818); Sir Thomas Browne's *Urn Burial* (1658) and W. G. Sebald's *The Rings of Saturn* (1995); and selected adaptations of *Hamlet* (1603-23), such as Tom Stoppard's *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* (1967), Heiner Müller's *Hamletmaschine* (1979), Michael Almereyda's *Hamlet* (2000), and Martha Ronk's *why why not* (2003).

BOOKS

Required:

- Blake, William. *MILTON: a poem*. Ed. Robert N. Essick and Joseph Viscomi. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998. ISBN: 9780691001487
- Browne, Sir Thomas. *Religio Medici and Urne-Buriall*. Ed. Stephen Greenblatt and Ramie Targoff. New York: New York Review, 2012. ISBN: 9781590174883
- Cavendish, Margaret. *Paper Bodies: A Margaret Cavendish Reader*. Ed. Sylvia Bowerbank and Sara Mendelson. Toronto: Broadview Press, 2000. ISBN: 9781551111735
- Dutton, Danielle. *Margaret the First*. Catapult, 2015. ISBN: 9781936787357
- Milton, John. *Paradise Lost*. Ed. Alastair Fowler. 2nd ed. London: Addison-Wesley Longman, 1998. ISBN: 0582215188
- Rivers, Isabel. *Classical and Christian Ideas in English Renaissance Poetry*. 2nd ed. New York: Routledge, 1994. ISBN: 0415106478
- Ronk, Martha. *why why not*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003. ISBN: 0520238117
- Sebald, W. G. *The Rings of Saturn*. New York: New Directions, 2016. ISBN: 9780811226158
- Shakespeare, William. *Hamlet*. Ed. Ann Thompson and Neil Taylor. London: Arden Shakespeare, 2016. ISBN: 9781472518385
- Shelley, Mary. *Frankenstein*. Ed. J. Paul Hunter. New York and London: Norton, 2011. ISBN: 9780393927931
- Stoppard, Tom. *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*. New York: Grove, Press, 1967. ISBN: 9780802132758
- Taussig, Michael. *Mimesis and Alterity*. New York: Routledge, 1992. ISBN: 9780415906876

Recommended:

- Brayman Hackle, Heidi, and Ian Moulton, eds. *Teaching Early Modern Literature From the Archives*. New York: MLA, 2014. ISBN: 9781603291569

Photocopies & Media: TBA

Creativity & Critique:

- Commonplace Book (open media, form and style) in which you engage consistently with our studies, responding to prompts as well as following your own path. [30%]
- One Work-in-progress that engages with your choice of materials from our studies. Open topic, media, form and style. Works-in-progress will be presented and submitted in class on the day of your choice. [30%]
- One Project involving research. Open topic, media, form and style. The project should engage in some way with your selection of materials from our studies, and should also address contexts and works beyond that scope. Project proposals required. [40%]

CALENDAR (subject to changes):

- 1/4 Plato, *Republic*, Books 7 – 10; Aristotle, *Poetics*; Shakespeare, *Hamlet*; Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle*
- 1/11 Plato, *Republic*, Books 7 – 10; Aristotle, *Poetics*; Shakespeare, *Hamlet*; Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle*; Stoppard, *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*; Müller, *Hamletmachine*; Almereyda, *Hamlet 2000*; Ronk, *why why not*; Mazzoni, “On the Defense of the *Comedy of Dante*”; Kristeva, “From One Identity to Another”; Rivers, *Classical and Christian Ideas in English Renaissance Poetry* (chapters 3, 5, 9, 11, 12); Howard, “Historical Figuration: Poetics, Historiography, and New Genre Studies”
- 1/18 Cavendish, *Paper Bodies*; Dutton, *Margaret the First*; Taussig, *Mimesis and Alterity*; Rivers, *Classical and Christian Ideas in English Renaissance Poetry*
- 1/25 Cavendish, *Paper Bodies*; Dutton, *Margaret the First*; Taussig, *Mimesis and Alterity*; Rivers, *Classical and Christian Ideas in English Renaissance Poetry*
- 2/1 Browne, *Religio Medici and Urne-Buriall*; Sebald, *The Rings of Saturn*; Taussig, *Mimesis and Alterity*; Rivers, *Classical and Christian Ideas in English Renaissance Poetry*; Commonplace Books due
- 2/8 Browne, *Religio Medici and Urne-Buriall*; Sebald, *The Rings of Saturn*; Taussig, *Mimesis and Alterity*; Rivers, *Classical and Christian Ideas in English Renaissance Poetry*; Project proposals due
- 2/15 Milton, *Paradise Lost*; Taussig, *Mimesis and Alterity*; Rivers, *Classical and Christian Ideas in English Renaissance Poetry*
- 2/22 No meeting / Louisville Conference: <http://thelouisvilleconference.com/>

CALENDAR
(subject to changes):

- 3/1 Milton, *Paradise Lost*; PL visual art by John Martin, Carlotta Petrina, Mary Elizabeth Groom, and others; Blake, *MILTON: a poem*; Taussig, *Mimesis and Alterity*; Rivers, *Classical and Christian Ideas in English Renaissance Poetry*
- 3/8 Milton, *Paradise Lost*; Blake, *MILTON: a poem*; Shelley, *Frankenstein*; Taussig, *Mimesis and Alterity*; Rivers, *Classical and Christian Ideas in English Renaissance Poetry*
- 3/14 – 3/17 winter quarter exams; Commonplace Books due; Projects due



“Reading Shakespeare” by Lauren Mulkey.

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