English 485-01: John Fletcher

CRN 21212

Professor J. Brady
Spring 2011
Palmer 305 (office)
9:30-10:45 TR in
843-3906 (office phone)
Palmer 203

Reading List:

Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher, *Philaster*, ed. Gurr (Manchester UP)
John Fletcher and Philip Massinger, *The Custom of the Country* (any edition)
William Shakespeare, *The Taming of the Shrew* (Pocket, or any edition)
John Fletcher, *The Tamer Tamed or The Woman’s Prize* (Manchester UP)
William Shakespeare, *The Tempest* (Pocket, or any edition)
John Fletcher, *The Island Princess* (Theatre Communications Group)
John Fletcher, *The Sea Voyage* (any edition)

Each student in the class will be expected to read at least one other play by Fletcher beyond those assigned to the class, and to incorporate discussion of it into his or her research paper.

Office Hours:

Tuesday and Thursday: 11:00-12:00, or by appointment Monday through Thursday.

Course Description:

Building on interpretive skills honed in the Junior Seminar (English 385), the Senior Research Seminar (English 485) offers a focused exploration of special topics or critical problems in literary study. This seminar culminates in a major independent research essay. The first half of the course concentrates on an intensive introduction to the literary period, author, or interpretive concept that organizes the seminar. The second half or the course proceeds as a research seminar, with students pursuing independent reading, presenting material in class, and submitting preliminary writing assignments and drafts. The final seminar
paper, at least 20 substantial pages, draws upon both primary and secondary texts. In this project, students develop an independent interpretive argument through sustained engagement with close reading, and situate their argument within pertinent critical history. Finally, every senior delivers a formal oral presentation of their argument derived from this research paper.

This spring’s senior research seminar explores the exceptionally popular and prolific Renaissance dramatist, John Fletcher (1579-1625), who succeeded Shakespeare as the principal writer for the King’s Company. Fletcher’s plays constitute the largest extant canon of drama produced in the English Renaissance. He wrote by preference in collaboration with other playwrights, a practice that was the norm in the early modern theater, but which he adopted to an unusual degree. His collaborators included Shakespeare, Massinger, and Beaumont, among others, and Fletcher collaborated with his contemporaries in yet another way, writing adaptations of and even sequels to other playwrights’ work. Fletcher was held in high regard during the Renaissance and the Restoration, despite his comparative obscurity today. This course will introduce majors to an important body of work that still remains unfamiliar to most undergraduates. His significance and place in the literary canon are currently being reassessed by scholars of the seventeenth century and his plays are starting to be staged more frequently. His plays lend themselves especially well to feminist and colonialist readings.

**Attendance Policy:**

This class is a seminar, which depends on student involvement in class discussions. Late arrivals to class will be counted as an absence. Any student who misses or comes late to class more than four times in the semester will receive a zero in the 20% of the grade reflecting class participation and attendance and may be asked to withdraw from the course.

**Schedule:**

- **January 18**
  - *The Tempest*

- **January 20**
  - *The Island Princess* (Acts 1 and 2)

- **January 25, 27**
  - *The Island Princess*

- **February 1, 3**
  - *The Sea-Voyage*

- **Friday, Feb. 4**
  - First essay due, by noon
February 8, 10  
*The Maid’s Tragedy*

February 15, 17  
*Valentinian*

February 22, 24  
*The Custom of the Country*

**Tuesday, March 1**  
Second essay due, by noon

March 3  
*Taming of the Shrew*

March 8, 10  
*The Tamer Tamed, or The Woman’s Prize*

March 15, 17  
Spring Break

March 22  
Commendatory Poems to the 1647 Folio

March 24  
No class, away at conference

March 29, 31  
*Philaster*

April 5, 7  
Peer review of research proposals (5-6 per class)

April 12  
Revised Proposal and Annotated Bibliography Due

April 14, 19  
Draft of opening 4 pages; peer review

April 21  
Easter Recess

April 26, 28  
Final Presentations of Research Projects

April 30  
Final essay due to my office, by noon
Method of Evaluation:

Research essay of 20 pages 50%

Paper 1 (4-5 pages) 10%

Paper 2 (4-5 pages) 10%

Seminar participation, including active participation in class discussion 10%

In-class presentations 10%

Annotated Bibliography for research paper 10%

Critical Readings on Reserve at Barret Library:


To locate Fletcher texts, go to [http://www.gutenberg.org/browse/authors/f#a4606](http://www.gutenberg.org/browse/authors/f#a4606).