English 485-02: John Fletcher

CRN 14545

Professor J. Brady
Palmer 305 (office)
843-3906 (office phone)  
Fall, 2013
9:30-10:45 TR in
Palmer 211

Reading List:

Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher, Philaster, ed. Gurr (Manchester UP)  
Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher, The Maid's Tragedy, ed. Wiggins, in Four Jacobean Sex Tragedies (Oxford UP)  
John Fletcher, The Tragedy of Valentinian, ed. Wiggins, in Four Jacobean Sex Tragedies (Oxford 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)  
William Shakespeare and John Fletcher, King Henry VIII, ed. McMullan (Arden)

Office Hours:

Tuesday and Thursday: 11:00-12:00, or by appointment Monday through Friday, including MWF from 10:00-10:30.

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 of 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 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. Fletcher's significance and place in the literary canon are currently being reassessed by scholars of the seventeenth century and his plays are now 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 10% of the grade reflecting class participation and attendance and may be asked to withdraw from the course.

Schedule:

August 22, 27  
August 29  
September 3, 5  
September 10, 12  
Friday, September 13  
September 17, 19  
September 24, 26

The Tempest
The Island Princess (Acts 1 and 2)
The Island Princess
The Sea-Voyage
First essay due, by noon
The Maid's Tragedy
Valentinian
October 1, 3  The Custom of the Country
October 8  Taming of the Shrew
October 10, 17  The Tamer Tamed, or The Woman's Prize
Friday, October 18  Second essay due, by noon
October 22, 24  Philaster
October 29  Commendatory Poems to the 1647 Folio (handout)
October 31, November 5  King Henry VIII
November 7, 12  Peer review of research proposals (4 per class)
November 14  Revised Proposal and Annotated Bibliography Due
November 19, 21  Draft of opening 4 pages; peer review
November 26, December 3  Final Presentations of Research Projects
Wednesday, December 4  Final essay due to my office, by 3:00 p.m.

Method of Evaluation:

Research essay of 20 pages  50%
Paper 1 (4 pages)  10%
Paper 2 (4 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).