Renaissance Drama
O Hour (1:00 – 2:30 p.m.), Tuesdays & Thursdays

Prof. Michael Leslie
Office: Palmer 400

Office Hours: Tuesdays, Thursdays, 2:30-3:30 p.m.; Wednesday, 10:30-11:30; and by appointment.

My administrative role as Dean of British Studies At Oxford sometimes means I have to be out of my office unexpectedly. For your own convenience, please try to phone (3715) before climbing all those stairs to see me - usually, Mrs. Mary Allie Baldwin will be there and can tell you whether I am or when I will be.

Texts
Russell A. Fraser & Norman Rabkin, Drama of the English Renaissance. I: The Tudor Period and II: The Stuart Period.

Grading
The final grade recognizes the quality of your work over the whole course. It is normally made up as set out in the scheme below, but there are two thresholds you must cross successfully before I will award a grade above “D”.

First, this is a college English course, and I expect papers to be written with correct grammar and spellings. Most students now have access to word processing programs with a spelling checker, so there is little excuse for handing in misspelled work. Grammar is fundamental to communication, and degree-level written work in English has to communicate accurately. Many WP programs also have a grammar checker, though these are of limited usefulness. If you have any doubts about the accuracy of your English usage, you should use the Writing Center to gain advice.

Second, this course requires that you master some facts concerning the literary, cultural, and political history of the time during which these texts were being written. If I become concerned about the adequacy of your preparation for class, I shall issue a series of unannounced tests, each based on factual material found in the texts, the headnotes in our anthology, and in any other material I have made available to you. You must achieve at least a 60% average on these tests to get above “D”.

Once across these thresholds, the grade is determined as follows:

First paper: 15%
Second paper: 15%
Third paper: 35%
Final exam: 15%
Participation: 20%
Requirements

Participation
Your assessment for this course includes a substantial component for participation and you should be in no doubt that I use the full range of grades. Participation is important because learning is a not a passive activity. What’s more, one person's failure to be actively engaged in a class can adversely affect the experience of others. Participation can take many forms; speaking-up is only one of them. A student who is comparatively silent, but who is also obviously attentive and committed to the class is making a substantial contribution to the overall atmosphere. Conversely, students who attend, but don't bring the text, are visibly bored, wear hats or caps, fall asleep, talk among themselves, or who are repeatedly late ... such students cannot expect to be rewarded for participation even if they make the occasional contribution to discussion.

Attendance
You are expected to attend all the sessions of the course and all unjustified absences will adversely affect your grades. Up to 5 unjustified absences will result in the substantial lowering of your grade for the course; with the sixth I will assume you are withdrawing from the course and, if you remain on the class roll, will give an automatic final grade of F. You are also expected to remain in the classroom throughout the class and not bring in food or drink.

Papers
Completion of all written work is required to pass the course; failure to do so is an automatic F. All papers must be submitted by the agreed date. If you encounter difficulties, you must contact me before the agreed deadline. I shall deduct 10% per day for late papers up to one week after the due date; after that, although the paper is still necessary for completion of the course, I shall record a grade of zero.

Rewrites
I encourage rewrites, but these must be substantive: merely changing a few words I’ve queried or deleting things I’ve found challengeable will not do. For each assignment one rewrite is permitted. The recorded grade will be the average of the first and second grades. Rewrites are due at least one week before the date for the next paper.

What are the characteristics of the different grades of performance?
An attempt to give a full description of what will lead to various grades is both unwise and unlikely to succeed. Bear in mind that the average student should receive a C grade; a B recognizes well above average performance. A grade of A or A- is received rarely and for outstanding work. That being said, here are some of the characteristics of the excellent and the poor student:

Excellent students attend the class without fail; they have always prepared for the class well; they are self-motivated learners, using the library and other resources to discover additional materials for the subject; they are curious and enquiring; and they constantly reflect on the relationship between subjects under immediate discussion and earlier discussions in the class. Their writing is ambitious: they seek to grapple with substantial subjects, which they pursue with clarity, accuracy, determination, and rigour. They are perceptive and sophisticated in their enquiries concerning issues to do with literature, language, and culture more generally. They seek to present their work with professionalism.
Poor students have poor attendance records. They have put little into preparation for class and they are visibly disengaged. In their written work they are more concerned with “set length” than with intellectual substance, and they fail to observe obvious professional standards (spelling, grammar, getting simple things like authors’ names right). They seek simple answers to complex questions, and do the bare minimum, rarely bringing to bear any reading or thinking not explicitly required by the professor.

**Tentative Schedule**

1. Thurs., 27 August  
   Introduction to the Course

   **I: Before “The Theatre”**

2. Tues., 1 September  
   “Mr. S”, *Gammer Gurton’s Needle*; Thomas Preston, *Cambyses*

3. Thurs., 3 September  
   Thomas Norton and Thomas Sackville, *Gorboduc*

**Interlude**

4. Tues. 8 September  
   An introduction to the London theatre

   **II: Elizabethan Metropolitan Theatre**

5. Thurs., 10 September  
   Thomas Kyd, *The Spanish Tragedy*;

6. Tues, 15 September  
   Christopher Marlowe, *Tamburlaine*, part 1

   **History and the drama**

7. Thurs, 17 September  
   Christopher Marlowe, *Dr Faustus*  
   FIRST PAPER DUE

8. Tues., 22 September  
   Robert Greene, *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*;  
   Thomas Lodge and Robert Greene, *A Looking Glass for London and England*

9. Thurs., 24 September  
   Christopher Marlowe, *Edward II*

   **Varieties of Comedy**

10. Tues., 29 September  
    Anon, *Mucedorus*

11. Thurs., 1 October  
    Thomas Decker, *The Shoemaker’s Holiday*
### Interlude

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Events</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12 Tues., 6 October</td>
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<td>The politics and religion of the theatre</td>
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### III: Jacobean Comedy

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Events</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13 Thurs., 8 October</td>
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<td>Ben Jonson, <em>Volpone</em></td>
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<td><strong>SECOND PAPER DUE</strong></td>
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<td>14 Tues., 13 October</td>
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<td>Ben Jonson, <em>Epicoene; or, The Silent Woman</em></td>
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<td>15 Thurs., 15 October</td>
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<td>Ben Jonson, <em>The Alchemist</em></td>
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<td>16 Tues., 20 October</td>
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<td><strong>FALL RECESS - NO CLASS</strong></td>
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<td>17 Thurs., 22 October</td>
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<td>Ben Jonson, <em>Bartholomew Fair</em></td>
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<td>18 Tues., 27 October</td>
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<td>Francis Beaumont, <em>The Knight of the Burning Pestle</em></td>
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### IV: Jacobean Tragedy

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<td>20 Thurs., 5 November</td>
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<td>Cyril Tourneur, <em>The Revenger's Tragedy</em></td>
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<td>21 Tues., 10 November</td>
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<td>Thomas Middleton and William Rowley, <em>The Changeling</em></td>
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<td>22 Thurs., 12 November</td>
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<td><strong>MPL AWAY – NO CLASS</strong></td>
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<td>23 Tues., 17 November</td>
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<td>John Webster, <em>The White Devil</em></td>
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<td>24 Thurs., 19 November</td>
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<td>John Webster, <em>The Duchess of Malfi</em></td>
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<td><strong>THIRD PAPER DUE</strong></td>
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<td>25 Tues., 24 November</td>
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<td>26 Thurs., 26 November</td>
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<td><strong>THANKSGIVING RECESS - NO CLASS</strong></td>
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<td>27 Tues., 1 December</td>
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<td>John Ford, <em>‘Tis Pity She’s A Whore</em></td>
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<td>28 Thurs., 3 December</td>
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<td>James Shirley, <em>Hyde Park</em></td>
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<td>29 Tues., 8 December</td>
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<td>Review</td>
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