

English 340-01: Restoration Drama

CRN 10234

Professor J. Brady
Palmer 306 (office)
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Fall, 2009
9:30 -10:45 in
Palmer 205

This course explores English literature after the restoration of Charles II to the throne in 1660. Topics include: the reopening of the theaters; the introduction of the actress to the stage in lieu of the boy actors who had played women's roles in the Renaissance; the flourishing of drama, especially comedy, after the interregnum. Our focus will be on plays by important dramatists, including Wycherley, Etherege, Dryden, Otway, Cibber, Vanbrugh, and Congreve, and on the unique conditions of the theater they wrote for between 1660 and 1700. We will examine royal sponsorship of the theater of this period and the dissolute atmosphere of Charles II's court, as depicted in penetrating satires by the king's godson, the Earl of Rochester.

Texts:

David Womersley, ed. *Restoration Drama: An Anthology* (Blackwell)
John Dryden, *Marriage A la Mode*, ed. David Crane (New Mermaids)

Office Hours:

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

Attendance Policy:

This class will be run as a combination of lecture, seminar, and discussion. Late arrivals to class will be counted as absences and 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.

Method of Evaluation:

70% You are required to write essays of 6 pages each on *two* of the three central units of this course (i.e., Comedies of the 1670s; Dryden or Otway; Comedies of the 1690s) and a longer essay of 10 pages on the other unit. See schedule below for the due dates on these papers.

- 20% Participation in the class, attendance, preparation for class, and willingness to engage with the primary material and the scholarship in the field. You are required to read the assigned criticism or supplementary primary texts in conjunction with each week's principal reading.
- 10% An essay of four pages on an aspect of theatrical performance or staging that interests you or on an actor or actress of the period, with illustrations from the plays we have studied. This essay must be submitted by the Thanksgiving recess at the latest.

Schedule:

Restoration Comedies of the 1670s

Sept. 1, 3, 8

The Country Wife (1675)

*Read Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, "The Country Wife: Anatomies of Male Homosocial Desire" in *Between Men*.

Sept. 10, 15

The Plain Dealer (1676)

September 17, 22, 24

The Man of Mode (1676)

*Friday, September 25

First essay due

Court and Theater Milieu

September 29

Rochester's satires (handout)

October 1

The Restoration Actress

* Read **one** of the following reserve readings:
 Elizabeth Howe, *The first English actresses*;
 Katharine Eisaman Maus, "Playhouse Flesh and Blood: Sexual Ideology and the Restoration Actress";
 Deborah Payne, "Reified Object or Emergent Professional?: Retheorizing the Restoration Actress," in *Cultural readings of Restoration and eighteenth-century English theater*, ed. Canfield and Payne.

Dryden and Otway

October 6, 8

The Conquest of Granada (1670)

October 13, 15, 22

Marriage A la Mode (1673)

Oct. 27, 29, Nov. 3

Venice Preserved (1682)

*Thursday, November 5

Second essay due

Comedies of the 1690s

November 10, 12

Love's Last Shift (1696)

November 17, 19

The Relapse (1696)

*Friday, November 20

Essay due on some aspect of theatrical performance or staging in the Restoration

November 24

The Way of the World (1700); read Acts 1 and 2

Dec. 1 and 3

*The Way of the World**Read on Congreve's play, Robert Markley, *Two Edg'd Weapons: Style and Ideology in the Comedies of Wycherley, Etherege, and Congreve*, on reserve

* December 8

Final essay due