I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

For purposes of this course, “sixteenth century drama” is used to refer to the dramatic literature from the mid-sixteenth century to the end of the first third of the seventeenth century. English 401 is an upper level elective course which therefore engages students in a critical study of Elizabethan and Jacobean drama with an exclusive focus on non-Shakespearean dramatists. It discusses the type of drama produced by these dramatists in the context of the public and private playhouses at the time, the contemporary acting companies, and the influence of all of these on sixteenth century English drama. The course attempts to define the character of the non-Shakespearean achievement in drama at this time and characterize the forces at work in society on these dramatists. The course will explore some of the dramatic traditions that emerged at this time and their antecedents, e.g., the Revenge Tradition and Seneca.

II. COURSE RATIONALE

This course is designed to promote an understanding of the significant contribution of these dramatists to an age dominated by Shakespeare, and to demonstrate the distinctive nature and qualities of their plays and the dramatic traditions which they developed and refined to give these plays their observable characteristics. The drama of the age is also related to the impact of the professional and acting companies on these playwrights.

III. COURSE OVERVIEW

A major focus of this course is to get candidates to recognize that the Elizabethan and Jacobean phase of the English Renaissance produced dramatists other than Shakespeare who were his predecessors, contemporaries and successors. These dramatists contributed to and exploited early modern English and responded to their times in their own way. The course uses recent findings of scholars in the field, and attempts to apply modern critical approaches in the interpretation of the selected plays.
IV. INSTITUTIONAL OUTCOMES AND LEARNING OBJECTIVES

a) Institutional Outcomes

- The content of this course provides candidates with additional knowledge of the drama of Shakespeare’s age. This should make them into **effective performers** through the broadening of their knowledge-base which in turn could inform their instructional practices.
- The same broader knowledge-base on Renaissance drama provided for candidates by this course should help shape them into **reflective decision makers** who may be faced with making choices about what students have to read as they make decisions in the educational setting.
- As this dramatic literature explores the human condition in another culture at a different time period, it should contribute to shaping candidates into **humanistic practitioners** who can approach diversity objectively and see similarities and differences in people over time and space.

b) Learning Objectives

i) Knowledge

   During the course and on its completion candidates are expected to acquire the following competencies:

1. Some knowledge of the playhouses/theaters and acting companies and their relationship to Elizabethan and Jacobean drama/dramatists.

2. Some understanding of what the Renaissance impact was on the sixteenth century dramatists, e.g., the influence of Seneca.

3. Some idea of the dramatic traditions developed or inherited by these dramatists.

4. An understanding of the dramatic tradition initiated and represented by Thomas Kyd.
5. A recognition of the extent of Marlowe’s refinement and development of English dramatic blank verse and his achievement in his plays.

6. Some knowledge and recognition of the comic genius of Ben Jonson, the special qualities of his comedies as well as their social criticism objectives.

7. A critical interpretation and understanding of plays in the revenge tradition and melodrama in Jacobean drama (as represented by Tourneur, Kyd, Middleton and Webster), and their noteworthy characteristics.

8. An appreciation of the (non-Shakespearean) conception of tragedy and comedy presented in these plays.

9. Some understanding of Arden of Feversham as a domestic tragedy and 'Tis Pity She’s a Whore as bringing together a Marlovian and Shakespearean traditions.

ii) Skills

During the course and especially on its completion, candidates should be able to:

1. Identify the major acting companies, the main public and private theaters and link them, where appropriate, with the dramatists identified here.

2. Develop an overview of the work of the dramatists of this era, their relative and comparative significance, and list their most important plays.

3. Discuss the Senecan revenge tradition in drama, place Kyd’s play in this context and critically interpret this play.

4. Show some knowledge of Marlowe’s development of blank verse in Elizabethan drama and the “hero-villain” Marlovian tradition, interpret and analyze his treatment of the Faust theme, and his use of the revenge theme in tragedy.
5. Discuss Jonson’s satirical comedy and social criticism through drama; get some sense of his classical antecedents and control of the comic form.

6. Discuss the revenge tradition and melodrama in Jacobean drama intelligently and with full understanding.

7. Interpret, analyze and discuss the plays of Webster, Tourneur/Middleton and Kyd, dramatists who worked within the revenge tradition.

8. Account for the uniqueness of this sixteenth drama by recognizing the characteristics of the comedy and tragedy it produced.

9. Show an understanding of the notion of a domestic tragedy and the tragedy of love.

(iii) Dispositions

At the end of this course, candidates will:

- Recognize the scope of dramatic literature of the English Renaissance and use this knowledge in ways relevant to pedagogy and the curriculum.

- As English and Drama majors, relate what has been learned to themes, motifs and issues in Shakespeare and other dramatists and thus broaden their insight in these areas.

V. OUTLINE OF COURSE CONTENT

1. The theater/playhouses, acting companies, Elizabethan and Jacobean dramatists and their plays.

2. The “University Wits,” Seneca, Revenge Tragedy, the Renaissance influence on dramatic traditions.

3. The Spanish Tragedy – Kyd.

5. Arden of Faversham - Anonymous

6. Volpone – Jonson

7. The Revenger’s Tragedy – Tourner/Middleton (? )

8. The Duchess of Malfi – Webster

9. Tis Pity She’s a Whore – Ford

10. Films, Videos, Websites
    - The BBC, Videos for Education and Training. (The Duchess of Malfi and The Changeling)
    - The British Universities Film and Video Council, 1992. www.BUFVC.ac.uk
    - Ben Jonson. VHS, 2005
    - The Elizabethan Age. VHS, 1977

VI. SPECIAL COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Research Paper or Long Essays

Class presentations
VII. METHODS OF EVALUATION & GRADING SCALE

Examination – Mid-Term 15%
Examination – Final 20%
Essays (Interpretation & Analysis) 20%
Research Paper or Long Essay 15%
Exercises/Tests 15%
Presentations 10%
Class Participation 5%

Rubrics:

The range of assessment instruments should have the performance features listed below for credit grades or better.

**Essays and Essay Examinations.**
- Proper understanding/interpretation of the topic/theme.
- Use of appropriate and relevant data/information from the text/lectures/videos to support analysis/discussion/descriptions and conclusions.
- Illustrate points using relevant data as examples.
- Apply an acceptable level of reasoning.
- Use College level language and style.

**Research paper**
- Follow the guidelines in the directions sheet
- Address all aspects of the topic
- Organized presentation of findings.
- Use and crediting of sources in the assigned documentation style.

**Textual Analysis**
- Read/Study a text and understand the data.
• Analyze the text, identify and discuss features of it.
• Record observations/findings on the text in clear grammatical language.

**Critique of Video/Audio Presentations**
• Answer specific focused/directed questions.
• Explain the relevance of the visual/audio text to the topic.
• Give undirected responses in a manner relevant to the topic/issue illustrated by the video/audio material.

**VIII. BIBLIOGRAPHY**

An extensive bibliography with recent sources can be found between pages 1977 and 1995 of the required text.


