

Business 3920: Early Modern Theaters and (as) Markets

Spencer K. Wall
office location: LNCO 3428
e-mail: spencer.wall@utah.edu

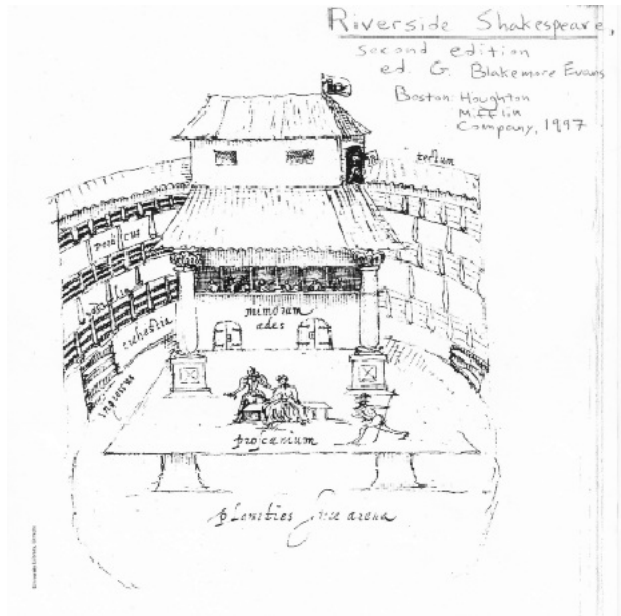
class meets: TuTh 3:40-5:00 in ARCH 127
office hours: TuTh 2:00-3:00 in LNCO 3428
and any day/time by appointment

Course Description:

Playwrights in Renaissance England both represented and participated in the growing exchange markets of their time. The theater could stage a fictional version of a busy market, as it does in Ben Jonson's comedies about London city life. In Jonson's *Bartholomew Fair*, the space of the theater becomes the space of a fair, in which professional vendors and amateur opportunists collaborate and compete to make a profit by hawking wares, putting on shows and picking pockets. Jonson's *The Alchemist* similarly brings enterprising entrepreneurs with questionable methods to the stage. The theater could also use the language of markets and sales as metaphor for other kinds of exchanges.

In Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida*, the mistresses of ancient Greek warriors are repeatedly compared to imported goods from the expanding global markets of the early modern world. In Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus*, a theological choice between good and evil is couched as mercantile haggling over the worth of Faustus' soul. And in Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice*, literal and metaphorical exchange values collide when a bad business venture occasions a religious dispute about when people are owed justice and mercy. At the same time that the theater could represent markets, it was always itself a market, a relatively novel entertainment market with playwrights and companies seeking to expand its appeal. Shakespeare's *Henry V* is not a play primarily about commercial activity. But it is a deeply commercial play in the sense that it openly obsesses about how it will be received by the paying customers in Shakespeare's theater.

This course will teach you about early modern (16th-17th century) markets and attitudes toward them through the lens of plays by Renaissance England's most famous playwrights: Ben Jonson, Christopher Marlowe and William Shakespeare. These texts are short, but some of their language can be difficult for 21st-century readers, so we will limit ourselves to six of them and spend ample class time learning to understand the language together. While most of the course will focus on markets in the early modern time period, we will watch the classic Laurence Olivier film of *Henry V* to explore how this play obsessed with its audience can be marketed to a new one in a different era.



Required Texts:

- Jonson, Ben. *The Alchemist and Other Plays*. Ed. Gordon Campbell. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2009. ISBN-13: 9780199537310
- Marlowe, Christopher. *Doctor Faustus and Other Plays*. Ed. David Bevington and Eric Rasmussen. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2008. ISBN-13: 9780199537068
- Shakespeare, William. *Henry V* (Pelican Shakespeare Series). New York: Penguin, 1999. ISBN-13: 9780140714586
- Shakespeare, William. *The Merchant of Venice* (Pelican Shakespeare Series). New York: Penguin, 2000. ISBN-13: 9780140714623
- Shakespeare, William. *Troilus and Cressida* (Pelican Shakespeare Series). New York: Penguin, 2000. ISBN-13: 9780140714869

English Renaissance playwrights (especially Shakespeare) wrote their plays primarily for performances that their audiences paid to see. Competing printed versions of the plays were sold to a secondary market of play readers by a variety of enterprising publishers. Some of these published versions were outright bootlegs, and most were prepared with little to no involvement by the playwrights themselves (though the print-obsessed Jonson often proved the exception). Consequently, the content and quality of the printed versions varied, and that variation in different versions and printed editions of these plays continues to this day. The market competition for play readers, and the way it gave rise to different play texts, will be one of our class topics. But if you do not purchase the same editions of the plays that I have ordered, you will have significant difficulty keeping up with the class. It is your responsibility to make any extra effort necessary to keep up with the class and follow along with the readings, should you choose to use other editions of the plays.

Grading and Assignments:

100-93% – A	89-88% – B+	79-78% – C+	69-68% – D+	59-0% – E
92-90% – A-	87-83% – B	77-73% – C	67-63% – D	
	82-80% – B-	72-70% – C-	62-60% – D-	

Paper #1 (on <i>Bartholomew Fair</i>)	– 20% of total course grade
Paper #2 (on <i>Merchant of Venice</i>)	– 10%
Paper #3 (on <i>Henry V</i>)	– 30%
playbill assignment	– 10%
reading quizzes and participation	– 30%

The first paper will be a two-page analysis of the commerce represented in *Bartholomew Fair*, in connection with a current-day business topic. The second paper

Grading and Assignments: (continued)

will be a one-page analysis of intrinsic and exchange value, as represented in *The Merchant of Venice*. The third paper will be a three-page comparison of Shakespeare's *Henry V* and Olivier's film version, in terms of their intended market audiences. Further details about all of these assignments will be given in class as their deadlines approach.

In addition to the three formal essays, you will create a playbill (an early modern advertisement for the play, like a modern-day movie poster) that advertises one of the other three plays that you will read for this course (*The Alchemist*, *Doctor Faustus* or *Troilus and Cressida*). Also, I will give brief reading quizzes (usually unannounced and open book) and other participation assignments in class, from time to time, to further encourage and track your regular engagement with the course material. You will receive a weekly participation grade for all the quizzes and activities that you complete throughout each week.

Late Work:

I will give short deadline extensions on the papers and the playbill assignment if you talk to me about this possibility in advance of the assigned due dates. If you do not arrange an extension with me in advance, I will accept late papers and playbills only for three-fourths credit.

I will not allow you to make up quizzes or participation assignments (except in special cases, in accordance with University policy), as the purpose of these assignments is to insure and track your regular attendance and engagement with the course. However, emergencies do come up, so I will drop every student's lowest weekly participation grade.

Course Policies:

Plagiarism:

The University of Utah Student Code classifies plagiarism as "academic misconduct." Plagiarism is defined in Part I.B.2.c of the Code as "the intentional unacknowledged use or incorporation of any other person's work in, or as a basis for, one's own work offered for academic consideration or credit or for public presentation. Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to, representing as one's own, without attribution, any other individual's words, phrasing, ideas, sequence of ideas, information or any other mode or content of expression." Part V.B of the Code stipulates that students guilty of plagiarism "may be subject to academic sanctions including but not limited to a grade reduction, failing grade, probation, suspension or dismissal from the program or the University, or revocation of the student's degree or certificate. Sanctions may also include community service, a written reprimand, and/or a written statement of misconduct that can be put into an appropriate record maintained for purposes of the profession or discipline for which the student is preparing." (www.regulations.utah.edu/academics/6-400.html)

If you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism, talk to me. Simply put, don't cheat. It's not worth it.

Course Outline: (continued)

T 2/7 *The Alchemist* Acts II, III (pages 235-78)
H 2/9 *The Alchemist* Act IV (pages 279-306)

T 2/14 *The Alchemist* Act V (pages 307-326)
PAPER #1 DUE

Early Modern Markets as Theatrical Metaphors

H 2/16 William Shakespeare, *The Merchant of Venice* Act I

T 2/21 *The Merchant of Venice* Act II
H 2/23 *The Merchant of Venice* Act III

T 2/28 *The Merchant of Venice* Act IV
H 3/2 *The Merchant of Venice* Act V
PAPER #2 DUE

T 3/7 NO CLASS – SPRING BREAK
H 3/9 NO CLASS – SPRING BREAK

T 3/14 William Shakespeare, *Troilus and Cressida* Acts I, II, III
H 3/16 *Troilus and Cressida* Acts IV, V

T 3/21 Christopher Marlowe, *Doctor Faustus* Act I (A– Text, pages 135-50)
H 3/23 *Doctor Faustus* Act II (pages 151-61)

T 3/28 *Doctor Faustus* Acts III, IV (pages 162-75)
H 3/30 *Doctor Faustus* Act V (pages 176-83)
PLAYBILL DUE

Marketing an Early Modern Play

T 4/4 William Shakespeare, *Henry V* Acts I, II
H 4/6 *Henry V* Act III

T 4/11 *Henry V* Acts IV, V
H 4/13 Laurence Olivier’s *Henry V* (view in class)

T 4/18 Laurence Olivier’s *Henry V* (view in class)
H 4/20 Laurence Olivier’s *Henry V* (view in class)

T 4/25 discuss Shakespeare’s and Olivier’s *Henry V*

PAPER #3 DUE MONDAY, 5/1 at 5:30 pm