Business 3920: Early Modern Theaters and (as) Markets

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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 some opportunists try to make a profit by picking pockets, while others hawk wares or put on shows. The theater could also use the language of markets and sales as metaphor for other kinds of exchanges. In Christopher 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 reading three of them (and viewing film versions of two); and we'll 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 read Shakespeare’s *Henry V* in conjunction with the heavily edited, radically adapted Laurence Olivier film version of the play in order to explore how this play obsessed with its audience can be marketed to a new one in a different era.

Required Reading:


English Renaissance playwrights (especially Shakespeare) wrote their plays primarily for performance. Printed texts of the plays differed from each other significantly during the playwrights’ lifetimes and in the years following their deaths. Consequently, the variation in different versions and printed editions of the plays continues to this day. If you do not purchase the same editions of the plays that I have ordered, you may have 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.

**Required Viewing:**


Both of these films will be available to view in the Marriott Library through the library’s reserve desk. However, since you will be writing your final paper (worth 30% of your course grade) on Olivier’s *Henry V* in connection with Shakespeare’s play, I strongly encourage you to order your own copy of Olivier’s film (it’s available through Amazon and Barnes and Noble), if possible.

**Grading and Assignments:**

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Paper #1 (on *Bartholomew Fair*) – 30% of total course grade
Paper #2 (on *Doctor Faustus*) – 10%
Paper #3 (on *Henry V*) – 30%
reading quizzes and participation – 30%

The first paper will be a two-page response to *Bartholomew Fair* in connection with a current-day business topic. The second paper will be a one-page responses to *Doctor Faustus*. The third paper will be a two-page comparison of Shakespeare’s *Henry V* and Olivier’s film version. Further details about all of these assignments will be given in class as their deadlines approach.

I will give brief reading quizzes from time to time (usually unannounced and open book). I will also consider other forms of engagement with the class (questions and comments in class discussions, participation in class activities, consultations with me outside of class, etc.) when determining your grade for quizzes and participation.
Late Work:
I will give short deadline extensions on the papers 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 only for three-fourths credit.

I will not allow you to make up quizzes, as their purpose 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 quiz grade.

Course Outline:
Come to class having read or viewed the assignment listed for the day and prepared to discuss it. I may update this reading schedule as the course progresses and our needs as a class evolve. Any changes will be announced in class.

H (6/22) introduction – the English Renaissance theater, early modern stage business

Weeks 2-3: Theatrical Representations of Early Modern Markets

T (6/27) Bartholomew Fair Acts I, II
H (6/29) Bartholomew Fair Act III

T (7/4) NO CLASS – INDEPENDENCE DAY
H (7/6) Bartholomew Fair Acts IV, V

Weeks 4-5: Early Modern Markets as Theatrical Metaphors

T (7/11) The Merchant of Venice
PAPER #1 DUE
H (7/13) Doctor Faustus Acts I, II

T (7/18) Doctor Faustus Acts III, IV, V
PAPER #2 DUE

Weeks 5-7: Marketing an Early Modern Play

H (7/20) William Shakespeare’s Henry V Act I

T (7/25) Shakespeare’s Henry V Acts II, III
H (7/27) Shakespeare’s Henry V Acts IV, V

T (8/1) Laurence Olivier’s Henry V
PAPER #3 DUE
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.

ADA Notice:
The University of Utah seeks to provide equal access to its programs, services and activities for people with disabilities. If you will need accommodations in the class, reasonable prior notice needs to be given to the Center for Disability Services, 162 Union Building, 581-5020 (V/TDD). CDS will work with you and the instructor to make arrangements for accommodations.

Content Accommodation Policy
“It is the student's obligation to determine, before the last day to drop courses without penalty, when course requirements conflict with the student's sincerely-held core beliefs. If there is such a conflict, the student should consider dropping the class.” (http://www.regulations.utah.edu/academics/6-100.html)
For more information, please consult the University of Utah Regulations web site.