

Studies in English Early Modern Literature

ENGL 224

Fall 2025 Section 80 Fully Online 4 Unit(s) 08/20/2025 to 12/08/2025 Modified 08/12/2025

Course Information

Course Description

Have you ever wondered about the apparently androgenous subject of Shakespeare's Sonnet 20--"the master-mistress" of the speaker's "passion"? Or what it might have meant to watch a play in which the main character, who would have been played by a man, plays a woman, who—for at least part of the action—plays a man? Well, now is your chance to take a fresh look at some old texts! ENGL 224 will turn a queer eye on some of the more interesting early modern English texts by Shakespeare and his contemporaries! In addition to some critical gender theory and some historical grounding, the course will read and discuss homoerotics in Lyly's *Galatea*, Marlowe's *Edward II*, Jonson's *Epicoene, or The Silent Woman*, and Middleton and Dekker's *The Roaring Girl*, alongside some of Shakespeare's queerest hits: *As You Like It*, *Twelfth Night*, and *Richard II*. Let's look at queerness as it manifests on the stage and overflows into the street!

Course Description and Requisites

Study of selected writers or topics of the sixteenth and seventeenth century.

Satisfies GWAR: Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement.

Course may be repeated for credit for up to 8 units.

Prerequisite(s): Classified graduate standing or instructor consent.

Grading: Letter Graded

Note(s): This course satisfies graduate-level GWAR in this master's program.

* Classroom Protocols

AI/ChatGPT/Plagiarism: The act of writing is a way to think further on a topic and to organize or clarify those thoughts. The connection between writing and thinking is crucial to your development as a communicator, a critical thinker, and a creator—all skills that will serve you in your future endeavors. Using

AI to respond to essay prompts is cheating: it is cheating you out of the education you are paying for. Make no mistake: using AI as a replacement for your own insight and engagement with literature will keep you from developing the skills you will need to be competitive and successful in the workplace. In my seminar, the use of AI will negatively impact your grade on your assignments (a D or an F). Repeated infractions will lead to a failing grade for the course.

Program Information

Course Goals

Graduate Program Learning Outcomes

1. Students will demonstrate an appropriate level of expertise in literary history, literary theory, and rhetoric.
2. Students will demonstrate high-level proficiency in literary research and in the synthesis of research.
3. Students will demonstrate critical and analytical skills in the interpretation and evaluation of literary texts.
4. Students will demonstrate a command of written academic English, including the abilities to a) organize and present material in a cogent fashion, b) formulate and defend original arguments, c) employ effectively the language of their discipline and d) write under time constraints.
5. Students will demonstrate a reading knowledge of at least one foreign language.
6. Students preparing for teaching careers will receive the appropriate instruction.
7. Students will be prepared for further graduate study.

Course Goals

Course Student Learning Objectives

1. Demonstrate familiarity with major periods/authors/texts covered in the MA exam
2. Demonstrate ability to analyze literary texts in context
3. Demonstrate ability to respond to sample exam questions

Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs)

The following statement has been adopted by the Department of English for inclusion in all syllabi: In English Department Courses, instructors will comment on and grade the quality of student writing as well as the quality of ideas being conveyed. All student writing should be distinguished by correct grammar and punctuation, appropriate diction and syntax, and well-organized paragraphs. The Department of English reaffirms its commitment to the differential grading scale as defined in the SJSU Catalog ("The Grading System").

Grades issued must represent a full range of student performance:

A = excellent;
B = above average;
C = average;
D = below average;
F = failure.

Within any of the letter grade ranges (e.g. B+/B/B-), the assignment of a +(plus) or -(minus) grade will reflect stronger (+) or weaker (-) completion of the goals of the assignment.

Program Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of the MA English program, students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate an appropriate level of expertise in literary history, literary theory, and rhetoric.
2. Demonstrate high-level proficiency in literary research and in the synthesis of research
3. Demonstrate critical and analytical skills in the interpretation and evaluation of literary texts.
4. Demonstrate a command of written academic English, including the abilities to
 - a. organize and present material in a cogent fashion,
 - b. formulate and defend original arguments,
 - c. employ effectively the language of their discipline and
 - d. write under time constraints.
5. Demonstrate a reading knowledge of at least one foreign language.

Upon successful completion of the MFA in Creative Writing, students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate a high level of ability to propose and complete a publishable, full-length work of literature in a primary genre concentration (fiction, creative nonfiction, poetry, or scriptwriting).
2. Demonstrate high level of proficiency to write works of literature in a secondary genre concentration (fiction, creative nonfiction, poetry, or scriptwriting).
3. Demonstrate an appropriate level of knowledge of literary history, literary theory, and craft and theory of creative writing.
4. Demonstrate critical and analytical skills in the evaluation and interpretation of literary texts.
5. Demonstrate a command of written academic English, including the abilities to:
 - a) organize and present material in a cogent fashion;
 - b) formulate and defend original arguments;
 - c) employ effectively the language of their discipline;
 - d) write under time constraints.

Department Information:

Department Name: English and Comparative Literature

Department Office: FO 102

Department Website: www.sjsu.edu/english (<https://www.sjsu.edu/english>)

Department email: english@sjsu.edu (<mailto:english@sjsu.edu>)

Department phone number: 408-924-4425

Course Materials

Nicole Galland, *Boy*. William Morrow, 2025. ISBN: 978-0063342859

Christopher Marlowe, *Edward II*. Edited by Matthew R. Martin, Broadview Press (2010). ISBN: 9781551119106

Middleton and Dekker, *The Roaring Girl*. Norton Critical Edition, edited by Jennifer Panek (2011). ISBN-13 : 978-039393277

Ben Jonson, *Epicoene – or the Silent Woman*. New Mermaids/Bloomsbury Press (2014).

ISBN	9781408144381
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Aphra Behn, *The Widow Ranter*. Broadview Edition (2022). ISBN: 9781554815739

Other Readings

John Lyly, *Galathea* Full Text: https://internetshakespeare.uvic.ca/doc/Gal_M/complete/index.html

Peter Ackroyd, *Queer City* (Link to SJSU Library Free E-Book): https://csu-sjsu.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01CALS_SJO/tu4ck5/alma991071139119502901

William Shakespeare. Use this link to find annotated versions of *Richard II*, *Twelfth Night*, *As You Like It*, and all of the sonnets: <https://internetshakespeare.uvic.ca/Library/plays.html>

Supplementary readings for this course will be available on Canvas.

Course Requirements and Assignments

Course Requirements: This is a seminar, and as such, each of us is responsible for the quality and usefulness of our meetings. I expect that you will find the readings both interesting and valuable, and I encourage you to express and explore your particular interests as we work through the material.

Contribution and Participation: I expect all students to be prepared to discuss the material in every class. Students who do not bring anything to the discussion week after week will receive a fail for this portion of the course. I do not expect expertise, but I do count on an active interest and thoughtful questions from EVERY STUDENT.

Presentations: To help encourage active participation, I require at least one student per week (depending on the number of students in the class) to be responsible doing some extra research and offering a presentation to the group. The presenter should be prepared to lead the class for a minimum of 15 minutes. A sign-up sheet will be provided the first few weeks for you to select the works and issues that you are the most interested in. Presenters should choose a topic inspired by the reading for the week (anything goes, really), and offer a mini lecture on that topic, sharing material of interest (paintings, images, articles, videos, etc.) for the class to consider. You should prepare a few (at least 3) discussion questions that are grounded in the reading for the week (with relevant passages to highlight) to help move the discussion along. During your assigned week, you should be prepared to pose provocative questions and possible answers stimulate class discussion. Please pay close attention to the text itself. You should be prepared to point to specific aspects of the text to aid your discussion. Specific directions will be provided on Canvas.

Questions: Each week, you will need to post a list of questions (3 is a good number) for discussion about the readings on Canvas. These may be informal, or they may point to places in the text where you had difficulty understanding the content. Or, they may be more detailed questions about the author's craft. You should consider these questions your entry ticket to the seminar as they will help guide our discussions. You might also use these questions to explore ideas about the material that interest you for possible future research. **I expect the questions to reflect your specific interests and your engagement with the text itself. Points will be reduced for generalized questions.**

Written Work: You will be asked to write one 12-15 page (around 5,000 word) scholarly essay for this class, using both primary and secondary texts. This essay will allow you to more thoroughly develop a line of thinking inspired by the reading and discussions, and also to incorporate research. To help you identify a topic and potential argument, I will collect a **short abstract** outlining your ideas in week 12 and provide you with feedback. In week 14, you should plan on submitting a **draft of your essay** as it has progressed to this point. The amount of feedback you receive will be directly proportional to the submission—the more you are able to think through your argument, the more constructive feedback you will receive. The **final seminar paper** will be due on December 15th.

Your success on this paper will be directly proportional to your knowledge and understanding of the texts.

Grading Information

Grading Breakdown:

Contribution and Participation	15%
Presentation	15%
Weekly Questions	15%
Abstract	5%
Essay Draft	5%
Seminar Paper	45%

University Policies

Per [University Policy S16-9 \(PDF\)](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf) (<http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf>), relevant university policy concerning all courses, such as student responsibilities, academic integrity, accommodations, dropping and adding, consent for recording of class, etc. and available student services (e.g. learning assistance, counseling, and other resources) are listed on the [Syllabus Information](https://www.sjsu.edu/curriculum/courses/syllabus-info.php) (<https://www.sjsu.edu/curriculum/courses/syllabus-info.php>) web page. Make sure to visit this page to review and be aware of these university policies and resources.

Course Schedule

ENGL 228: Genre Studies, Course Schedule

SUBJECT TO CHANGE

Readings for this course are found in the required textbooks ordered for the course or in supplementary modules available on Canvas.

Course Schedule

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines <i>(If appropriate, add extra column(s) to meet your needs.)</i>
Module 0		Review Syllabus Review Questions for the Course
1	8/25	Introductions – Definitions, guiding questions. Read <i>Boy</i> by Nicole Galland.
2	9/1	Labor Day – NO CLASS
3	9/8	<i>Boy</i> , by Nicole Galland
Module 1		Post Discussion Questions for <i>Boy</i> (Week 3)
4	9/15	<i>Boy</i> (continued). General Theory. Excerpts from Lois Tyson's <i>Critical Theory Today</i> , Michel Foucault from <i>History of Sexuality</i> , Volume 1, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick from <i>Epistemology of the Closet</i> , Peter Ackroyd, Chapters 1 and 2 from <i>Queer City</i> .
Module 2		Post Discussion Questions for General Theory (Week 4)
5	9/22	Lyly's <i>Galatea</i> original text and adaptation edited by Andy Kesson (Bloomsbury Press). <i>Folger Shakespeare Library Podcast</i> from September 24, 2024, "Will Tosh on the Hidden Queer Lives of William Shakespeare."
Module 3		Discussion Questions for <i>Galatea</i> and Folger Podcast (Week 5)
6	9/29	Shakespeare's Queer Sonnets. 1-17, 19-25, 144-145.

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines <i>(If appropriate, add extra column(s) to meet your needs.)</i>
Module 4		Discussion Questions for Shakespeare's Queer Sonnets (Week 6)
7	10/6	Queer History Plays Marlowe, <i>Edward II</i> Ackroyd, Chapters 3 and 4 of <i>Queer City</i> Alan Bray, "Homosexuality and Male Friendships"
Module 5		Discussion Questions for Marlowe's <i>Edward II</i> (Week 7)
8	10/13	Queer History Plays Continued. Shakespeare, <i>Richard II</i>
Module 6		Discussion Questions for Shakespeare's <i>Richard II</i> (Week 8)
9	10/20	Shakespeare's Queer Comedies <i>As You Like It</i> Ackroyd, Chapters 5 and 6 of <i>Queer City</i>
Module 7		Discussion Questions for <i>As You Like It</i> . (Week 9)
10	10/27	Shakespeare's Queer Comedies Continued. <i>Twelfth Night</i>
Module 8		Discussion Questions for <i>Twelfth Night</i> (Week 10)

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines <i>(If appropriate, add extra column(s) to meet your needs.)</i>
11	11/3	<p>The 17th Century Queer City Comedies</p> <p>Middleton and Dekker, <i>The Roaring Girl</i></p> <p>The Diary of Moll Frith</p> <p><i>Hic Mulier, Haec Vir</i></p> <p>Ackroyd Chapters 7 and 8</p>
Module 9		Discussion Questions for <i>The Roaring Girl</i> and other readings (Week 11)
12	11/10	<p>Queer City Comedies Continued.</p> <p>Ben Jonson, <i>Epicoene</i></p> <p>Mirabelli, Philip, "Silence, Wit, and Wisdom in The Silent Woman," <i>SEL</i>, 29(2).</p>
Module 10		<p>Discussion Questions for <i>Epicoene</i> (Week 12)</p> <p>Abstracts Due Nov. 14th</p>
13	11/17	<p>Colonial Queers</p> <p>Aphra Behn's <i>The Widow Ranter</i></p>
Module 11		Discussion Questions for <i>The Widow Ranter</i> (Week 13)
14	11/24	No class meeting. Essay drafts due on Canvas by 11:59.
Module 12		Essay Drafts Due 11/24
15	12/1	Conferences
16	12/8	Last day of instruction – Final papers due by midnight on December 15 th .

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines <i>(If appropriate, add extra column(s) to meet your needs.)</i>
		Final Essays Due December 15th