



ENGL309

Shakespeare and the Renaissance

S2 Day 2016

Dept of English

Contents

<u>General Information</u>	2
<u>Learning Outcomes</u>	2
<u>General Assessment Information</u>	3
<u>Assessment Tasks</u>	3
<u>Delivery and Resources</u>	6
<u>Unit Schedule</u>	6
<u>Policies and Procedures</u>	9
<u>Graduate Capabilities</u>	10
<u>Lecture Notes</u>	14
<u>Marking Rubrics</u>	31
<u>Selected Reading List</u>	33

Disclaimer

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General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff

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Credit points

3

Prerequisites

6cp in ENGL units at 200 level

Corequisites

Co-badged status

Unit description

The unit considers a broad range of Shakespeare's writings in relation to writings by his contemporaries and by his successors – dramatists as well as non-dramatists. In doing so it examines how those texts at once represent and engage with issues and problems in the culture of early modern, or Renaissance, England. Those issues and problems include: issues of genre and of sexuality in verse of the 1590s; problems evoked in representations of tragic selfhood; problems associated with religious and political conflict; and problems arising from English portrayals both of England and of life outside it.

Important Academic Dates

Information about important academic dates including deadlines for withdrawing from units are available at <https://www.mq.edu.au/study/calendar-of-dates>

Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this unit, you will be able to:

gaining an understanding of key Shakespearean texts by close analysis and research
(1-5, 8-9)

gaining an understanding, in the same ways, of major non-Shakespearean texts of the English Renaissance (1-5, 8-9)

understanding relations between texts by Shakespeare and those by his contemporaries (1-5, 8-9)

understanding how texts by his contemporaries relate to each other (1-5, 8-9)

gaining knowledge of how the set texts represent issues and problems recurrent in the culture of the English Renaissance (1-5, 8-9)

General Assessment Information

In the case of each assignment, please also consult the 300-level grade descriptors, which can be viewed under "marking rubrics".

Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Due
<u>Class Test/ Take home exam</u>	20%	day of the lecture, week 3
<u>Tutorial Presentation/Essay 1</u>	30%	as described
<u>Final Essay</u>	50%	14/11

Class Test/ Take home exam

Due: **day of the lecture, week 3**

Weighting: **20%**

Brief description:

The Class Test will be a 1,500 word essay, written at home for submission on the day of the lecture in Week 3. It will focus in particular on students' abilities to write close textual analysis. The Test will ask students to discuss "Astrophil and Stella", Sonnet 71, as printed in "The Norton Anthology of English Literature," Volume B. In writing on the poem, students should answer the question, 'How does Astrophil link desire with discontent?' Students should focus on contradictions and tensions within the poem: on different worldviews being set in opposition, different senses of duty felt by the poem's speaker. One way of highlighting the interplay of worldviews, of values, of the speaker's responses to them, is to pay special attention to the imagery of the sonnet. What images seem in particular to emphasise how different meanings and values clash in Astrophil's experience of desire? Also, consider the different aspects or areas of human life that are evoked by Astrophil.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- gaining an understanding of key Shakespearean texts by close analysis and research (1-5, 8-9)
- gaining an understanding, in the same ways, of major non-Shakespearean texts of the English Renaissance (1-5, 8-9)
- understanding relations between texts by Shakespeare and those by his contemporaries (1-5, 8-9)
- understanding how texts by his contemporaries relate to each other (1-5, 8-9)
- gaining knowledge of how the set texts represent issues and problems recurrent in the culture of the English Renaissance (1-5, 8-9)

Tutorial Presentation/Essay 1

Due: **as described**

Weighting: **30%**

Brief description:

The tutorial presentation should be **about 5-7 minutes maximum**. Basically, it will be the presentation of a thesis with supporting evidence: in addition to providing some close textual analysis, students should find two recent journal articles or book chapters (written within the last 5 years) and refer to them in their discussions. The presentation will be developed into a 2,000-word essay and submitted in the following week--that is, on the day of the next tutorial (or, what would be the next tutorial if your presentation comes directly before one of the breaks). The essay is graded but the presentation itself is not.

Students should NOT deliver the presentation merely by reading out their complete essay, if it is already written. Doing so will not count as having delivered the presentation.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- gaining an understanding of key Shakespearean texts by close analysis and research (1-5, 8-9)
- gaining an understanding, in the same ways, of major non-Shakespearean texts of the English Renaissance (1-5, 8-9)
- understanding relations between texts by Shakespeare and those by his contemporaries (1-5, 8-9)
- understanding how texts by his contemporaries relate to each other (1-5, 8-9)
- gaining knowledge of how the set texts represent issues and problems recurrent in the culture of the English Renaissance (1-5, 8-9)

Final Essay

Due: **14/11**

Weighting: **50%**

Brief description:

An essay (2,500-3,000 words) in lieu of an examination, requiring that students examine at least 3 of the set texts. A text discussed in the First Essay or Class Test cannot be discussed in the Final Essay. The topics and questions for that Essay are designed to encourage independent analysis and research. Students will be asked to analyse texts closely, to link them, to suggest how they represent preoccupations in English Renaissance culture, and to engage with commentary on those texts. Since the final essay is in lieu of an exam, the paper is graded, with a general comment, but not annotated. Students wishing to have feedback on the essay can make an appointment to discuss it.

Topics and Questions for the Final Assignment

1. Discuss the different uses of language in soliloquies from three plays that you have studied this semester (that is, at least one soliloquy from each play).
2. How are the will to power and self-destruction linked by Shakespeare and by two other authors?
3. What theoretical approach to Shakespeare--that is, what literary theory--have you found most useful in reading his texts? In your answer, discuss three Shakespearean plays that you have studied this semester.
4. Examine portrayals of the sacred by three authors whose work you have studied in this unit: what do you see as their main differences?
5. Consider how the Petrarchan discourse of desire is critiqued by any three of the writers studied this semester.
6. What different attitudes to honour are presented by any three writers studied in this unit?
7. Devise a topic of your own choosing—but consult your tutor before working on it.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- gaining an understanding of key Shakespearean texts by close analysis and research (1-5, 8-9)
- gaining an understanding, in the same ways, of major non-Shakespearean texts of the English Renaissance (1-5, 8-9)
- understanding relations between texts by Shakespeare and those by his contemporaries (1-5, 8-9)
- understanding how texts by his contemporaries relate to each other (1-5, 8-9)
- gaining knowledge of how the set texts represent issues and problems recurrent in the culture of the English Renaissance (1-5, 8-9)

Delivery and Resources

Students must: attend all tutorials; deliver a presentation in one of those tutorials (there will be no exceptions); submit the Class Test and the two essays. Attendance at lectures is advised.

Lecture (1 hour)

Tutorial (1 hour)

I-Learn

(as in previous delivery of unit)

There have been additional texts added to the non-dramatic literature studied in the unit.

Assignment Submission:

Essays are to be submitted via Turnitin.

Examination:

There is no examination.

Extensions and special consideration:

Extensions will be granted only for medical or other exceptional reasons.

Required and recommended texts and/or materials

S. Greenblatt, et al., *The Norton Shakespeare: Essential Plays/The Sonnets*

S. Greenblatt, et. al., *The Norton Anthology of English Literature, Ninth Edition, Volume B*

Recommended: L. Hopkins, *Beginning Shakespeare*

J. Coffin and R. Stacey, *Western Civilizations, Volume 2*

Unit Schedule

Week 1	Introduction: "Shakespeare" and "the Renaissance"	No tutorial
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Week 2	<p>Competing Representations of Sexuality in the 1590s.</p> <p>(i) Rewriting the Petrarchan discourse of desire: Sidney, "Astrophil and Stella," Spenser, "Amoretti," Shakespeare, Sonnets 18 and 30, Drayton, "Idea"</p>	<p>How is male sexuality explored in two of the poems set for study this week?</p>
Week 3	<p>Class Test submitted</p>	<p>No tutorial</p>
Week 4	<p>Competing Representations of Sexuality in the 1590s.</p> <p>(ii) Liberating and naturalising Ovid: Donne's Elegies and "Sappho to Philaenis"; Carew's "A Rapture"</p>	<p>Donne's Elegies and "Sappho to Philaenis"; Carew's "A Rapture":</p> <p>How differently do Donne and Carew portray female sexual power in the poems set for this week? You need discuss only one poem by Donne in relation to Carew's poem.</p>
Week 5	<p>Sexuality and Selfhood.</p> <p>(i) Donne, "Songs and Sonnets" ("The Sun Rising," "The Apparition," "The Flea", "The Relic"); Shakespeare, sonnets 20, 116 and 126</p>	<p>Donne's "Songs and Sonnets"; Shakespeare's Sonnets:</p> <p>Discuss the connections between gender and power (or powerlessness) in two poems set for study this week.</p>

Week 6	Sexuality and Selfhood. (ii) Donne's "Holy Sonnets"; Crashaw's "The Flaming Heart"; Shakespeare, sonnets 144 and 146 Herbert's "Death" and "Love (3)"	Why do you think sexuality and the sacred are interwoven in any two of the poems set for study this week?
Week 7	Sexuality and Selfhood. (iii) "Romeo and Juliet"	"Romeo and Juliet" How does the play contextualise the Petrarchan discourse of desire?
Week 8	Selfhood and Tragedy. (i) "Hamlet"	"Hamlet" Is Hamlet actually a revenger?
Week 9	Selfhood and Tragedy. (ii) "Macbeth"; Marvell's "An Horatian Ode"	"Macbeth;" Marvell's "An Horatian Ode": How are Shakespeare's Macbeth and Marvell's Cromwell unlike?
Week 10	Selfhood and Tragedy. (iii) "King Lear"	"King Lear" Discuss the different versions of "the sacred" in Shakespeare's play.
Week 11	Imagining East and West: "Othello"	"Othello" Is Othello a hero or a fool?
Week 12	Alternative Englands: Raleigh, "A Vision upon this Conceit of the Faery Queene," Jonson's "To Penshurst" and Marvell's "Appleton House"	Set poems by Raleigh, Jonson, and Marvell: Discuss the concepts of England in two of the set poems.
Week 13	No lecture	No tutorial

Policies and Procedures

Macquarie University policies and procedures are accessible from [Policy Central](#). Students should be aware of the following policies in particular with regard to Learning and Teaching:

Academic Honesty Policy http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/academic_honesty/policy.html

New Assessment Policy in effect from Session 2 2016 http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/assessment/policy_2016.html. For more information visit http://students.mq.edu.au/events/2016/07/19/new_assessment_policy_in_place_from_session_2/

Assessment Policy prior to Session 2 2016 <http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/assessment/policy.html>

Grading Policy prior to Session 2 2016 <http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/grading/policy.html>

Grade Appeal Policy <http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/gradeappeal/policy.html>

Complaint Management Procedure for Students and Members of the Public http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/complaint_management/procedure.html

Disruption to Studies Policy http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/disruption_studies/policy.html *The Disruption to Studies Policy is effective from March 3 2014 and replaces the Special Consideration Policy.*

In addition, a number of other policies can be found in the [Learning and Teaching Category](#) of Policy Central.

Student Code of Conduct

Macquarie University students have a responsibility to be familiar with the Student Code of Conduct: https://students.mq.edu.au/support/student_conduct/

Results

Results shown in *iLearn*, or released directly by your Unit Convenor, are not confirmed as they are subject to final approval by the University. Once approved, final results will be sent to your student email address and will be made available in [eStudent](#). For more information visit ask.mq.edu.au.

Student Support

Macquarie University provides a range of support services for students. For details, visit <http://students.mq.edu.au/support/>

Learning Skills

Learning Skills (mq.edu.au/learningskills) provides academic writing resources and study strategies to improve your marks and take control of your study.

- [Workshops](#)
- [StudyWise](#)
- [Academic Integrity Module for Students](#)

- [Ask a Learning Adviser](#)

Student Services and Support

Students with a disability are encouraged to contact the [Disability Service](#) who can provide appropriate help with any issues that arise during their studies.

Student Enquiries

For all student enquiries, visit Student Connect at ask.mq.edu.au

IT Help

For help with University computer systems and technology, visit http://www.mq.edu.au/about_us/offices_and_units/information_technology/help/.

When using the University's IT, you must adhere to the [Acceptable Use of IT Resources Policy](#). The policy applies to all who connect to the MQ network including students.

Graduate Capabilities

Creative and Innovative

Our graduates will also be capable of creative thinking and of creating knowledge. They will be imaginative and open to experience and capable of innovation at work and in the community. We want them to be engaged in applying their critical, creative thinking.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- gaining an understanding of key Shakespearean texts by close analysis and research (1-5, 8-9)
- gaining an understanding, in the same ways, of major non-Shakespearean texts of the English Renaissance (1-5, 8-9)
- understanding relations between texts by Shakespeare and those by his contemporaries (1-5, 8-9)
- understanding how texts by his contemporaries relate to each other (1-5, 8-9)
- gaining knowledge of how the set texts represent issues and problems recurrent in the culture of the English Renaissance (1-5, 8-9)

Assessment tasks

- Class Test/ Take home exam
- Tutorial Presentation/Essay 1
- Final Essay

Capable of Professional and Personal Judgement and Initiative

We want our graduates to have emotional intelligence and sound interpersonal skills and to demonstrate discernment and common sense in their professional and personal judgement. They will exercise initiative as needed. They will be capable of risk assessment, and be able to handle ambiguity and complexity, enabling them to be adaptable in diverse and changing environments.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- gaining an understanding of key Shakespearean texts by close analysis and research (1-5, 8-9)
- gaining an understanding, in the same ways, of major non-Shakespearean texts of the English Renaissance (1-5, 8-9)
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Assessment tasks

- Class Test/ Take home exam
- Tutorial Presentation/Essay 1
- Final Essay

Commitment to Continuous Learning

Our graduates will have enquiring minds and a literate curiosity which will lead them to pursue knowledge for its own sake. They will continue to pursue learning in their careers and as they participate in the world. They will be capable of reflecting on their experiences and relationships with others and the environment, learning from them, and growing - personally, professionally and socially.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- gaining an understanding of key Shakespearean texts by close analysis and research (1-5, 8-9)
- gaining an understanding, in the same ways, of major non-Shakespearean texts of the English Renaissance (1-5, 8-9)
- understanding relations between texts by Shakespeare and those by his contemporaries

(1-5, 8-9)

- understanding how texts by his contemporaries relate to each other (1-5, 8-9)
- gaining knowledge of how the set texts represent issues and problems recurrent in the culture of the English Renaissance (1-5, 8-9)

Assessment tasks

- Class Test/ Take home exam
- Tutorial Presentation/Essay 1
- Final Essay

Discipline Specific Knowledge and Skills

Our graduates will take with them the intellectual development, depth and breadth of knowledge, scholarly understanding, and specific subject content in their chosen fields to make them competent and confident in their subject or profession. They will be able to demonstrate, where relevant, professional technical competence and meet professional standards. They will be able to articulate the structure of knowledge of their discipline, be able to adapt discipline-specific knowledge to novel situations, and be able to contribute from their discipline to inter-disciplinary solutions to problems.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- gaining an understanding of key Shakespearean texts by close analysis and research (1-5, 8-9)
- gaining an understanding, in the same ways, of major non-Shakespearean texts of the English Renaissance (1-5, 8-9)
- understanding relations between texts by Shakespeare and those by his contemporaries (1-5, 8-9)
- understanding how texts by his contemporaries relate to each other (1-5, 8-9)
- gaining knowledge of how the set texts represent issues and problems recurrent in the culture of the English Renaissance (1-5, 8-9)

Assessment tasks

- Class Test/ Take home exam
- Tutorial Presentation/Essay 1
- Final Essay

Critical, Analytical and Integrative Thinking

We want our graduates to be capable of reasoning, questioning and analysing, and to integrate and synthesise learning and knowledge from a range of sources and environments; to be able to

critique constraints, assumptions and limitations; to be able to think independently and systemically in relation to scholarly activity, in the workplace, and in the world. We want them to have a level of scientific and information technology literacy.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- gaining an understanding of key Shakespearean texts by close analysis and research (1-5, 8-9)
- gaining an understanding, in the same ways, of major non-Shakespearean texts of the English Renaissance (1-5, 8-9)
- understanding relations between texts by Shakespeare and those by his contemporaries (1-5, 8-9)
- understanding how texts by his contemporaries relate to each other (1-5, 8-9)
- gaining knowledge of how the set texts represent issues and problems recurrent in the culture of the English Renaissance (1-5, 8-9)

Assessment tasks

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- Tutorial Presentation/Essay 1
- Final Essay

Problem Solving and Research Capability

Our graduates should be capable of researching; of analysing, and interpreting and assessing data and information in various forms; of drawing connections across fields of knowledge; and they should be able to relate their knowledge to complex situations at work or in the world, in order to diagnose and solve problems. We want them to have the confidence to take the initiative in doing so, within an awareness of their own limitations.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- gaining an understanding of key Shakespearean texts by close analysis and research (1-5, 8-9)
- gaining an understanding, in the same ways, of major non-Shakespearean texts of the English Renaissance (1-5, 8-9)
- understanding relations between texts by Shakespeare and those by his contemporaries (1-5, 8-9)
- understanding how texts by his contemporaries relate to each other (1-5, 8-9)
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Assessment tasks

- Class Test/ Take home exam
- Tutorial Presentation/Essay 1
- Final Essay

Effective Communication

We want to develop in our students the ability to communicate and convey their views in forms effective with different audiences. We want our graduates to take with them the capability to read, listen, question, gather and evaluate information resources in a variety of formats, assess, write clearly, speak effectively, and to use visual communication and communication technologies as appropriate.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- gaining an understanding of key Shakespearean texts by close analysis and research (1-5, 8-9)
- gaining an understanding, in the same ways, of major non-Shakespearean texts of the English Renaissance (1-5, 8-9)
- understanding relations between texts by Shakespeare and those by his contemporaries (1-5, 8-9)
- gaining knowledge of how the set texts represent issues and problems recurrent in the culture of the English Renaissance (1-5, 8-9)

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- Class Test/ Take home exam
- Tutorial Presentation/Essay 1
- Final Essay

Lecture Notes

Lectures

Week 1

-

What we as individual readers think of Shakespeare—how we interpret his

texts—is always heavily but not totally conditioned by how our culture interprets

him at any given time: there is no unmediated or transparent view on Shakespeare and his works.

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That is to say, our views on Shakespeare are coloured by the facts we possess and the ways in which our culture chooses, more or less by consensus (a consensus of disagreements), to make sense of them. We are confronted by the identity politics within the global Shakespeare industry.

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That doesn't mean we can think about Shakespeare and his writings only in the terms available to us at any given time; but it does mean that our thinking is conditioned directly or indirectly by them (and we have to acknowledge that it is).

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If there's no single, uncoloured version available to us of who or what

Shakespeare was, nevertheless we can know something of the preoccupations that recur throughout his texts (and from them we can draw informed inferences as to what may be the dominant, competing worldviews at stake in his texts).

•

Here are some suggestions relevant to those preoccupations: that people are driven irresistibly by their appetites—in defiance of convention, decorum, and law; that people are much compelled by fear; that the will to power is everywhere in human life—and that there is too little compassion in human interaction; that our senses of what constitutes “the natural” or “the divine” are changeable and contested; that we inhabit a physical world in constant flux and transformation, and marked by betrayal; that we ourselves are a mix of the recurring and the fluctuating, capable of sometimes unexpected transformations

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To say that leads here: to understand “Shakespeare” we need to see how his texts reflect, engage with, and re-imagine the culture from which they emerge.

•

That culture can be characterized by the terms “Renaissance” or “early modern”—problematic but useful terms which involve allusion to classical and (or) Christian paradigms. The first of those terms involves the idea of “rebirth” and is linked to the concept of “humanism”. The second leads to notions of the “modern” and the “postmodern”.

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We can usefully consider those terms, moreover, in relation to issues of conflicting worldviews, hierarchy and surveillance, gender and sexuality

•

Suggested reading: Perry et al., *Western Civilization* (6th edn, 2000), 300-348,

Coffin/Stacey, *Western Civilizations* (2005), 434-529, *Understanding Shakespeare*, 5-35, Nauert, *Humanism and the Culture of Renaissance Europe* (2nd edn, 2006). See also, Starn, "A Postmodern Renaissance?" *Renaissance Quarterly*, 60 (2007), 1-24.

Week 2

-

The Petrarchan discourse of desire offers the most influential rhetoric of romantic love in western culture

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That rhetoric of love expresses a narcissistic male self, a Narcissus who is also a kind of Pygmalion

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He is, as well, divided against himself: torn between apparently irreconcilable perspectives on the world (what might broadly be called the Christian and the Ovidian)

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Centuries after Petrarch first wrote, Sidney recreates the Petrarchan speaker, locating him—and his inner warfare—in the culture of the English Renaissance. How did Sidney re-imagine Petrarch in order to naturalize him?

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Spenser tries to reconcile the conflict of perspectives in Petrarchan discourse, attempting to bring harmony out of discord by subsuming the secular in the sacred, profane in sacred love

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Shakespeare translates the conflicts of the Petrarchan discourse across genders, beyond two lovers, and seems to place the experience of desire in an Ovidian universe

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Drayton's sonnets suggest both the residual power of the Petrarchan rhetoric of romantic love in early modern English culture and how tired readers are of seeing that rhetoric used to describe the experience of desire

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Suggested reading: Forster, *The Icy Fire* (1969), Bloom, ed., *Petrarch* (1989), Sturm-Maddox, *Petrarch's Laurels* (1992), Smith, *Elizabethan Poetry*, Low, *The Reinvention of Love*, Dubrow, *Echoes of Desire*, Cousins, *Shakespeare's Sonnets*

Week 3 : Class Test submitted

Week 4

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Donne's Elegies are intended for a small and, predominantly, male readership (what has been called, since the early 1900s, a coterie readership)

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The poems draw attention to their ingenuity, their rhetorical virtuosity, and their flouting of social decorum, of conventional pieties—a considered outrageousness

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That outrageousness is, however, merely transgressive: that is to say, it offers a conventional and contained flouting of convention. It is safe rather than dangerous, but sometimes it could be risk-taking

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It does so primarily by presenting a Romanised rewriting of Donne's London: a London re-imagined as a city like Ovid's Rome.

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Donne thereby implies that he is a successor to Christopher Marlowe—an admirer of Ovid (in fact, the great rewriter of Ovid in Elizabethan literary culture) and the genius of the unconventional in Elizabethan literature. Donne, like Marlowe, turns his back on the contemporary practice of Christianising Ovid (in other words, of trying to make Ovid's writings harmonise with Christian values)

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Donne's speakers in his Elegies have, at the same time, interesting and elemental similarities to the speaker of Petrarch's love verse

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Donne's speakers put forward perspectives on experience that are narcissistic and

androcentric—even (or, especially) in a poem on lesbian love, Sappho to Philaenis

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Donne's speakers, like Marlowe's Doctor Faustus, seem driven by the will to power as well as pleasure: power over women, over male rivals, over desire itself

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Suggested reading: Marotti, John Donne: Coterie Poet, Low, The Reinvention of Love, Dubrow, Echoes of Desire, Mousley, John Donne, Cousins, Donne and the Resources of Kind

Week 5

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Donne's Songs and Sonnets offer deliberately divergent views on desire

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They therefore affirm the insistence in early modern literary as well as visual culture that desire is endlessly self-transforming and transformative

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In fact they play with the idea, to be seen in Sidney and in Shakespeare also, that desire is obsessive and endless

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Some of the perspectives on desire—the narcissistic and the colonialist—voiced in Donne's Elegies recur in his Songs and Sonnets but new perspectives also appear

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In particular, Donne's love lyrics present eutopian visions of love: the notion that love creates, for those who truly are in love, a "good place" (eutopia) that is their private space within the great world

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His lyrics of eutopian desire also suggest that true lovers become one selfhood—a single identity despite their physical individualities

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Yet Donne's speakers are invariably aware how precarious such assertions are, and they consistently affirm but interrogate them. They know that love's eutopia exists only as a fiction

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The great challenges to the eutopian vision of desire (whatever form of desire may be at issue in any given poem) are usually these: time, separation, betrayal, death

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The will to personal power and the impulse to mutuality are often in conflict throughout the relationships depicted in Donne's erotic verse

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The myth of love's eutopia is similarly explored by Shakespeare in Sonnet 112

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Elsewhere, he uses other myths to suggest how the will to (personal) power and the impulse to mutuality conflict in the human experience of desire

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In particular, he deploys myths of Cupid, Venus, and Adonis—in connection with notions of androgyny and of unity amidst multiplicity

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Like Donne he both celebrates and questions: his idealizings are never simple, never (in one way or another) unquestioned

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Suggested reading: For Donne, as in Week 3; for Shakespeare, *Dubrow, Captive Victors, Cousins*, Shakespeare's Sonnets

Week 6

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Donne's religious verse suggests that on earth there can be no "good place," for the only good place lies beyond time and change, in heaven

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Therefore, all eutopian thinking about the self and the world is illusory—the invention of a 'good

place' that is in fact a dangerous self-delusion

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Moreover, the significant other in the religious verse is not someone who can be manipulated or dominated—is someone who does not have to reply to the ingenious speeches of Donne's personae

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That other is, however exactly imagined, necessarily the ultimate Other: complete, personal yet remote, merciful yet terrible

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And before that Other the self is compelled to recognize and acknowledge its own necessary submissiveness or subordination, its own incapacity to control who it finally is and what will finally happen to it

-

How much control the self has over its experience is not clear in Donne's Holy Sonnets—which raises the question of the extent to which it is (i) feminized and (ii) at different times voicing a Calvinist theology

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Crashaw's religious verse habitually celebrates female spiritual experience and what could be called feminine spirituality in men (note: the soul was, in Renaissance culture across Europe, almost always referred to or pictured as female—with reference to the souls of both men and women). Crashaw is especially interested in the idea of female agency and heroism

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Crashaw's religious verse, although Catholic and not Protestant (as was Donne's), although ecstatic in tone rather than argumentative, emphasizes submissiveness—and recurrently portrays that submissiveness by means of sexual metaphors.

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In Shakespeare's Sonnets, only two poems insistently present a religious world view

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One of those uses religion as a dramatic way of talking about sex; the other is—it might be argued—flatly conventional and stands out as the sole religious poem amidst the 154 poems that

make up Shakespeare's otherwise Ovidian sequence

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We are left wondering how important religion is, or is not, to notions of selfhood

in the Sonnets, whereas, in Herbert's poems, there is no selfhood outside religion. In his poems, there is an intricate and dramatic interplay among submission, transformation, and celebration. Selfhood is unstable and problematic and endlessly self-reflexive

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Suggested reading: as for Week 5, with Cousins, *The Catholic Religious Poets*, Corns, *The Cambridge Companion*, and Summers/Pebworth, *Representing Women*

Week 7

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Romeo and Juliet sets the Petrarchan discourse of desire amidst the socio-political pressures of an Italian city-state, Verona

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We are shown from the start how those pressures or forces—for example the feud and family obligation—begin to transform the Petrarchan discourse and to be transformed by it

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We are shown, too, that the Petrarchan discourse competes with other versions of desire, which is to say, other versions of what "love" is

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And we begin to see that desire is (i) inseparable from violence in the world of the play (ii) unconfined by conventional social constraints

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Desire breaks anarchically through constraint by family obligation, law, political dictate, religious authority

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Focusing on Romeo's first speech suggests the extent to which his initial sense of sexuality and of selfhood has been shaped by Petrarchan cliché

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Focusing on his first dialogue with Juliet suggests how she is aware of but has moved beyond the merely clichéd Petrarchism espoused by and shaping Romeo

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The lovers' subsequent dialogue indicates that the socio-political realities of Verona at once complement and heighten the Petrarchan discourse of desire as acted out by Romeo and Juliet—transforming it and therefore transforming them

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In the world of Verona, it is desirable that what might be called the Petrarchan vision should alter: it should find fulfilment in marriage, since what the divided city most requires is that harmony be brought out of discords

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But can that happen in a place such as Verona? If it can (and bear in mind that Petrarchan discourse suggests that the reconciliation of the opposites in which desire is implicated cannot be possible) what is the cost—and are we left with the idea that the Petrarchan discourse is essentially for adolescents, defining adolescent sexuality and selfhood, unable to deal with or to survive the pressures of the harsh world?

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Suggested reading: Edwards, Shakespeare, Dutton, William Shakespeare, Ryan, Shakespeare, Wells, Shakespeare, Gruber, Shakespeare After All. Cf. Gurr, Playgoing in Shakespeare's London, 154-55 and Hopkins, Beginning Shakespeare, 134-61

Week 8

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Now-contemporary criticism is divided as to whether tragedy was, in English

Renaissance culture, a subversive literary form: did it, at the least, raise issues and questions (political or otherwise) with which orthodox ways of thought could not satisfactorily deal?

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Whatever we decide about that, we need to start our study of selfhood and

(Shakespearean) tragedy by recognizing that tragedy, as a concept in the drama of the English Renaissance, could take several (and sometimes related) forms

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In Hamlet several of those forms interact: revenge tragedy; de casibus tragedy; what might loosely be called Aristotelian tragedy; tyrant tragedy; the tragedy of state; domestic tragedy

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It is arguable that Hamlet's father, Hamlet, Claudius, Gertrude, Laertes, and Ophelia are all caught up in their own tragedies, each of which is of course connected with the tragic experience of the other characters

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However not every character in the play (as named in the point above) can recognize that the characters around him or her are caught up and largely defined by tragic circumstance

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The three most important forms of tragedy in the play are: de casibus tragedy (involving Hamlet's father); revenge tragedy (involving especially Hamlet but also Laertes); tyrant tragedy (involving chiefly Claudius)

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The tragic power of the play comes in part, then, from a confluence of tragic forms; but it comes too from the fact that some of those tragic forms are destabilized or shown as inherently unstable (primarily and respectively, the de casibus and revenge forms)

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The tragedies and identities of Hamlet's father and of Hamlet are therefore particularly problematic

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The tragedy of Hamlet himself lies in the fact that, as is the case with other of Shakespeare's tragic heroes, he decides to take on a role that is a radical departure from those in his customary repertoire—he commits himself in effect to taking on a new, conflicted identity

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In the process of taking on that identity, that is to say, like other tragic heroes in Shakespeare's plays he does not extend or enlarge his sense of self but, rather, loses himself

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It is loss of self, not loss of life, that marks the story of Hamlet as tragic—and it is a story with only (imperfect) political closure

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Suggested reading: the general studies of Shakespeare listed for the previous week, along specifically for this week with (if possible) Greenblatt's introduction to his *Renaissance Self-Fashioning* (1980), and also his *Hamlet in Purgatory*, Hopkins, *Beginning Shakespeare*, 16-18 and 49-59, Curran, *Hamlet, Protestantism, and the Mourning of Contingency* (2006).

Week 9

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Shakespeare's play and Marvell's poem, like *Hamlet*, focus on tragedy in relation to the death of a king

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In *Macbeth*, the murder of King Duncan is shown, with a melodrama customary in many early modern depictions of royal deaths, as having been a terrible violation of the "natural" order

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In *An Horatian Ode*, the execution of King Charles (son of James I, for whom Shakespeare wrote *Macbeth*) is depicted as the consequence of "natural" forces at work

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It is revealing to see how the representations of Duncan and Charles are alike even though they are also obviously different

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In Shakespeare's play, Duncan's murder follows from Macbeth's having taken on a role—an identity—alien to the overt conduct of his life so far

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As a result of his forsaking one role for another, a sanctioned and public role for what the play elaborately constructs as an illegitimate one that has been hitherto concealed, Macbeth at once loses and fulfils who he is

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Broadly speaking, then, his tragedy, like *Hamlet*'s, centres on loss of selfhood.

And like *Hamlet*, *Macbeth* desperately attempts before he dies to regain something of what he was before he negated himself

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Marvell indicates that Cromwell's killing of Charles I has resulted not in loss or diminution of selfhood but, rather, in allowing Cromwell scope to reveal his "true" selfhood—his being in effect a king by "nature" though not by birth

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Cromwell is shown, not without some wariness, as the man whose virtues and preternatural talents give him a more than kingly—a more than merely inherited—stature

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The execution of Charles marks his personal story as a tragedy; but from that tragedy, Marvell seems to imply, emerges a glorious future ordained by Providence, which is much the point Shakespeare makes in *Macbeth* about the murder of Duncan

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Suggested reading: the general commentary as for the previous week, but specifically here with (if possible) Kinney, *Lies Like Truth* (2001), Shakespeare's *Webs*, and Shakespeare and Cognition (2006), Batson, *Shakespeare's Christianity* (2006)

Week 10

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King Lear, like the two plays immediately preceding it, involves the death of a king

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In the cases of *Hamlet* and of *Macbeth*, the royal deaths are followed ultimately by political renewal (which is problematic, as we have seen, in the former)

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The structure of government in Britain after Lear's death seems, however, far

from clear or secure

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Those concerns are foreshadowed from the play's very beginning, for despite its chronologically remote setting the play opens with what were very topical concerns for Shakespeare's audience: inheritance, and civil war.

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Lear reveals in the opening scene that he views himself as a king and father who has a divinely ordained authority

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In that respect, Lear's characterization focuses the audience's attention on political issues that in Shakespeare's time were highly sensitive: absolutist kingship and its claim to be by divine right

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Lear remakes his kingdom, dividing it against itself; in doing so, he reveals that he knows neither himself nor his children—and, in particular, that he does not understand how his authority—and therefore how his sense of self—are constituted

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Believing himself divinely appointed to rule, and hence uniquely as well as innately important, Lear does not understand that he is a human being who holds authority by virtue of a socio-political structure rather than by some divine *fiat* (that his authority is man-made and can be man-unmade: which it is, ironically, by himself)

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The fall of Lear from high estate (de casibus tragedy) because of his arrogant belief that, as a person, he transcends ordinary humanity (Aristotle's idea of a "tragic flaw" is relevant here) involves loss of self and a remaking of self

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Yet Lear's remaking of self is flawed—and his tragedy is at once the tragedy of his daughter Cordelia, of his personal followers, and of his kingdom, which experiences both civil war and invasion

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As the various tragedies of the play unfold, several questions are set before the audience again and again but no resolution of those questions is offered beyond that severally attempted by some of the play's characters

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Those questions include: what is the “natural”? is human life framed by divine powers? If there are divine powers, how do they relate to us and we to them?

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Most important, perhaps, is this question: is human life merely knowable through, or as, the interplay of worldviews—the polyphony of ideologies?

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Suggested reading: the general studies of Shakespeare listed for the previous week, along specifically for this week with (if possible) Elton, *King Lear and the Gods* (1966), Ryan, *King Lear* (1992), Howard/Dutton, *A Companion to Shakespeare's Works: The Tragedies* (2003), Hopkins, *Beginning Shakespeare*, 142–44, Nuttall, *Shakespeare the Thinker*

Week 11

- *Othello* is set, at least initially, in the Venetian Republic and not a kingdom; moreover it is about a princely figure—not a king—who is non-European

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Yet it is focused precisely on the fall of that princely figure, on his “tragic flaw” of jealousy, and on his loss as well as his attempted recuperation of selfhood

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That process of loss and attempted recuperation, always marked by self-division, forms part of the East-West dialectic established by the play: between Europe and Africa; between Europe and the Ottoman Empire; between Christianity and Islam

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It is a process enacted in no small part through the power of fictionality, the power of theatre—self-transformation and transformation into the other are achieved through fictions and

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Through his power to fashion eloquent fictions, Othello constructs himself, in an alien world, as an heroic exotic: thus his colour is both what makes him vulnerable (even in so cosmopolitan an area of Europe as Venice) and what facilitates his ambition to stand out beyond rivals

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That is to say, Othello achieves distinction by means of real military gifts, genuinely heroic virtue (in a martial sense)—but he knows how to present himself as a romantic figure, a romance hero who is exotic and mysterious

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Iago—together a smaller figure than Othello, and a curiously hollow figure as well (“I am not what I am”)—understands the power of fiction-making and of theatre as thoroughly as does Othello

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Driven by jealousy (although exactly why remains unclear), yet in no way tragic, he knows how to undo the romance narratives spun by Othello.

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And he knows how to script, improvise, perform in and direct episodes of theatre

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Othello constructs himself within romance genres; Iago, within anti-romance genres (but is he more than a collection of improvised selves?)

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Desdemona, Cassio, and other characters find themselves caught up in the clash of fictions, in theatrical moments of others’ making, without understanding the extent to which their social world is made up of those fictions and those moments

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Hence they are caught up in tragedies or near-tragedies of their own, in a world textured by and largely known through illusion—a major example of which is the polarising of East and West

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Suggested reading: the general studies of Shakespeare listed for the previous

week, along specifically for this week with (if possible) Orlin, Othello (2003), Hopkins, Beginning Shakespeare, 183-87

Week 12

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Raleigh's poem offers a version of the *translatio imperii et studii motif*: the notional movement of political authority and of culture westward after the fall of Troy. In this case, movement to England—implied here as becoming the centre of a reborn Roman empire

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The pattern of that England-focused movement, as suggested by the poem, can be traced along several lines: authorial, geographic/historical, erotic

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Homer—(Virgil) Petrarch—Spenser (Raleigh)

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Classical Greece—imperial Rome—London

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(Helen of Troy) Vesta—Laura—Elizabeth I

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As we follow those lines of descent, we are left wondering how many subjects of praise Raleigh's short, dramatic and colourful poem in fact has, or who is the main one

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Jonson's poem is one of the first country house poems

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Such poems present eutopian fictions, in which a great house on a country estate is portrayed as the centrepiece of an harmonious, morally stable, and productive community: a microcosmically ideal society

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Jonson tries, in the case of his poem, to portray life at Penshurst Place as a miniature of life as it might be lived—not as it is actually lived—under the rule of James I

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He tries to create an anglocentric fiction which is serio-ludic, one which will thereby allow him to celebrate England's monarchic system of government and yet seem to retain personal independence within it

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The key rhetorical tactic to consider, when watching Jonson's political fiction unfold, is hyperbole—a tactic Jonson often uses when celebrating his social superiors

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Marvell's poem was written after the English civil war, and the beheading of James I's son, Charles

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It celebrates life on the estate of Thomas Fairfax, until recently one of the two most powerful men in England

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The dilemma facing Marvell is this: how to celebrate a general who has retreated to life in the country, abandoning public life and its responsibilities

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Marvell tries two solutions: (i) to suggest that life on Fairfax's country estate, *centred* on his home, Nun Appleton, forms an example of how a truly protestant mode of being can all but perfect human existence (ii) to suggest that from Fairfax's protestant eutopia is emerging the to-be messianic figure of his daughter, Maria

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Marvell's country house poem mingles, however, celebration with nostalgia and with the ludicrous (the playfully ridiculous)—undermining nationalism at the same time as it is asserted

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Suggested reading: Smith, Elizabethan Poetry, Berry, Of Chastity and Power, Condren and Cousins, The Political Identity of Andrew Marvell, Harp/Stewart, The Cambridge Companion to Ben Jonson

Marking Rubrics

University Grading Policy

<http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/grading/policy.html>

The grade a student receives will signify their overall performance in meeting the learning outcomes of a unit of study. Grades will not be awarded by reference to the achievement of other students nor allocated to fit a predetermined distribution. In determining a grade, due weight will be given to the learning outcomes and level of a unit (ie 100, 200, 300, 800 etc). Graded units will use the following grades:

HD High Distinction - 85-100

D Distinction - 75-84

Cr Credit - 65-74

P Pass - 50-64

F Fail - 0-49

Criterion	High Distinction	Distinction	Credit	Pass	Fail
Relation-ship to topic or task	Highly sophisticated demonstrated understand-ing of the task; excellent knowledge of implicit or embedded aspects; provides substantial number of additional insights	Superior demonstrated understand-ing of the task; superior knowledge of implicit or embedded aspects; provides some additional insights	Good Demonstra-ted understand-ing of the task; some knowledge of implicit or embedded aspects; may provide some additional insights	Adequate demonstrated understand-ing of the task. Some understand-ing of relevant concepts but these may not be incorporated in a productive manner	Does not demonstrate understand-ing of the task/topic or fundament-ally misinterp-rets what is being asked.

Knowledge of literary/critical concepts	Highly sophisticated demonstrated understanding of critical concepts and how these can be applied to texts.	Superior demonstrated understanding of critical concepts and how these can be applied to texts.	Good demonstrated understanding of critical concepts and how these can be applied to texts (provides evidence of learning that goes beyond replication of lecture/seminar content)	Adequate demonstrated understanding of critical concepts and how these can be applied to texts (relevant concepts can be applied in a basic manner)	Does not Demonstrate Understanding of critical concepts; fails to apply such concepts to texts
Development of Independent critical argument	Substantial originality and insight in identifying, generating and communicating a convincing critical argument	Originality and insight in identifying, generating and communicating a coherent critical argument	Generates an adequate, critical argument that is supported by primary and secondary evidence.	Minimal evidence of critical argument (argument is simplistic and underdeveloped)	Does not construct a coherent critical argument.
Analysis of narrative strategies / literary technique/theories	Highly sophisticated and original analysis of narrative strategies/literary technique/theories	Superior analysis of narrative strategies/literary technique/theories	Some analysis of narrative strategies/literary technique/theories, but still reliant on plot/story elements for argument	Limited analysis of narrative strategies/literary technique/theories and heavy reliance on plot/story elements for argument	Failure to analyse narrative strategies/literary technique/theories. Total reliance on plot/story

Selection and analysis of examples from text(s)	Highly sophisticated selection and analysis of examples from texts	Superior selection and analysis of examples from texts	Effective selection and analysis of examples from texts – but some aspects problematic	Examples from text included but these examples not selected or analysed effectively	Failure to analyse specific examples from the text; incorrect use of citations
Evidence of secondary research	Sophisticated use of research to support and extend ideas	Research clearly connected to ideas; citations correct	Evidence of research used to support ideas, but research not always used effectively (e.g. citations substituted for original argument)	Some research used but fails to support ideas	Lack of appropriate research.
Presentation (language and expression)	Highly sophisticated and effective expression that is appropriate to the task.	Superior expression that is appropriate to the task.	Good expression. Some improvement needed in relation to expression of ideas and articulation of argument.	Adequate use of language. Numerous mistakes in expression or grammar.	Sub-standard use of language. Substantial mistakes in grammar and/or awkward expression.

Selected Reading List

Some General Studies of Shakespeare

Edwards, Shakespeare, (1986)

Dutton, William Shakespeare, (1989)

Ryan, Shakespeare, (1989)

Wells, Shakespeare, (1994)

Bate, The Genius of Shakespeare, (1997)

Wells, The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare (2001 and thereafter)

Gruber, Shakespeare After All (2004)

Dutton/Howard, A Companion to Shakespeare's Works (2005)

Hopkins, Beginning Shakespeare (2005)

Cheney, Shakespeare: National Poet-Playwright (2005)

Ackroyd, Shakespeare the Biography (2005)

Wells, Shakespeare and Co.. (2007)

Bate, Soul of the Age (2008)

Cousins, The Shakespeare Encyclopedia (2009)

Potter, The Life of William Shakespeare (2012)

Skinner, Forensic Shakespeare (2014)

--, The Shakespeare Big Book (2015)

Some Studies of English Literary Culture in the 1590s (as well as before, and after, that decade)

Smith, Elizabethan Poetry (1952)

Kermode, Shakespeare, Spenser, Donne, (1971)

Mack and Lord, eds, Poetic Traditions of the English Renaissance, (1982)

Ferry, The "Inward" Language, (1983)

Berry, Of Chastity and Power, (1989)

Crewe, Trials of Authorship (1990)

Smith, Homosexual Desire in Shakespeare's England, (1991)

Helgerson, Forms of Nationhood, (1992)

Knapp, An Empire Nowhere, (1992)

Low, The Reinvention of Love, (1993)

Corns, ed, The Cambridge Companion to English Poetry, Donne to Marvell (1993)

Schleiner, Tudor and Stuart Women Writers, (1994)

Henderson, Passion Made Public, (1995)

Manley, Literature and Culture in Early Modern London, (1995)

Dubrow, Echoes of Desire: English Petrarchism and Its Counterdiscourses (1995)

Gurr, *Playgoing in Shakespeare's London* (2nd edn, 1996)

McEachern, *The Poetics of English Nationhood* (1996)

Biester, *Lyric Wonder* (1996)

Kinney, *The Cambridge Companion to English Literature 1500-1600* (2000)

Hattaway, *A Companion to English Renaissance Literature and Culture* (2002)

Fowler, *Renaissance Realism* (2003)

Turner, *The English Renaissance Stage* (2006)

Dubrow, *The Challenges of Orpheus* (2008)

Sharpe, *Image Wars* (2010)

Cousins and Howarth, *The Cambridge Companion to the Sonnet* (2011)

Cousins and Payne, *Home and Nation in British Literature between the English and the French Revolutions* (2015)

Some Specific Studies of Shakespeare (a brief selection)

Bradley, *Shakespearean*

Paster, *The Idea of the City in the Age of Shakespeare*, (1985)

Dubrow, *Captive Victors*, (1987)

Greenblatt, *Shakespearean Negotiations*, (1988)—see also his *Hamlet in Purgatory* (2002)

Marcus, *Puzzling Shakespeare*, (1988)

Cox, *Shakespeare and the Dramaturgy of Power*, (1989)

Bate, *Shakespeare and Ovid*, (1993)

Sorelius, *Shakespeare's Early Comedies*, (1993)

Woodbridge, *The Scythe of Saturn*, (1994)

Gillies, *Shakespeare and the Geography of Difference*, (1994)

Dubrow, *Shakespeare and Domestic Loss* (1999)

Cousins, *Shakespeare's Sonnets and Narrative Poems*, (2000)

Foakes, *Shakespeare and Violence* (2003)

Cheney, *Shakespeare, National Poet-Playwright* (2004)

Kinney, *Shakespeare's Webs* (2004)

Rosenbaum, *The Shakespeare Wars* (2006)

Hanke and Spiller, *Ten Shakespeare Sonnets* (2006)

Nuttall, Shakespeare the Thinker (2007)

Schoenfeldt, A Companion to Shakespeare's Sonnets (2007)

Blades, Shakespeare: The Sonnets (2007)

Callaghan, Who Was William Shakespeare? (2013)

Post, The Oxford Handbook of Shakespeare's Poetry (2013)

Gray and Cox, Shakespeare and Renaissance Ethics (2014)

Some Specific Studies of Other Writers—points from which to begin

Chernaik, The Poet's Time, (on Marvell; 1983)

Marotti, John Donne, (1986)

Docherty, John Donne Undone, (1986)

Evans, Ben Jonson and the Poetry of Patronage, (1989)

Condren and Cousins, eds, The Political Identity of Andrew Marvell, (1990)

Cousins, The Catholic Religious Poets from Southwell to Crashaw, (1991)

Summers/Pebworth, Representing Women in Renaissance England (with reference to Crashaw, 1997)

Mousley, John Donne (1999)

Harp/Stewart, The Cambridge Companion to Ben Jonson (2000)

Cousins and Grace, eds, Donne and The Resources of Kind (2002)

McCoy, Alterations of State (with reference to Marvell; 2002)

Barton, Ben Jonson: Dramatist (2004)

Guibbory, The Cambridge Companion to John Donne (2006)

Stubbs, John Donne (2007)

Cousins and Scott, Ben Jonson and the Politics of Genre (2009)

Cousins, Pleasure and Gender in the Writings of Thomas More (2010)

Faust, Andrew Marvell's Liminal Lyrics (2012)

Drury, Music at Midnight (2013: on George Herbert)

Cousins, Andrew Marvell's Miscellaneous Poems (2016)

The MLA Annual Bibliography offers a comprehensive list of publications on Shakespeare and on writings of the English Renaissance.