

Module Name: The “Other” in Early Modern English Drama (10 ECTS)

Preferred Term: HT

Level: JS

Module Description:

This module will investigate the figure of the non-English “Other” in early modern England’s drama, focusing on how the selected dramatic texts depict racial, ethnic, linguistic, religious, and cultural otherness. We will look at how the original early modern performances physically created foreign characters on stage through costumes, make-up, props, sets, or stage accents while also exploring what more recent productions have done with these figures. We will at the same time consider the broader historical picture, examining how the representation of foreigners in drama of the period is tied into wider developments in Elizabethan and Jacobean England, namely the precipitation of a sense of English national identity, the beginnings of England’s imperial expansion, the increasing numbers of foreigners arriving in England as both visitors and migrants, and the surge in English jingoism and xenophobia.

Preliminary Reading list:

Thomas Kyd: *The Spanish Tragedy* (1582-92)

Christopher Marlowe: *The Jew of Malta* (1589-90)

Anthony Munday et al: *Sir Thomas More* (1591-93)

William Shakespeare: *The Merchant of Venice* (1596-98) and *Othello* (1603)

Elizabeth Cary: *The Tragedy of Mariam, the Fair Queen of Jewry* (1602-04)

Ben Jonson: *The Masque of Blackness* (1605), *The Irish Masque at Court* (1613), *For the Honor of Wales* (1618)

Robert Daborne: *A Christian Turned Turk* (1612)

Thomas Middleton: *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside* (1613)

John Fletcher: *The Island Princess* (1619-20)

Learning Outcomes and Aims:

- Develop an understanding of the range of dramatic genres written, read, and performed in early modern England between c. 1580 and 1620.
- Become conscious of the shaping impact of major historical events and socio-political developments on the texts covered.
- Be able to identify a variety of intertextual connections between the different playwrights and their writings covered on the module.
- Be able to apply the knowledge gained from both the primary and secondary texts and seminar discussions to the interpretation of other early modern texts as well as texts from other historical periods.
- Know how to identify and access the most essential sources (e.g. performance databases, biographical information for the authors, recent scholarship) relevant to the material covered on the module.
- Be able to craft an extensive, informed, research-based argument on a topic relevant to the material covered in the module.

Assessment Details:

- Number of Components: 1
- Name/Type of Component(s): Final essay
- Word Count of Component(s): 5,000
- Percentage Value of Component(s): 100%