

Department of English & Writing Studies

English 3323F (001)
Drama After Shakespeare
Fall 2026

Instructor Information

Dr James Purkis | jpurkis@uwo.ca | University College 4412 | Office Hours will be posted on Brightspace and held in person. Zoom meetings held by prior arrangement.

Students must use their Western (@uwo.ca) email addresses when contacting me. I usually respond within 24 hours Monday to Friday but am unlikely to respond over the weekend.

Prerequisite: At least 60% in 1.0 of English 1020-1999 or permission of the Department.

Unless you have either the requisite for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

Course Objectives, Schedule, Delivery Mode

The decades following Shakespeare's retirement witnessed the production of some extraordinary drama. This half-course will study three tragedies by Middleton and Webster that present desire and obsession in their darkest forms. Three comedies by Middleton, Webster and Behn range across social climbing, friendship, and libertinism to explore love, greed, and acceptance. Throughout, the plays will be read in the context of contemporary anxieties about marriage, class, capital, homosocial relationships, and female autonomy.

By the end of the course, successful students will have attained:

- an increasingly advanced understanding of seventeenth-century drama and how it was created and first performed
- an understanding of the culture of early-modern England, particularly as it pertains to modern constructions of gender, sexuality, and class
- a developing facility with a variety of approaches, theories, and techniques that can be applied to the study of dramatic literature, including a critical awareness of knowledge systems that shape our analysis of the text.
- an ability to reflect on their own varied and intersecting positionalities and/or to think critically about ways in which the reception of Shakespeare reproduces or contests existing power structures
- proficiency with essential tools of literary scholarship, including content databases
- an introduction to specialized research tools and their uses
- an advanced ability to analyze a piece of literature within its specific cultural context
- an advanced ability to apply a variety of scholarly or theoretical approaches to the analysis of texts, including metrical analysis of verse
- the opportunity to develop a clear, concise and effective prose style, free of technical errors
- the opportunity to develop an ability to structure a complex and engaging argument

Course Schedule

SEPTEMBER 2026

We 9 Introductions

Mo 14 *The Changeling*, Thomas Middleton and William Rowley

We 16 *The Changeling*

Mo 21 *The Changeling*

We 23 *The Changeling*

Mo 28 *Women Beware Women*, Thomas Middleton

We 30 **National Day for Truth and Reconciliation (non-instructional day)**

OCTOBER 2026

Mo 5 *Women Beware Women*

We 7 *Women Beware Women*

12-18 FALL READING WEEK | NO CLASSES

Mo 19 *The Duchess of Malfi*, John Webster

We 21 *The Duchess of Malfi*

Mo 26 *The Duchess of Malfi*

We 28 *The Duchess of Malfi*

NOVEMBER 2026

Mo 2 *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside*, Thomas Middleton

We 4 *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside*

Mo 9 *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside*

We 11 *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside*

Mo 16 *A Cure for a Cuckold*, John Webster and William Rowley

We 18 *A Cure for a Cuckold*

Mo 23 *A Cure for a Cuckold*

We 25 *The Rover*, Aphra Behn

Mo 30 *The Rover*

DECEMBER 2026

We 2 *The Rover*

Mo 7 *The Rover*

We 9 Remainders and reminders

Course Materials

Aphra Behn, *The Rover and Other Plays*, ed. by Jane Spenser (Oxford University Press, 2008)

ISBN: 9780199540204 (<https://www.oupcanada.com/catalog/9780199540204.html>) - \$11.20

John Webster, *The Duchess of Malfi and Other Plays*, ed. by Rene Weiss (Oxford University Press, 2009) ISBN 9780199539284 (<https://www.oupcanada.com/catalog/9780199539284.html>) - \$15.50

Thomas Middleton, *Women Beware Women and Other Plays*, ed. by Richard Dutton (Oxford University Press, 2009) ISBN: 9780199538928

(<https://www.oupcanada.com/catalog/9780199538928.html>) \$17.95

Additional course material will be posted to OWL: <https://westernu.brightspace.com/>

Students are responsible for checking the course OWL site (<https://westernu.brightspace.com/>) regularly for news and updates. This is the primary method by which information will be disseminated to all students in the class.

If students need assistance with the course OWL site, they can seek support on the [OWL Brightspace Help](#) page. Alternatively, they can contact the Western Technology Services Helpdesk. They can be contacted by phone at 519-661-3800 or ext. 83800.

Technical Requirements This course requires you to submit work online through Brightspace in MS Word format.

Electronic Devices No aids are permitted for in-class tests or the final exam. Electronic devices of any kind (including calculators, cell phones and smart watches) are not permitted for these assignments.

Statement on the Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) In this course, the use of AI (automatic translation tools, grammar checkers, ChatGPT, Gemini, Claude, and so on) is prohibited. If AI use is suspected, the instructor will ask for research notes, rough drafts, essay outlines, and other materials used in preparing assignments. Students are expected to retain these materials until after final grades have been entered. In the event of concerns being raised about the authenticity of any assignment, students may be asked to produce these materials; an inability to do so may weigh heavily against them.

Methods of Evaluation

The grade for the course will be arrived at as follows:

Short Paper (600-800 words) (Due October 19) – 10%
2 x In-Class Writing Assignment (October 5, November 9) – 10% each
2000-word Term Paper (due December 4) – 25%
Participation – 10%
2-hour Exam (in December exam period) – 35%

Short Paper (600 words)

Please ensure that you support your reading with analysis of the primary text. Include a Works Cited and proper and correct referencing. You may, but need not, cite appropriate criticism. The question will be posted two weeks before the due date

In-class Writing Assignments

35 minutes, hand-written (unless accommodation is required) and with no reference to notes, texts, or electronic devices allowed. Students will be given either a passage analysis or a discussion question that calls for engagement with course material. I shall talk about the format and what will make for a strong response in class before the assignment.

Please note that the first in-class writing assignment is central to the learning objectives for this course. Accordingly, students seeking academic consideration for this assessment will be required to provide formal supporting documentation. Students who are granted

academic consideration for this assessment will be provided with an opportunity to make up this work by writing a similar assignment later in the semester.

Term Paper (2000 words)

Your essay must be presented in accordance with MLA Guidelines and must include TWO pieces of peer-reviewed secondary reading and a Works Cited list. Your essay will be graded on the quality of the argument and of interpretative analysis, presentation, and articulation of expression.

Questions will be posted on OWL three weeks before the essay is due.

Participation

The grade will be founded on regular and punctual class attendance; demonstration of completion of assigned reading; meaningful and regular contributions to class discussion. Please note that interactions with the professor outside of class time will not count towards the participation grade.

Exam

A two-hour in-person exam. The format of the exam will be explained in class and a description of the format and the exam's rubrics will be posted to OWL in advance of the examination. Note that supporting documentation is **always** required for academic consideration requests for examinations scheduled by the office of the registrar

Please submit electronic copies (in MS Word and NOT pdf) of all out-of-class writing assignments through the course's OWL Brightspace site.

General information about missed coursework

Students must familiarize themselves with the *University Policy on Academic Consideration – Undergraduate Students in First Entry Programs* posted on the Academic Calendar:

<https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academicpolicies/appeals/academicconsiderationSep24.pdf>

This policy does not apply to requests for academic consideration submitted for **attempted or completed work**, whether online or in person. The policy also does not apply to students experiencing longer-term impacts on their academic responsibilities. These students should consult: [Accessible Education](#).

For procedures on how to submit Academic Consideration requests, please see the information posted on the Office of the Registrar's webpage:

<https://registrar.uwo.ca/academics/academicconsiderations/>

All requests for Academic Consideration must be made within 48 hours after the assessment date or submission deadline.

All academic consideration requests must include supporting documentation; however, recognizing that formal documentation may not be available in some extenuating circumstances, the policy allows students to make one Academic Consideration request **without supporting documentation** in this course. However, the following assessments are excluded from this, and therefore always require formal supporting documentation:

- Final examination (December exam period) This is defined by senate policy, as stated above.
- The first in-class writing assignment (see above).

Assignments with flexible deadlines and any term work that does not count towards the course grade are not eligible for additional consideration.

To make things easier for all of us, I am using a system of grace days, which – in effect – brings a flexible deadline to all assignments with the exception of the final exam and the first in-class writing assignment. This is how the grace-days system works:

You are each given FOUR grace days, which you can use at once, or share between your assignments. You will not be penalized for a late submission as long as you can cover the delay through using your grace days. When your grace days are gone, they are gone, and you are faced with a late assignment. If you submit an assignment after the due date and the expiration of your grace days, the grade will be reduced by a penalty of 2% for each calendar day that it is late. A reminder: Senate regulations stipulate that all assignments must be completed by the last day of classes (December 9). Grace days cannot extend the final deadline before the last day of classes.

In the case of prolonged extenuating circumstances that exceed the five grace days, a request for academic consideration must be made to the Academic Advising office of the student's Faculty of Registration.

Evaluation Scheme for Missed Assessments

When a student misses the **Final Exam** and their Academic Consideration has been granted, they will be allowed to write the Special Examination (the name given by the University to a makeup Final Exam). See the Academic Calendar ([Special Examinations](#)), especially for those who miss multiple final exams within one examination period.

Students who miss an in-class assignment and have been granted academic consideration will be given the opportunity to write a make-up assignment.

Essential Learning Requirements

Even when Academic Considerations are granted for missed coursework, the following is deemed essential to earn a passing grade.

- a passing grade on the essay to satisfy the Senate requirement that students must demonstrate “some minimal competence in essay writing” in order to pass an essay course,

Attendance

Attendance is mandatory in all classes and tutorials. In cases of excessive absenteeism (e.g. more than 9 unexcused hours for a half course), which are not accounted for by either academic consideration or accommodation, students may be debarred from taking the final examination, and will receive an official warning to this effect by or before the course drop date (see Senate policy).

Additional Statements

Academic Integrity Module

Incoming undergraduate students are required to complete Western's Academic Integrity Module. Information about the module, including access instructions, and completion deadlines, is available at: https://vpacademic.uwo.ca/Academic_Integrity_Module.html.

This training is part of the required training suite for all incoming students. Students who do not complete the Academic Integrity Module by the deadline will have an academic seal placed on their records and will not be able to add/drop courses, obtain a transcript, or Intent to Register the following year.

Academic Offences

Scholastic offences are taken seriously, and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, here:

https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_offences.pdf

Policy on Accommodation for Religious Holidays

Students should review the [policy for Accommodation for Religious Holidays](#) . Where a student will be unable to write examinations and term tests due to a conflicting religious holiday, they should inform their instructors as soon as possible but **not later than two weeks** prior to writing the examination/term test. In the case of conflict with a midterm test, students should inform their instructor as soon as possible but not later than one week prior to the midterm.

Religious Accommodation requests for final exams should be submitted via the Student Absence Portal.

Academic Accommodation and Accessible Education

Academic Accommodation is “a means of adjusting the academic activities associated with a course or program of student in order to permit students with disabilities to participate in those activities at the University and to fulfill the essential requirements of a course or program.” <https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academicpolicies/appeals/Academic%20Accommodationdisabilities.pdf>. Students with disabilities are encouraged to register with **Accessible Education** at the earliest opportunity. “Accessible Education plays a central role in Western's efforts to ensure that its academic programs are accessible for all students” <http://academicsupport.uwo.ca/accessibleeducation/index.html>

Special Examinations

A Special Examination is any examination other than the regular examination, and it may be offered only with the permission of the Dean of the Faculty in which the student is registered, in consultation with the instructor and Department Chair. Permission to write a Special Examination may be given on the basis of compassionate or medical grounds with appropriate supporting documents. To provide an opportunity for students to recover from the circumstances resulting in a Special Examination, the University has implemented Special Examinations dates. These dates as well as other important information about examinations and academic standing can be found [here](#).

Support Services

Academic Advising

Your Home Faculty's Academic Advising Office will support or refer whenever you have an issue that is affecting your studies, including information on adding/dropping courses, academic considerations for absences, appeals, exam conflicts, and many other academic related matters. Do not hesitate to reach out to them if you are struggling and unsure where to go for help. Contact info for all Faculties is here: <https://registrar.uwo.ca/facultyacademiccounselling.html>

Mental Health Support

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western (<https://uwo.ca/health/>) for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

Gender-based and sexual violence

Western University [is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence](#) (GBSV) and providing compassionate support to anyone who is going through or has gone through these traumatic events. If you are experiencing or have experienced GBSV (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts at the following website:

<https://www.uwo.ca/health/student-support/survivorsupport/get-help.html>. To connect with a case manager or set up an appointment, please contact support@uwo.ca.

Learning Development and Success

Counsellors at the Learning Development and Success Centre <https://learning.uwo.ca> are ready to help you improve your learning skills. They offer presentations on strategies for improving time management, multiple-choice exam preparation/writing, textbook reading, and more. Individual support is offered throughout the Fall/Winter terms in the drop-in Learning Help Centre, and year-round through individual counselling.

USC

Additional student-run support services are offered by the USC, <https://westernusc.ca/services/>.