

**THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN ONTARIO**  
**Department of English**  
**<http://www.uwo.ca/english>**

**English 9127B: Performance Conditions in Shakespeare's Time**  
**Wednesdays 12:30-3:30**  
**Weldon Library 257**

**Dr M.J. Kidnie**

**AHB 0N05 x85830**

**[mjkidnie@uwo.ca](mailto:mjkidnie@uwo.ca)**

**Description:** This course focuses on the creation and staging of professional theatre in the age of Shakespeare. Students will study architectural evidence of performance spaces and consider how these spaces might have been put to use in practice, they will be introduced to practical theatrical concerns such as company organisation, payments for scripts, theatrical collaboration, rehearsal, and censorship, and they will examine and discuss surviving textual evidence of the revision and transmission of dramatic manuscripts through to performance.

6 January      Introduction to the course  
                 Plus seminar assignments.

13 January     Early modern stages  
                 Dramatists and actors had a shared understanding of the theatres in which their plays would be performed, and the opportunities these spaces provided. This week we'll explore the stage space of the outdoor amphitheatres in terms of live performance.

- Tiffany Stern, "Text, Playhouse and London," *Making Shakespeare* (Routledge, 2004): 6-33
- \*Peter Thomson, "Playhouses and Players," *Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare Studies*, ed. Stanley Wells (Cambridge, 1986), pp. 67-83
- \*Andrew Gurr, 'The Staging', *The Shakespearean Stage, 1574-1642*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Cambridge, 1992), pp. 172-211
- \*Peter Stallybrass, "Properties in Clothes: The Materials of the Renaissance Theatre," *Staged Properties in Early Modern English Drama*, ed. Jonathan Gil Harris and Natasha Korda (Cambridge UP, 2002): 177-201
- \**Shakespeare's Globe: A Theatrical Experiment*, ed. Christie Carson and Farah Karim-Cooper (Cambridge UP, 2008) – select essays

20 January Thomas Heywood, *A Woman Killed with Kindness*

Heywood was a contemporary of Shakespeare, and one of the most prolific playwrights of the age – he claimed to have a “hand or main finger” in 220 plays. This week we study the play for which he is today most famous. Please use my draft edition of *Woman Killed* (intro, text, and commentary). I’m finalizing this material for publication, and would welcome your comments.

27 January Early modern stage conventions

Dramatists and actors (and their audiences) made sense of live performance according to established conventions, and some of these conventions can be recovered from close study of the drama. We’ll turn again to *Woman Killed*, but this time with an eye to those moments in the text that might be revealing of the mechanics of large-company performance in the open-air amphitheatres. We’ll study such aspects of early modern performance as “passing over” the stage; “as from” directions; the law of re-entry (and its occasional transgression – see Sc. 13); cue lines to get actors offstage; cue lines for exit after improvised dialogue and/or dancing; how to get corpses offstage; one actor as group “leader” (Jenkin).

- \*Alan C. Dessen, “Shakespeare and the Theatrical Conventions of his Time,” *Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare Studies*, ed. Stanley Wells (Cambridge, 1986), pp. 85-99
- \*Leslie Thomson, “‘Pass Over the Stage’ – Again,” in *Staging Shakespeare*, ed. Lena Orlin and Miranda Johnson-Haddad (Newark: U of Delaware P, 2007): 23-44 (available from me as PDF)
- Mariko Ichikawa, “What to do with a corpse?: Physical reality and the fictional world in the Shakespearean Theatre,” *Theatre Research International* 29:3 (Oct 2004): 201-15
- Tiffany Stern, “Props, Music, and Stage Directions,” *Making Shakespeare* (Routledge, 2004): 91-112
- \**Shakespeare’s Globe: A Theatrical Experiment*, ed. Christie Carson and Farah Karim-Cooper (Cambridge UP, 2008) – select essays

3 February Plots, Parts, and Promptbooks

Understanding how theatrical companies prepared for performance asks us to interpret the textual traces that survive from the period. This week will introduce you to plots, parts, and promptbooks, and we will begin to consider how they might have guided performance.

- Paul Werstine, “Backstage Plots,” *Early Modern Playhouse Manuscripts* (Cambridge UP, 2013): 108-13
- Simon Palfrey and Tiffany Stern, “The Actor’s Part,” *Shakespeare in Parts* (Oxford UP, 2007): 15-39
- \*William B. Long, “‘Precious Few’: English Manuscript Playbooks,” *Companion to Shakespeare* (Blackwells, 1999), ed. David Scott Kastan, pp. 414-33
- Paul Werstine, “11. Thomas Heywood’s [The Captives],” *Early Modern Playhouse Manuscripts* (Cambridge UP, 2013): 300-309
- Paul Werstine, “Behind the stage/in the tiring house,” *Early Modern Playhouse Manuscripts* (Cambridge UP, 2013): 200-11

#### 10 February Rehearsal

Technology shapes perceptions of character. One will understand character and dramatic pace differently if one accesses a play in part(s), or as a single entity. This class will explore the implications of plays in parts. Please read the chapters below. You will also be asked to prepare a “part” from *Woman Killed*. During class time, we’ll try performing a scene or two from the play using only these parts.

- Tiffany Stern, “Rehearsal in Shakespeare’s Theatre,” *Rehearsal from Shakespeare to Sheridan* (Oxford UP, 2000): 46-123
- Simon Palfrey and Tiffany Stern, “Rehearsing and Performing,” in *Shakespeare in Parts* (Oxford UP, 2007): 57-79

#### 17 February **READING WEEK**

#### 24 February Thomas Heywood, *The Captives*

This play only survives in manuscript, and there has been immense debate about whether or not this manuscript was used as a promptbook. We’ll use this first week on the play to talk about themes and staging issues. Please use Paul Merchant, ed., *The Captives*, in *Thomas Heywood: Three Marriage Plays* (Manchester, 1996) – the edition is out of print, but a copy of it is available in Leanne’s office.

#### 2 March Thomas Heywood, *The Captives*

This second week on the play will be turned over to close discussion of the manuscript and its potential markings for performance. Please reread the play, using the Malone Society edition (available in Leanne’s office), and look specifically at, and for, evidence of playhouse use.

- \*James Purkis, “Foul Papers, Promptbooks, and Thomas Heywood’s *The Captives*,” *Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England* 21 (2008), pp. 128-56

9 March        The “foul papers” and “fair copy” debate

Interpretation of how texts were prepared and reproduced for use in early modern theatres has bedevilled our understanding of surviving documents, the cultures of professionalism that gave rise to them, and their modern editorial reproduction. W.W. Greg drew a distinction between foul papers and fair copy that enabled textual scholars and editors of the twentieth century to discern the manuscript copy behind printed texts. More recent scholars have challenged this methodology and its assumptions as unfounded. We’ll engage in class with Paul Werstine’s monumental re-examination of Greg, and also consider Stanley Wells’s analysis and categorization of quarto and Folio *Much Ado about Nothing*. Read any modern print edition of *Much Ado* (multiple editions are available at Weldon).

- Stanley Wells, “Editorial Treatment of Foul-Paper Texts: *Much Ado about Nothing* as Test Case,” *Review of English Studies* 31 (1980): 1-16
- Paul Werstine, “The discovery of ‘foul papers’” and “Redefining ‘foul papers,’” in *Early Modern Playhouse Manuscripts* (Cambridge UP, 2013): 12-106

16 March        *Much Ado about Nothing*: Quarto and Folio

This class will provide opportunity to apply last week’s discussion to a close analysis of *Much Ado* as a two-text play. We’ll look at variants between quarto and folio *Much Ado*, and discuss what we can say about their provenance. We’ll also talk about why this debate matters in terms of the modern editorial reproduction of early modern drama. Facsimiles of Q and F *Much Ado* are available on, and can be downloaded from, EEBO; you can also get print facsimiles of these texts from Weldon or me.

23 March        *Woman Killed with Kindness*: Q1607 and Q1617

*Woman Killed* is another play that survives in variant versions, and the nature of the differences between these texts has led textual scholars to assume this is another instance of “foul papers” and “fair copy”. Students will be asked to collate scenes from this play, and consider editorial procedure on the basis of that evidence. Facsimiles of Q and F *Much Ado* are available on, and can be downloaded from, EEBO.

30 March        Authors and the Dispersal of Authority

Over the course of this term, we've been implicitly decentring the place of the author, examining how actors, scribes, and bookkeepers help to shape both text and performance event. This week we'll turn to think about these plays in their printed form as potentially directed at a readership, rather than a theatrical audience. Lukas Erne makes the case for Shakespeare as literary author, while Sonia Massai argues that agents in the printinghouse "edited" plays for print publication.

- Lukas Erne, "Why Size Matters," *Shakespeare as Literary Dramatist* (Cambridge UP, 2003), pp. 131-73
- \*Sonia Massai, "The Making of the First Folio," *Shakespeare and the Rise of the Editor* (Cambridge UP, 2007), pp. 136-79

6 April            Essay Preparation

Students will give a 10-minute mini-presentation in this final class, outlining the argument they will pursue in their final paper. Your presentation should include discussion of primary materials, relevant secondary reading, and methodology.

## ASSIGNMENTS

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| ○ <i>Presentation</i> (50 minutes)  | 20% |
| ○ <i>Response to presentation</i> (10 minutes)  | 15% |
| ○ <i>3 x 500-word response paper</i>  | 15% |
| ○ <i>Participation (including part preparation, scene collation and analysis, final-class presentation)</i> | 10% |
| ○ <i>Essay</i> (4,000 words)  | 40% |

### Statement on 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, at the following URL:

[http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/scholastic\\_discipline\\_grad.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/scholastic_discipline_grad.pdf)