

ENGL 4831 - British Genres, Circles, and Movements

Fall 2026 Syllabus, Section 01, CRN 44163,

Credit hours: 3

Instructor

Timothy Francisco

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Public Instructor Information

Instructor Title: Dr. Timothy Francisco

Instructor Professional Qualifications: PH.D English Literature, U of Alabama, Hudson Strobe and Mellon fellowships (Research and Critical Theory)

MA English Literature, BA English/Journalism, Western Connecticut

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Course Description

4831. British Genres, Circles, and Movements. Study of a literary genre, a group of writers who shared a cultural context or who influenced one another's work, or a trend or development in literature. May be repeated once with different topic. Prereq.: ENGL 3700 with a grade of "C" or higher. 3 s.h.

Our genre focus will be Revenge Tragedy a unique movement of 17th century drama that serves as commentary on corrupt court culture and the longing for justice. While Shakespeare's Hamlet is the best known example, he's drawing on a sensationalist tradition that emerges as a result of state mediated channels for justice. The genre revels in gore, violence, and the presence of the supernatural and we'll make sense of all of this in the context of the development of the modern state.

Course Readings

Group	Title	Author	ISBN
Required	Thomas Middleton, The Revenger's Tragedy and Women Beware Women, Christopher Marlowe, The Jew of Malta, Thomas Kyd, The Spanish Tragedy, Webster, the Duchess of Malfi, Shakespeare, Titus Andronicus and Hamlet		

Thomas Middleton, The Revenger's Tragedy and Women Beware Women, Christopher Marlowe, The Jew of Malta, Thomas Kyd, The Spanish Tragedy, Ford, 'Tis Pity She's a Whore, Webster, the Duchess of Malfi, Shakespeare, Titus Andronicus and Hamlet

The course readings are subject to change in the event of extenuating circumstances, research developments, current events, and/or to ensure better learning.

Schedule of Topics and Assignments

Week of	Reading(s)	Proposed Topic	Due/To Prepare for Class
8/24	Introduction to the course		
8/31	Seneca, Thyestes	Revenge, Roman Death and Classical influences	
9/7	Bacon, Of Revenge and Montaigne, 'Anger' and Aristotle selections from poetics	Early modern ideas of justice and revisions of classical tragedy	Prepare two of the discussion questions for class (BB)
9/14	Kyd, The Spanish Tragedy	Setting the gory standard	
9/21	Shakespeare, Titus Andronicus	Ovid and Revising Rome	See Rome in the English world (slides)
9/28	Marlowe, The Jew of Malta	Tragedy and The Other	



10/5	Middleton, Women Beware Women	Gender, class, and the tragic court	
10/12	NO CLASS	Midterm project	
10/19	Shakespeare, Hamlet (cont)	Psyching revenge	
10/26	Shakespeare, Hamlet	Adaptation as critical practice	Clips (BB)
11/2	Ford, 'Tis Pity She's a Whore	Love, Money and the economy of tragedy	
11/9	Webster, the Duchess of Malfi	Disguise as stage practice and theme	
11/16	Film, The Duchess of Malfi	Filming performance: staging and stagecraft	Film (link in BB)
11/23	Middleton, The revenger's Tragedy	Black Humor and state satire	
11/30	Film: Promising Young Woman	Contemporary takes on revenge cycle	
12/7	Wrap up and final project	Reflections and contemporary resonances	

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