###### Spring 2018

###### EN 669: The Strode Seminar

###### Theatrical Economies in Early Modern England

# Dr. Michelle M. Dowd

Tuesdays 2:00-4:30

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**Course Description**:

In this seminar, we will consider the Elizabethan and Jacobean theater—one of the central cultural and artistic institutions of the early modern period—as part of a vibrant economic network. We will investigate the theater itself as a business in its own right, and we will also examine how drama from the period represents both production and consumption. Specific topics to be discussed will include business practices related to theater and performance (including the early modern repertory system, apprenticeship, audience composition and expectation, and the commercial goals of theatrical companies) and dramatic representations of such issues as debt, consumerism, material cultural, and labor.

**Student Learning Outcomes:**

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

* Demonstrate familiarity with a range of canonical and noncanonical early modern plays
* Analyze the relationship between the early modern theater and concepts of labor, consumption, and economic exchange
* Critically evaluate secondary sources on early modern drama
* Develop and hone critical writing skills, research methods, and the skills of oral communication

**Required Texts**:

* You are required to obtain good (ideally critical) editions of all assigned plays.
* Several plays on the syllabus are included in *English Renaissance Drama: A Norton Anthology*, ed. David Bevington (New York: Norton, 2002), which I’ve ordered from the bookstore (it’s a good anthology to own if you don’t already).
* For the Shakespeare plays, I recommend the Norton and Riverside for complete works and Arden for individual plays.
* Please ask me if you have questions about editions.
* Additional readings on Blackboard **(BB)** and online via Gorgas Library (**O**)

**Schedule of Readings and Assignments**:

**Unit 1: The Business of Theater and Performance**

**Jan. 16: Introduction**

Tiffany Stern, “Text, Playhouse, and London” **(BB)**

Douglas Bruster, *Drama and the Market in the Age of Shakespeare* (Ch. 1 and Ch. 2) **(BB)**

David Kathman, “Grocers, Goldsmiths, and Drapers” **(BB)**

**Jan. 23: Company Commerce and Repertory**

*Cambyses* (Group 1) **(BB)**

*Three Ladies of London* (Group 2) **(BB)**

*The Rare Triumphs of Love and Fortune* (Group 3) **(BB)**

David McInnis and Matthew Steggle, “Introduction” to *Lost Plays in Shakespeare’s England* **(BB)**

Roslyn Knutson, *Playing Companies and Commerce in Shakespeare’s Tim*e (Ch. 2 and Ch. 3) **(BB)**

**Guest Visitor:** Professor Roslyn Knutson

NOTE: Professor Knutson will also be giving a public lecture at 5PM on January 23 (attendance is required for seminar members)

**Jan 30: Audiences and Reception**

Francis Beaumont, *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* (Norton)

Excerpt from Dekker, *The Gull’s Hornbook* (Pollard, ed.) **(BB)**

Lee Bliss, “Plot me no Plots” **(BB)**

**Feb. 6: Props and Costumes**

Excerpts from the *Diary* of Philip Henslowe (playhouse inventories) **(BB)**

Jonathan Gil Harris and Natasha Korda, “Introduction” to *Staged Properties in Early Modern English Drama* (**BB)**

Ann Rosalind Jones and Peter Stallybrass, *Renaissance Clothing and the Materials of Memory* (Ch. 7) **(BB)**

**Unit 2: Material Culture and the Consumer Economy**

**Feb. 13: Object Lessons**

Susan Harlan, “Travel and Its Objects” from *Luggage* **(BB)**

Catherine Richardson, *Shakespeare and Material Culture* (Ch. 1) **(BB)**

**OBJECT ASSIGNMENTS DUE (with brief presentations)**

**Guest Visitor:** Professor Susan Harlan

NOTE: Professor Harlan will also be giving a public lecture at 5PM on Feb. 13 (attendance is required for seminar members)

**Feb. 20: Value, Capital, and Exchange**

William, Shakespeare, *The Merchant of Venice*

Mark Netzloff, “The Lead Casket” **(BB)**

**Feb. 27: Credit, Debt, and the Law**

Thomas Middleton, *Michaelmas Term* **(BB)**

Amanda Bailey, “*Michaelmas Term* and the Problem of Satisfaction” **(BB)**

**March 6: Household Economies and Commodity Culture**

William Shakespeare, *The Taming of the Shrew*

Lena Cowen Orlin, “The Performance of Things in *The Taming of the Shrew*” **(BB)**

**March 13: Spring Break.** No class.

**Unit 3: Labor and Production**

**March 20: Cultures of Labor**

Tom Rutter, *Work and Play on the Shakespearean Stage* (Ch. 2) **(BB)**

Natasha Korda, *Labors Lost* (Ch. 1) **(BB)**

Excerpts from William Shakespeare, *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* (1.2; 3.1 (up to line 105, when Bottom is left alone on stage); 4.2; 5.1 (lines 105-356, the performance of P&T)

**ABSTRACTS AND WORKING BIBLIOGRAPHIES DUE**

**March 27: The Theater and/as Labor**

Ben Jonson, *The Alchemist* (Norton)

Elizabeth Rivlin, “The Rogues’ Paradox: Redefining Work in *The Alchemist”* in *Working Subjects in Early Modern English Drama*, ed. Dowd and Korda (2010), Ch. 7**(O- EBOOK)**

**April 3: Apprentices, Guilds, and Craft Labor**

Thomas Dekker, *The Shoemaker’s Holiday* (Norton)

Ronda Arab, “Work, Bodies, and Gender in *The Shoemaker’s Holiday*” **(BB)**

**April 10: Women, Work, and the Urban Economy**

Thomas Heywood, *The Fair Maid of the Exchange* (1607) **(O-EEBO)**

Juana Green, “The Sempster’s Wares” **(BB)**

**Guest Visitor:** Professor Natasha Korda

NOTE: Professor Korda will also be giving a public lecture at 5PM on April 10 (attendance is required for seminar members)

**Unit 4: Conclusions and Applications**

**April 17:** All Work, No Play: Brief Labor Reports

**April 24:** All Play, No Work: Seminar Dinner TBA

**Thursday, April 26, 5PM: FINAL PAPERS DUE**

**Course Requirements and Grading**:

Discussion Prompts 10%

Object Assignment and Presentation 15%

Class Participation (including informal group presentations) 20%

Abstract & Working Bibliography 5%

Labor Report 5%

Seminar Paper/Final Project 45%

**Academic Integrity:** Students are expected to abide by UA’s Code of Academic Conduct and the Academic Honor Code. Please use MLA or Chicago style to document your sources in written work.

**Attendance:** Excellent attendance is expected in a graduate seminar and is essential to your success in this course. I expect you to attend every class meeting, to arrive on time, and to participate actively in our discussions. Please inform me if you will be unable to attend class because you are participating in a conference or if you have a serious illness or emergency.

**Participation:** Active and thoughtful class participation is one of your most important assignments in this course, and it represents a significant part of your grade. In order to participate fully, you will need to come to class prepared – that is, having read the material, having thought about it critically, and having brought it with you. You will also need to come to class ready to share your ideas with your classmates and engage in rigorous, intellectual discussion. I expect you to be prepared with questions and observations about our readings as well as specific passages that you want to discuss.

**Discussion Prompts:** Each of you will also be expected to take a more active role in guiding our discussion of one of the plays on our syllabus (beginning with *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*). I ask that you help get our discussion started by preparing brief leads (5-10 min. or so) into the material. You will need to prepare two or three discussion questions in addition to selecting a particular passage in the play that you’d like to discuss. Where relevant, you should plan to be in contact with the other student assigned to the same play in order to coordinate your questions and passages and avoid overlap. On the day that you are presenting your discussion prompts, please turn in a copy of your questions and the citation of your passage for my reference.

**Object Assignment/Presentation:** For this assignment you will choose one early modern object that is either 1) referenced in one of the plays we’re reading this semester (or in another early modern play) or 2) related directly to the business of early modern theater. Be as specific as you can when selecting your object. Also: be inventive: choose something that you’re generally curious about and/or something that is directly related to your research interests. You should conduct research on your object in primary sources where possible: the *OED* is a great place to start, as is *LEME* (Lexicons of EM English). You might also experiment with keyword searching in *EEBO*. In addition, you should consult secondary materials (including historical studies) to gather more information on your object. How was it used? By whom? How much did it cost? How popular or rare was it? What was its cultural or theatrical or religious or political or gendered (etc.) significance in the period?

You will write up your “object lesson” as a **600-800-word report (approximately 3-4 pages**), double-spaced, with one-inch margins on all sides, in a standard 12-point font, and stapled. Please include a word count with your paper. Given the space limitations, your primary focus should be on producing a mini “history” of your object rather than on (say) providing a detailed close-reading of how the object is referenced in an individual play. However, if you become especially interested in your object, you may want to explore further how its meanings and significance contribute to an early modern play (or plays) for your final paper.

Your mini-histories of early modern objects can be loosely modeled on the *Object Lessons* series from Bloomsbury Publishing, which focuses on “the hidden lives of ordinary things.” I’ve posted a fuller description of the *Object Lessons* series on our Blackboard page.

Your object assignments are due in class on **Feb. 13.** On that day, you will also give a **very brief (5 minute) presentation** to the class about your object. I encourage you to work from notes, an outline, or bullet points so that you can succinctly and clearly give us an account of what you learned about your object and what its significances in the period might have been.

**Labor Reports:** We will conclude our seminar in class on **April 17** with brief, individual labor reports in which you will reflect on the nature of your own work as part of a broader academic community. You will select one aspect of contemporary, academic labor, with which you are either currently engaged or which you would like to learn more about. Some possibilities include tasks related to teaching (e.g. discussion leading or grading), research (e.g. writing, publication, grant submission), or service (e.g. peer reviewing, committee work, organizing departmental events) or structures of academic labor (e.g. contingent labor or administration). If you elect to present on a task that you have not yet participated in (e.g. administrative work), you will need to gather some basic information about the task (I would recommend informal, informational interviews with relevant English Department faculty as a good starting place).

Your **labor reports should be brief (around 5 minutes or so)** to allow time for group discussion. I encourage you to work from notes, an outline, or bullet points so that you can succinctly and clearly give us an account of the task or role you’ve selected and provide some reflections on your own (current and future) academic labor.

**Seminar Paper/Final Project:** 15-20-page original research paper (plus a bibliography or list of works cited) or equivalent research project (e.g. bibliographic essay and annotated bibliography) on a topic of your choice. Use a standard 12-point font and double-space throughout (indented quotations may be single-spaced). 250-word abstract and working bibliography are due in class on **March 20**. For research papers: please include a 2-3 sentence lay summary with your final paper.