

Shakespeare's Contemporaries: Kyd, Marlowe, Jonson, and Webster

Time: Summer 2025. Mon. 11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. (June 02 – July 14; May 26 is a Holiday.)

Location: Aliante Library, 2400 Deer Springs Way, N. Las Vegas, NV 89084. Room TBD.

Instructor: Alfred J. Drake, Ph.D.

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Recommended Texts (*These editions can often be bought used at lower cost.)

Kyd, Thomas. *The Spanish Tragedy*. New Mermaids / Methuen, 2019. ISBN-13: 978-1408114216.

Marlowe, Christopher. *Doctor Faustus*. New Mermaids / Methuen, 2018. ISBN-13: 978-1474295178.

Jonson, Ben. *Volpone*. New Mermaids / Methuen, 2018. ISBN-13: 978-1350007796.

Webster, John. *The Duchess of Malfi*. New Mermaids / Methuen, 2020. ISBN-13: 978-1474295673.

We will examine two Elizabethan and two Jacobean plays, excellent works by Shakespeare's earlier and later contemporaries. Thomas Kyd's revenge play *The Spanish Tragedy* (1582-92) and Christopher Marlowe's tragedy *Doctor Faustus* (1592-93) influenced Shakespeare as a young playwright, while Ben Jonson's witty comedy *Volpone* (1606) and John Webster's revenge play *The Duchess of Malfi* (1612-13) give us a sense of what was available to the London public in the time of Shakespeare's maturity. The London stage during the Elizabethan-Jacobean period was vibrant and wide-ranging, and Shakespeare, while preeminent, was one author among many busy, talented dramatic artists.

Schedule (Subject to change)

Week 1	May 26	Memorial Day, no class. Read Kyd's <i>The Spanish Tragedy</i> .
Week 2	June 02	Kyd's <i>The Spanish Tragedy</i> , Acts 1-5.
Week 3	June 09	Marlowe's <i>Doctor Faustus</i> , Acts 1-2.
Week 4	June 16	Marlowe's <i>Doctor Faustus</i> , Acts 3-5.
Week 5	June 23	Jonson's <i>Volpone</i> , Acts 1-2.
Week 6	June 30	Jonson's <i>Volpone</i> , Acts 3-5.
Week 7	July 07	Webster's <i>The Duchess of Malfi</i> , Acts 1-2.
Week 8	July 14	Webster's <i>The Duchess of Malfi</i> , Acts 3-5.