

# BLHS 107: The Early Modern World

## Shakespeare, Science, and Religion in the Early Modern World (1500-1800)

Professors Arnold Bradford and Matthew Shifflett  
Fall 2014

### Course Meetings:

**Mondays, 6:30 pm-10:25 pm**, ICC 221B (Main Campus)

Aug. 27 (a GU "Mon."), Sept. 8, 15, 22, 29; Oct. 6, 20, 27; Nov. 3, 10, 17, 24; Dec. 1.

[Notice: Wed., Aug. 27 serves as a GU "Mon." There is no class on Mon., Sept. 1, or Mon., Oct. 13.]

### Contact information:

Prof. Arnold Bradford: bradfora@georgetown.edu 703-347-2864 (Lead Professor)

Prof. Matthew Shifflett: matthew.shifflett.27@gmail.com; office hours by appointment.

### Course Description:

In this interdisciplinary course, you will discover that in the early modern period (1500-1800), a variety of factors—the European age of exploration and expansion, scientific investigation, Reformation theology, Renaissance Humanism, and the spread of print culture—caused Europeans to redefine themselves and their society. You will explore this process of “modern” redefinition of human values and study how to discuss and write about the changes in intellectual and cultural life it occasioned. You will encounter the terms “Reformation” and “Catholic Reformation,” and study the scientific revolutions of the seventeenth century. William Shakespeare’s plays will enable you to address compelling questions about the interwoven themes of “The Human & the Divine” and “Identity & Difference.” As you study the scientific, religious, and artistic debates of the Early Modern era, you will practice writing and speaking critically about them, using evidence from the text, research, and sound reasoning.

### Learning Goals:

Generally: To practice critical thinking skills in class and in all written work

To define the “Early Modern” era; also to critique the act of periodization that identifies the “Early Modern” era  
To list the five main factors affecting European culture in the Early Modern Age, but also to analyze the limits of current knowledge about these five factors

To define and analyze the significant elements of the theological controversies of the Early Modern period, and interpret the significance of their influence on European society, particularly Tudor England

To distinguish between the Protestant Reformation and Catholic Reformation, and to query why the term “Reformation” is used to identify these movements

To explain the nature, significance, and impact of the major scientific revolutions of the seventeenth century

To analyze how ideas of “the human” altered during the Early Modern era, using examples from *Hamlet*

To explain the various concepts of “the divine” that surface in Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*

To illuminate the workings of “othering” within Shakespeare’s *Merchant of Venice*

To explicate how Shakespeare’s *Merchant of Venice* participates in the creation of a gendered, racialized, religiously coherent English nationhood

To identify and narrow and appropriate question to pursue in a short essay

To write a clear thesis statement

To write straightforward topic sentences that develop the claims outlined in the thesis

To present effectively and explain, clearly and straightforwardly, the specific evidence supporting the topic sentences and overall thesis

To revise essays in order to improve writing skills

### Required Readings:

Cohen, I. Bernard. *The Birth of a New Physics*. Rev. ed. Norton, 1991. ISBN: 0393300455. Paper.  
Hooke, Robert. *Micrographia*. BiblioBazaar, 2008. ISBN: 1426486766. Paper.  
Janz, Denis, and Jordon, Shirley, eds. *A Reformation Reader*. Augsburg Fortress Publishers, 2002. ISBN: 0800663101 or ISBN-13: 9780800663100  
Shakespeare, William. *Hamlet*. Revised Edition. Ed. Roma Gill. Oxford School Shakespeare Series. USA: Oxford University Press, 2002. ISBN-10-0198320493  
Shakespeare, William. *The Merchant of Venice*. Ed. Roma Gill. Oxford School Shakespeare Series. USA: Oxford University Press, 2006. ISBN-10-019832152X

### COURSE REQUIREMENTS

#### Attendance:

Students are expected to attend all class meetings and to participate in all assigned activities. Class participation grades are predicated on attendance at all class meetings. In keeping with BALS policy, students with two or more absences, excused or unexcused, may receive a failing grade for the course. Late arrivals and/or early departures of more than seven minutes count as ½ of an absence.

#### Participation and Classroom Etiquette:

Students are expected to read the course material carefully, take notes, and participate fully in class discussion. Laptop usage is acceptable as a means of note-taking but not as a means of engaging in any other activity, from checking email to surfing the web. iPhones and other devices must be turned off and stowed, out of sight and out of hand, during class meetings. Please conduct all personal business before class begins: eat dinner, use the restroom, call home, text friends. University regulations proscribe the consumption of food within classrooms; water bottles and soft drinks are allowed.

#### Papers:

A variety of writing exercises anchors each unit of the course. These exercises are designed to help you improve your critical thinking skills as well as your writing skills. A Writing Center Associate may assist you with these assignments. Share completed drafts of your papers with a WCA, and solicit feedback so that you can revise your written work accordingly. This will help you learn to think more critically and write more clearly, and may very well improve your grades.

#### Late Paper Policy:

Please turn in your paper in person, in hard copy, at precisely 6:30 pm in the class meeting in which it is due. We do not accept papers emailed to us at 6:30 pm on the due date, nor do we admit outsiders into the classroom to deliver your papers to us as we lead discussion. A late paper turned in after 6:37 pm on the due date is lowered one letter grade. Any paper turned in more than 48 hours late is lowered two full grades. Papers received one week late automatically receive an F. **You must, however, complete all assigned work in order to receive a grade for the course as a whole.**

#### Evaluation:

Your final grade is based on the average of your grade for the Shakespeare unit (50%; Shifflett) and your grade for the Science and Religion unit (50%; Bradford).

- Within the Shakespeare unit, your grade is calculated on the following basis: 40 points for the 4pp. *Hamlet* paper, 40 points for the 4pp. *Merchant* paper, 20 points for overall class participation.

- Within the Science and Religion unit, your grade is calculated on the follow basis: 25 points for each of the two short essays (50 points total), 25 points for the Virtual Museum report, and 25 points for the Cumulative Blackboard Submission.

#### **The Honor Pledge:**

*In the pursuit of the high ideals and rigorous standards of academic life, I commit myself to respect and uphold the Georgetown University Honor System: to be honest in any academic endeavor, and to conduct myself honorably, as a responsible member of the Georgetown community, as we live and work together.*

**Any incident of plagiarism, however minor or major, results in an “F” for the course. You must cite every source.** Please meet with the Writing Center Associate assigned to the course or with a Lauinger Library Reference Librarian if you have any questions about how to cite your research sources. They will be happy to help you. We expect students to follow the MLA citation style, which is outlined in detail on the following website: <http://www.library.georgetown.edu/tutorials/research-guides/mla-guide>. You may also find the Purdue University “OWL” website helpful: just search online for “Purdue University OWL.”

Plagiarism—including *accidental* plagiarism—has *extremely* serious ramifications. Professors are required, by university regulations, to report any suspicion of a violation. The University Honor Council adjudicates all cases, and if the allegation is upheld the Council may add to the professor’s penalty other sanctions, including *dismissal or suspension, notation on the transcript, and/or a letter of censure or reprimand*: “Anyone with suspicions that a member of the Georgetown University undergraduate community has participated in some incident that violated the Academic Honor Code should report their suspicions to the Executive Director of the Honor Council, Sonia Jacobson, 202-687-4891 or to the Graduate Assistant to the Honor Council, Perry Guevara, 202-687-0667. Professors and Teaching Assistants are required to report any suspicion of a violation. Students and other members of the community are strongly encouraged, but not required, to report any suspicion of a violation.” Please seek our assistance and follow the Honor Code assiduously.

#### **Disabilities:**

If you have a disability, **you must submit your Accommodation Form to both professors at the first class meeting**, so that we can work with you properly. Failure to do so will lead to a lack of accommodation. Contact the Academic Resource Center ([arc@georgetown.edu](mailto:arc@georgetown.edu)), located in the Leavey Center, Suite 335. This Center is responsible for reviewing documentation provided by students with disabilities and for determining reasonable accommodations in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and University policies.

#### **University Policy on Religious Observance:**

If you have a religious obligation that affects your participation in the course, **you must submit your need for accommodation, in writing, at the first class meeting**, so that we can work with you properly. Georgetown University promotes respect for all religions. Any student who is unable to attend classes or to participate in any examination, presentation, or assignment on a given day because of the observance of a major religious holiday or related travel shall be excused and provided with the opportunity to make up, without unreasonable burden, any work that has been missed for this reason and shall not in any other way be penalized for the absence or rescheduled work. Students will remain responsible for all assigned work. *Students should notify professors in writing at the beginning of the semester of religious observances that conflict with their classes.* The Office of the Provost, in consultation with Campus Ministry and the Registrar, will publish, before classes begin for a given term, a list of major religious holidays likely to affect Georgetown students. The Provost and the Main Campus Executive Faculty encourage faculty to accommodate students whose bona fide religious observances in other ways impede normal participation in a course. Students who cannot be accommodated should discuss the matter with an advising dean.

## COURSE OUTLINE

Arnold Bradford (AB) and Matthew Shifflett (MS)

Wed., Aug. 27      **Introduction to the Early Modern World AB & MS**  
("GU Mon.")

*[no class Mon., Sept. 1]*

Mon., Sept. 8      **The Reformation, Part I: New Perspectives on Theology, Politics, Economics AB**  
**Assignments for today's class:**

Janz, Chapter 2 [Luther], introduction and pages 88-146; pages 56-59, 63-74.

Janz, Chapter 5 [Calvin], introduction and pages 270-328. Reformation short essay assigned.

Mon., Sept. 15      **The Reformation, Part II: Reformation in England; Christianity and Judaism AB**  
**Assignments for today's class:**

Jantz, Chapter 6 [English Reformation]: pages 329-376; page 436.

Work on Reformation short essay.

Mon., Sept. 22      **Shakespeare: *Hamlet*, the Human & the Divine MS**

**Assignment for today's class:**

\*Reformation short essay due.

Read Acts I-III of *Hamlet* after studying the Introduction, Background, and William Shakespeare sections of your text. Use the *Hamlet* Reading Guide posted on Blackboard.

Mon., Sept. 29      **Shakespeare: *Hamlet*, the Human & the Divine MS**

**Assignments for today's class:**

Finish reading *Hamlet*, Acts IV and V, then write a one-page analysis of a brief passage that reveals Shakespeare's conception of "the human" or the "divine." See Blackboard for the complete version of this two-part *Hamlet* Paper Assignment.

Mon., Oct. 6      **Shakespeare: *Hamlet*, the Human & the Divine MS**

**Assignments for today's class:**

Watch *Hamlet* video.

\*Due: 4 pp. *Hamlet* paper on Shakespeare's definition of "man" or "the divine." Draw upon your knowledge of Humanism or the Reformation to augment your argument. See Blackboard for the complete version of this two-part *Hamlet* Paper Assignment.

*[no class Mon., Oct. 13]*

Mon., Oct. 20      **Shakespeare: *The Merchant of Venice*; Identity & Difference within Religion MS**  
**Assignments for today's class:**

Read *The Merchant of Venice*, Acts I-V, using the Reading Guide. Begin working on your 4-pp. *Merchant* paper. See Blackboard for this *Merchant* Paper Assignment.

Mon., Oct. 27      **Shakespeare: *The Merchant of Venice*; Identity & Difference within Religion MS**  
**Assignments for today's class:**

View *Merchant* video.

\*4 pp. *Merchant of Venice* essay due

Read the selections from James Shapiro, *Shakespeare and the Jews* (posted on Blackboard).

Mon., Nov. 3      **The Rise of Science, Part I: Macrocosm: Copernicus and Galileo AB**

**Assignments for today's class:**

Cohen, pp. 3-126. Study questions posted on Bb.  
Science short essay assigned.

Mon., Nov. 10      **The Rise of Science, Part II: Microcosm: Newton and The Invisible Universe AB**

**Assignments for today's class:**

Cohen, pp. 127-184; Hooke. Study questions posted on Bb. Work on science short essay.

Mon., Nov. 17      **Religion, Science, and the Arts in the Early Modern World AB**

**Assignments for today's class:**

Study assignment posted online.  
\*Science short essay due.

Mon., Nov. 24      **Virtual Museum Visit: Individual Online Work, no Classroom Meeting AB**

**Assignments for today's class:**

Virtual museum visit includes Science, Reformation, Shakespearean interests.  
Specific assignment posted on Blackboard.

Mon., Dec. 1      **Last Class AB & MS**

**Assignments for today's class:**

\*Virtual Museum Visit report due.

**\*Oral Presentation due on Shakespeare and on Science/Religion Unit:**

In our last class meeting, we will launch a retrospective discussion of Shakespeare, Science, and the Reformation. Identify what you think is **THE MOST CRITICAL SHIFT IN PERCEPTION** that occurs during the time period we refer to as "Early Modern."

Bring to class two illustrations of the shift that you think is the most far-reaching in its effects: one illustration from Professor Bradford's unit and one from Professor Shifflett's. From the Science and Reformation Unit, you may want to select a passage from a philosophical or religious treatise or an image from the Virtual Museum project. From the Shakespeare Unit, you may choose a passage from one of Shakespeare's plays or sonnets.

Focus on finding evidence of the shift in perspective that characterizes the Early Modern World.

In class, you'll be responsible for presenting a well-planned fifteen-minute argument to defend your choice from the Science and Reformation Unit and a well-planned fifteen-minute argument to defend your choice from the Shakespeare Unit. Please rehearse these oral arguments before class. Imagine ways in which to enhance your presentation: how will you illustrate your argument to make it interesting and exciting for your classmates? You may share video or audio clips, images, charts, paintings—anything that will augment your line of reasoning. Time your presentation so that you fill the ten minutes with a substantive, thoughtful argument.

**Wed., Dec. 10 10:00am \*CUMULATIVE RESPONSE (BLACKBOARD SUBMISSION) DUE**

Please transform one of your oral presentations on the most critical shift in perception in the Early Modern World into a two-page, double-spaced paper and submit it to the "CUMULATIVE BLOG" on the BLHS 107 Blackboard site. Responses are not accepted after 10:00 am.

**Class Make-up sessions:** Any necessary make-up sessions will be conducted online in a timely way.

### REQUIRED VIDEOS:

Please watch the assigned BBC Shakespeare Collection video versions of *Hamlet* and *The Merchant of Venice* (listed below). Both are available on streaming video at <http://guides.library.georgetown.edu/streamingmedia>.

***Hamlet***. 242 minutes. Castle Rock Entertainment, Burbank, CA : Warner Bros. Entertainment : BBC : Turner Entertainment : Distributed by Warner Home Video, 2007; produced by David Barron ; adapted for the screen and directed by Kenneth Branagh. Performers: Kenneth Branagh, Julie Christie, Billy Crystal, Gerard Depardieu, Charlton Heston, Derek Jacobi, Jack Lemmon, Rufus Sewell, Robin Williams, Kate Winslet.

***The Merchant of Venice***. 160 minutes. BBC Television Production in association with Time-Life Television. New York : Time-Life Multimedia, 1980. Producer Jonathan Miller; director Jack Gold; title music composed by Stephen Oliver; incidental music composed by Carl Davies; literary consultant, Dr. John Wilders. Performers: John Franklyn-Robbins, John Rhys-Davies, Alan David, John Nettles, Richard Morant, Kenneth Cranham.

### RECOMMENDED VIDEOS:

***Shakespeare & his theatre: the Globe/Thames***. [videorecording]. Call# DVD 5182. 28 min. Scenes of present-day London and London of Shakespeare's time are compared, as the history and design of the Globe Theatre are described; directed & produced by Alan Afriat ; executive producer, Francis Coleman ; presented by Christopher Neame Princeton, NJ : Films for the Humanities & Sciences, [c2003?]

***Critical approaches to Shakespeare***. [videorecording]. Call # DVD 5320. 57 minutes. A presentation of Films for the Humanities and Sciences ; BBC ; The Open University ; executive producer, Nicholas Watson ; series producer, Jenny Bardwell. Princeton, N.J. : Films for the Humanities & Sciences, [2004], c1999. LAU Gelardin Media Center Host, Stephen Regan ; interviews with Terence Hawkes, Catherine Belsey, Russ McDonald, Stephen Greenblatt, Ania Loomba, John Drakakis, Reg Foakes, Kiernan Ryan, Penny Gay. Interviews recorded at the 6th World Shakespeare Congress in Los Angeles, 1996. Presents a range of critical approaches to the Bard, including postcolonialism, feminism, new historicism, and cultural materialism. Record # b3454524

***Shakespeare in Love*** [videorecording]. Call # DVD 349. 122 minutes. Fictionalized representation of Shakespeare's life and writing process. Miramax Films/Universal Pictures/the Bedford Falls Company ; produced by David Parfitt, Donna Gigliotti, Harvey Weinstein, Edward Zwick, Marc Norman ; written by Marc Norman and Tom Stoppard ; directed by John Madden Burbank, Calif. : Miramax Home Entertainment : Distributed by Buena Vista Home Entertainment, 1998.

***A Waste of Shame: The Mystery of Shakespeare and His Sonnets***. [videorecording] 87 min. / Call # DVD 5180. Written by William Boyd ; produced by Chrissy Skinnis ; directed by John McKay; a co-production, BBC, the Open University Princeton, N.J. : Films for the Humanities & Sciences, c2006 Rupert Graves, Indira Varma, Tom Sturridge, Anna Chancellor, Zöe Wanamaker. Dramatization about Shakespeare's sonnets and the mystery of the identities of two people the sonnets mention.