

## English 630.001: Early Modern Literature: Shakespeare's Sonnets

Fall 2002  
Thursday 4:30-7:10  
West 256

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"Not marble nor the gilded monuments / Of princes shall outlive this powerful rhyme."  
Sonnet 55, like many of the sonnets, is famous for celebrating the permanence of poetry. The sonnets have lived, and proved powerful, but they have been nothing like permanent--if one thinks of the diverse ways they have been read, rather than just their continued reading. This course explores some of that variety. We'll consider the sonnets from many perspectives: their representation of the writer, his beloveds, and of love; their use of the sonnet form; their relationship to other Renaissance sonnet sequences; their implication in English Renaissance culture; their relationship to Shakespeare's plays; and their contemporary reception, in critical argument and in the creation of modern editions of the sonnets.

## Required texts:

Shakespeare's Poems, ed. Bevington  
Castiglione, The Courtier, trans. and intro. George Bull  
Love's Labour's Lost in Three Early Comedies, ed. Bevington  
Merchant of Venice, ed. Bevington  
Shakespeare's Sonnets: Critical Essays, ed. Schiffer (abbreviated SSCE)  
Course reader available in Jonson Center bookstore (abbreviated "packet")

**Course requirements:** Class participation, weekly reading responses, a sonnet recitation, a close reading (5-7 pp.), a prospectus (1-2 pp.) an annotated bibliography and a final paper (15-20 pp.)

Date	Readings	Due Dates
Aug. 29	Course Introduction	
Sept. 5	Shakespeare's sonnets, 1-75	
Sept. 12	Shakespeare's sonnets, 76-126	
Sept. 19	Shakespeare's sonnets, 127-54	5-page essay assigned
Sept. 26	Castiglione, <u>The Courtier</u> , book 1 and selections from book 2, pp. 107-117; 125-133; Erasmus, from <u>De copia</u> (reader); Puttenham, from the <u>Arte of English Poesie</u> (reader); Marotti, from "Love is Not Love" (reader)	

Oct. 3	Bray, "Homosexuality and the Signs of Male Friendship" (reader); Sedgwick, "Swan in Love" (reader); De Grazia, "The Scandal of Shakespeare's Sonnets" (SSCE, 89-112)	5-page essay due
Oct. 10	Castiglione, <u>The Courtier</u> , from book 3, pp. 207-223, 241-250; Montaigne, "Of Moderation" (reader); Sowerman, from "Esther Hath Hang'd Haman" (on-line); Traub, "Sex Without Issue" (SSCE, 431-452); Hunt, "Be Dark" (SSCE, 369-389)	Annotated bibliography assigned
Oct. 17	Vendler, "Introduction" and "sonnet 29" (reader); Booth, "Preface" and "sonnet 29"; Dubrow, "'Incertainties now crown themselves'" (SSCE, 113-133); sonnet editions (on reserve)	
Oct. 24	Elizabethan Sonnets (on-line); Shakespeare, "A Lover's Complaint" (in <u>Poems</u> ); Schoenfeldt, "The Matter of Inwardness" (SSCE, 305-324)	1-2 page prospectus due
Oct. 31	No class: conferences	
Nov. 7	Shakespeare, <u>Love's Labour's Lost</u> ; Braden, "Shakespeare's Petrarchism" (SSCE, 163-183)	Annotated bibliography due
Nov. 14	Shakespeare, <u>Merchant of Venice</u> ; Herman, "What's the Use?" (SSCE, 263-283)	
Nov. 21	Oscar Wilde, "The Portrait of Mr. W.H." (on reserve); Stallybrass, "Editing as Cultural Formation" (SSCE, 75-88); LaRoche, "The Sonnets on Trial: Reconsidering The Portrait of Mr. W.H." (SSCE, 391-409)	15-page first version due
	Paper exchange (2nd half of class)	
Nov. 28	Thanksgiving Break	
Dec. 5	Discussion of Wilde continued; and <u>Shakespeare in Love</u> (on reserve or rent movie; watch before class)	Final paper due
	Wrap up	

Some notes on course requirements (further details about paper assignments will be forthcoming):

--Reading notes should be about a page of informal ideas about the day's reading, either the texts or the criticism (or both). They should address thoughts you've had or questions you'd like to raise about the reading. Your notes might be a listing of different ideas, or an extended treatment of one. These notes may be developed out of the marginalia you produced as you read (I suggest this approach). I will collect them but they need not be typed. I hope that, in addition to helping you prepare for class, these notes will become a mine for you while you're working on your papers.

--During the course of the semester you will recite a sonnet (chosen by you, with certain restrictions) for the class. You will also write a one-page essay about the decisions you made about how to recite the sonnet. You should demonstrate facility with the sonnet's language, provide a compelling verbal interpretation of the sonnet, and explain in the one-page essay the decisions made in providing that interpretation (it may be necessary to focus on just one or two aspects of the interpretation).

--The first paper should be about five to seven pages and provide a close reading of some moment or a set of related moments in one of or two sonnets. It is due on **Oct. 3**.

--The 1-2 page prospectus should give a synopsis of the idea you want to explore in your final paper, as well as questions that remained to be answered, and/or speculation about further directions to develop the topic. The prospectus should be based on the on-going work you are doing on the annotated bibliography; it might also get its impetus from your close reading. The 1-2 page prospectus is due **Oct. 24**. The following week there will be no class. Instead, we will discuss your prospectus in scheduled conferences.

--The annotated bibliography will be a list of about 15 critical, historical, literary or theoretical sources relevant to the topic that you are working on. It may also particularly focus on helping you develop ideas discussed in your close reading. Work on the prospectus and the annotated bibliography overlap and, ideally, will mutually inform one another. The annotated bibliography is due on **Nov. 7**.

--A 15-page first version of your term paper will be due in class on **Nov. 21**. About half this class will be devoted to sharing work with other students. You are also invited to see me at my office with your first version of the paper.

--Following the paper workshop, you will have time further to develop and revise your work, based on the suggestions you have received from your peer reviewer, on your own interests or discussion with me. **Final papers due in class on Dec. 5.**

--Students are expected to attend each session of class.

--Grades will be derived as follows:

First paper:	15 %
Participation = attendance, reading notes, class discussion, sonnet recitation and essay, and prospectus	25%
Annotated bibliography:	15%
Final paper:	45%