



**Instructor:** Dr. Cary DiPietro

~ cary.dipietro@utoronto.ca

**Course Number:** ENG 336 H5F

**Course Title:** Topics in Shakespeare

**Course Description:** William Caxton introduced the printing press to England in 1476. By the time Shakespeare began to write for the stage, little more than a hundred years later, the book trade had become a significant component of London's urban economy and a profoundly important social phenomenon. In this course we will investigate the relationship between the practice of making books, the culture of reading, and Shakespeare's theatre. What did early English books look like, how were they put together, how were they read, who read them, and how were they sold? What did Shakespeare read and how did his reading shape his play-writing? How did theatre compete with or profit by the trade in books? How were Shakespeare's own plays printed, and why? We will seek to answer these questions as we engage in our own reading of Shakespeare's texts.

**Required Reading:** William Shakespeare, "Venus and Adonis" (available on the course website), *The Comedy of Errors*, *Titus Andronicus*, *Richard III*, *Anthony and Cleopatra*, and *Othello*. We will use the single-volume editions in the Oxford World's Classics series, available in the UTM bookstore. We will also use Early English Books Online (EEBO) to find and read photo-facsimiles of early printed books, especially those of Shakespeare's sources.

**First Three Texts/Authors to be Studied:** Shakespeare, "Venus and Adonis," *The Comedy of Errors*, *Titus Andronicus*.

**Method of Instruction:** Lecture and group discussion.

**Method of Evaluation:** Participation (10%), in-class exercises (40%), annotated bibliography (20%), and a research paper (30%).