



Instructor: Tony Antoniadès

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Course Number: ENG336H5F L6001

Course Title: Shakespeare's Villains

Course description: We love to watch bad people do bad things to good people, at least on stage, where moral failures can be dramatic sensations. Evil sincerity is more dramatically appealing than bland goodness. Why is this the case, and what might it reveal about our experience with the theatre, or indeed, about human nature? This course addresses these questions in the context of the Early Modern period, through an examination of a rogue's gallery of some of William Shakespeare's most delightfully horrible stage villains. Stopping off with some of his predecessors and contemporaries to provide a context for Shakespeare's choices, and spanning the length of his career and the breadth of his generic interests, we will investigate the dramatic, social, cultural, and historical traditions from which Shakespeare drew his villains, and the ways in which his characters and their fates comment upon these sources. Plays will include *Mankynde*, *The Jew of Malta*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *Richard III*, *Measure for Measure*, and *Othello*. Get ready to root for the bad guy.

Continued...

Required Reading:

The Jew of Malta, Richard 3, The Merchant of Venice, Measure for Measure, Othello, articles TBA

First Authors to be Studied: The Jew of Malta (Marlowe), Richard 3 and The Merchant of Venice (Shakespeare)

Method of Instruction:

Lecture, group work, class discussion, source materials, guest speakers

Method of Evaluation:

Final paper, content quizzes, responses