MORE INFORMATION about Lit 325, Shakespeare in Context

REVISED (11/17/16)

The course looks at plays by Shakespeare paired with plays by other dramatists from Shakespeare's time. The goal is to better understand the nature of Shakespeare's success as a playwright.

There will be no overlap of plays with those studied in the 200-level Shakespeare course, nor with those studied in Lit 330 this fall semester. It is not necessary to have taken either of those courses before taking Lit 325.

The texts for the course will include editions of the individual Shakespeare plays in the Signet Classics series, which have helpful surveys of performance histories in them and are relatively inexpensive. However, if you have a complete Shakespeare, or other editions of his plays, you will not need to purchase the Signets, although you may still choose to do so given their convenience. One can never have too many versions of Shakespeare!

The non-Shakespearean texts will not be drawn from an anthology but will be ordered individually (lower total expense).

Plays by Shakespeare and others are likely to be the following:

Tragedies (first part of the semester):
- Christopher Marlowe’s *Dr. Faustus*  
- *Titus Andronicus*  
- *Romeo and Juliet*  
- John Webster’s *The Duchess of Malfi*  
- Thomas Middleton’s *Women Beware Women*

Comedies (after Spring Break):
- *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*  
- *The Taming of the Shrew*  
- Ben Jonson’s *Volpone or Bartholomew Fair*  
- *Twelfth Night*  
- John Fletcher’s sequel, *The Tamer Tamed*

We will also read about the performance histories of the plays and read some historical contextual material.

The course is writing-intensive. There will be two 6-8 page essays that will incorporate peer review of drafts, one essay due just before Spring Break and the other due at the end of the semester. There will be one 4 page essay during the first part of the semester that can be revised during the second part of the semester. There will be a number of 1-page discussion statements, probably one on each play. There will not be a final exam.