



Let's get this out of the way: Like the last two terms, summer term 201 will be yet another experiment in pandemic pedagogics. I look forward to experimenting with new forms of (online) teaching, but I will need your help. Please keep in touch, take part in the Zoom classes, and use the forum for asynchronous coursework (study questions, book reviews – tasks specified below). Most importantly, please let me (and the other course members) know if something does not work for you or if you have different ideas about how to do things. Let's do this together!

class:

- **Tuesday, 16:15-17:45 [online]**

As Zoom is not the perfect medium for everyone (and some of you might struggle with technical issues) the seminar will combine synchronous Zoom classes and asynchronous sessions (see schedule & tasks below).

contact:

- **[office:** 4.154 IG-Farben-Haus]
- **e-mail:**
- **office hours:** Thursday, 9:00-10:30 (and on appointment) – please send me an e-mail for the Zoom link.
- **twitter:** @susannegruss (#RevengeTragHS)

resources:

- **OLAT:**

literature:

- You need to **buy** the following primary texts (listed in the order of discussion in class):
 - (1) William Shakespeare, *Titus Andronicus* (1594) (Arden edition)
 - (2) John Marston, *Antonio's Revenge* (1600) (Revels Plays, Manchester University Press)
 - (3) Thomas Middleton, *The Revenger's Tragedy* (1606) (in *Four Revenge Tragedies*, ed. K. Eisaman Maus, Oxford University Press)
 - (4) George Chapman, *The Revenge of Bussy d'Ambois* (c.1611) (in *Four Revenge Tragedies*)
 - (5) Cyril Tourneur, *The Atheist's Tragedy* (c.1611) (in *Four Revenge Tragedies*)

Please make sure that you have read at least *Titus Andronicus* and *Antonio's Revenge* by the beginning of term! Ideally, you are also familiar with the plots of Thomas Kyd's *Spanish Tragedy* and Shakespeare's *Hamlet*.

- Apart from these longer primary texts, all **other texts** that are mandatory reading are available on OLAT.
- Please check the **bibliography** for further references (full bibliographical details, further reading).

course description:

A mother is forced to eat a pie that contains the limbs of her sons, one mad revenger sprinkles his father's grave with the blood of his opponent's son, and another revenger uses the poisoned skull of his fiancée to kill her seducer; these are scenes from the first three texts we will discuss in this course. This might necessitate a CN: this seminar is not for the faint-hearted! We will cover a range of (revenge) tragedies from the late Elizabethan era through the Jacobean period, plays that are (in)famous for their imaginative killings and bloody catastrophes, excessive violence and gory details, their morbid atmosphere as well as their social criticism. In discussing these tragedies, we will look into early modern depictions of violence and their dependence on generic developments (the revenge tragedy) and early modern discourses (anatomy, the anxiety about the stability of gender roles, the development of English law, the status of the English monarch). We will proceed to analyse 'late' examples of the revenge mode (Chapman and Tourneur) and discuss what happens to a popular genre when it seems to have run out of steam.



e-mail and Zoom etiquette:**- e-mail:**

Please give me some time to answer your **e-mails** (up to 3 or 4 days). I will not write e-mails after 8pm or on weekends. As I teach four different classes, it would be very helpful if the class you are taking with me appeared somewhere in the body of your e-mail.

Zoom:

The usual: Please **mute yourself** if you are not talking. If you feel uncomfortable talking into the camera (or if you have connection issues), feel free to use the **chat** to contribute to class discussions.

I obviously will not (and cannot) force anyone to turn on their **camera** when we zoom but would still kindly ask you to do so (or drop me a brief note at the beginning of term explaining why you would rather not). Yes, staring at yourself onscreen can be cringeworthy, but if we want to use Zoom to create a **seminar experience**, being able to see each other's faces and nonverbal communication just makes everything so much easier for me (and you). Imagine trying to keep a discussion going while staring into a void of black rectangles.

Most of us will zoom from our **private spaces** – this means that my kids might make an appearance at some point (sorry). Zoom bombing family members, flatmates or pets are always welcome! Added bonus: you get to eat and drink during classes (as long as you have muted yourself, see above).

Our Zoom seminar should be a **safe space** for everyone. Recording (parts of) sessions or taking (and posting) screenshots is an absolute no-go. All material shared onscreen will be made available to you on OLAT.

I am not exempt from the occasional **technical blip** – please be patient if I freeze and simply carry on with your discussion. Like the terminator, I will be back, promised.

- And, as a general rule: **Be kind (to yourself, to each other, and to me).**

course performance & requirements:

- Apart from preparing the **compulsory reading**, please stick to the tasks detailed in the course schedule below.
- I expect you to take part in class **regularly** and **actively**, both in synchronous and asynchronous sessions. As indicated below, I will use your activity in the forum to track participation. Communication is key, so talk to me if you are struggling.
- For **asynchronous sessions**, I have indicated the tasks I expect you to cover over the week in the schedule below. This should not take more time than the 90-minute course slot (plus the time you would normally take to read/prepare for class).
- Instead of an oral presentation, **each** of you is expected to write at **least two 1½–2 page drama reviews**. Please write an academic review focussing not only on plot, but also on the revenge context of the seminar.
Please hand in the book reviews on the date specified in the schedule below. I will read them and send you feedback (this might take a while).
For those of you who do not need a term paper but an **assignment**, please revise and slightly extend your drama reviews (2x **3 pages**) and hand them in by the end of term at the latest.

term paper:

- If you need to write a term paper for this course, please stick to the department's style sheet and attend the Zoom session on term papers.
- You can, of course, use ideas developed in your book reviews as part of your term paper – see the book reviews as an exercise in academic writing.
- Developing a topic **independently** and coming up with a suitable **thesis** is part of your assignment. Please talk to me/chat with me as soon as possible – I will not accept & grade your term paper if I have not talked to you about your topic.



 mandatory reading / viewing
 to do
 background reading (optional)

01 13.04.21 *organisation, tools* (Flinga, Padlet, Perusall)

Zoom *revenge* (Francis Bacon, "Of Revenge")

to read / to do:

- F. Bacon, "Of Revenge" 

tasks:

- Please have a quick look at the forum **before we start** and introduce yourself (including your pronouns) – if you want to, you can also upload a selfie and/or a picture of your workspace. And if you have a pet, upload a pic for us (pretty please).
- prep for class:** Think about what you know about **revenge tragedy** – historically, academically, etc. Have you come across revenge plays in previous classes?
- Read Bacon's essay – how does he conceive of **revenge**?

02 20.04.21 *some theory*

genre – pollution & excess

to read / to do:

- T. Pollard, "Tragedy & Revenge" (58-72) 
- E. Smith, "The Spanish Tragedy: Thomas Kyd" (*Not Shakespeare: Elizabethan and Jacobean Popular Theatre* podcast) 
- M. Douglas, "(6) Powers and Dangers" (*Purity and Danger* 117-140) 
- E. Smith, "Hamlet" (*Approaching Shakespeare* podcast) 
- C. Jenks, "4 Excess" (*Transgression* 82-110) 

tasks:

- Read **Pollard's article** and take some notes about **generic conventions**. Listen to **Smith's podcast** (link in today's OLAT session) for some background on *The Spanish Tragedy* as a formative text. If you have some time on your hands, listen to her podcast on *Hamlet* as well.
- Read & comment on **Douglas's chapter** (Perusall, link in today's OLAT session).
- Answer the **forum question** & engage with the others' entries – there will be an open question for every asynchronous week of this seminar (I will use your forum posts to track participation). In an extra thread, I will prompt you to think about **discussion questions** for next week – this way you can contribute to the structure of our synchronous sessions.
- Please take the **minute paper** (link in today's OLAT session) for some feedback – I will upload a compilation of your answers, and we will discuss open questions at the beginning of our next synchronous session.

Note that this asynchronous session will probably take you a bit longer as you learn how to navigate Perusall and the forum. It will become easier as term progresses, I promise!

We will evaluate your experience of this asynchronous session at the beginning of our next (Zoom) session.



03 27.04.21

William Shakespeare, Titus Andronicus (1594) 1

Zoom

reading response - revenge tragedy

to read / to do:

- read the play 
- hand in a 1½–2 page **drama review** (you need to write two for the seminar) 
- E. Smith, "Shakespeare and Early Modern Tragedy" (*Cambridge Companion* 132-149) 

tasks:

- reading prompt:** Read the play with a focus on the depiction of the **development** of the **revenge plot** (for this week) and the characterisation of **women** (Lavinia and Tamora in particular) and their relation to **violence** (for next week).
- prep for class:** Look up the myth of the **rape of Philomela** (if you have the time to read it in full you can find it in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, book 6). Have a quick look at the **discussion questions** posted in last week's forum.
- Please take the **minute paper** (link in today's OLAT session) for some feedback.

04 04.05.21

William Shakespeare, Titus Andronicus (1594) 2

gender & violence

to read / to do:

- E. Smith, "Titus Andronicus" (*Approaching Shakespeare* podcast) 
- K. Robertson, "Rape and the Appropriation of Progne's Revenge in Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus*, or 'Who Cooks the Thyestean Banquet?'" (213-237) 
- D. Willis, "'The Gnawing Vulture': Revenge, Trauma Theory, and *Titus Andronicus*" (21-52) 

tasks:

- Listen** to Smith's **podcast** and watch my short **video on the lusty widow** (links in today's OLAT session). Do let me know if you have any questions about the video.
- Read & comment on **Robertson's article** (**Perusall**, link in today's OLAT session).
- Answer the **forum question** and engage with the others' entries. Post **discussion questions** for next week.
- Please take the **minute paper** (link in today's OLAT session) for some feedback.

05 11.05.21

John Marston, Antonio's Revenge (1600) 1

Zoom

reading response – traditional approaches, intertextuality

to read / to do:

- read the play 
- hand in a 1½–2 page **drama review** (you need to write two for the seminar) 
- B. J. Baines, "Antonio's Revenge: Marston's Play on Revenge Plays" (277-294) 
- G. L. Geckle, "Antonio's Revenge: 'Never more woe in lesser plot was found'" (323-335) 

tasks:

- reading prompt:** Read the play with a focus on **generic self-consciousness & metadrama** (for today) and on **taboo & transgression** for next session.
- prep for class:** Find out about the **Children of St. Paul's** (the troupe the play was written for) and Marston's *Antonio and Mellida* (c.1599). Have a quick look at the **discussion questions** posted in last week's forum.
- Please take the **minute paper** (link in today's OLAT session) for some feedback.



06 18.05.21

John Marston, Antonio's Revenge (1600) 2**cannibalism, sensationalism... & morality?**to read / to do:

- P. S. Spinrad, "The Sacralization of Revenge in *Antonio's Revenge*" (169-185) 
- R. J. Rice, "Cannibalism and the Act of Revenge in Tudor-Stuart Drama" (297-316) 

tasks:

- Watch my **video** on **cannibalism** in revenge plays (link in today's OLAT session). Do let me know if you have any questions!
- Read & comment on **Spinrad's article** (**Perusall**, link in today's OLAT session).
- Answer the **forum question** and engage with the others' entries. Post **discussion questions** for next week.
- Please take the **minute paper** (link in today's OLAT session) for some feedback.

07 25.05.21

Thomas Middleton, The Revenger's Tragedy (1606) 1

Zoom

reading response – anatomy & necrophiliato read / to do:

- read the play 
- hand in a 1½–2 page **drama review** (you need to write two for the seminar) 
- K. S. Coddon, "Necrophilia and *The Revenger's Tragedy*" (121-141) 
- S. Zimmerman, "(4) Invading the Grave: Shadow Lives in *The Revenger's Tragedy* and *The Duchess of Malfi*" (*Early Modern Corpse* 128-171) 

tasks:

- reading prompt:** Read the play with a focus on the **spectacle** of the **dead body** (for today) and on the **legal frameworks** for next session.
- prep for class:** Look up Andreas Vesalius's *De Humani Corporis Fabrica* as a starting point for our discussion of anatomy. Have a quick look at the **discussion questions** posted in last week's forum.
- Please take the **minute paper** (link in today's OLAT session) for some feedback.

08 01.06.21

Thomas Middleton, The Revenger's Tragedy (1606) 1**revenge and/vs. the law**to read / to do:

- E. Smith, "*The Revenger's Tragedy*: Thomas Middleton" (*Not Shakespeare: Elizabethan and Jacobean Popular Theatre* podcast) 
- S. Mukherji, "Middleton and the Law" (106-113) 
- E. Gieskes, "'From Wronger and Wronged Have I Fee': Thomas Middleton and Early Modern Legal Culture" (110-118) 

tasks:

- Listen** to Smith's **podcast** and watch my short **video** on **law and literature** in the early modern age (links in today's OLAT session). Do let me know if you have any questions about the video.
- Read & comment on **Spinrad's article** (**Perusall**, link in today's OLAT session).
- Answer the **forum question** and engage with the others' entries.
- Please take the **minute paper** (link in today's OLAT session) for some feedback.



09 08.06.21

*Sovereignty & the Divine Law of Kings***James I & absolutism**to read / to do:

- James I and VI. "The Trew Law of Free Monarchies" (1598) (52-84) 
- J. P. Sommerville, "James I & the Divine Right of Kings: English Politics & Continental Theory" (55-70) 

tasks:

- Read James's "The Trew Law of Free Monarchies" (1598) carefully; **take some notes** – what are James's main points? how might they collide with the early modern English legal system?
- Watch my **video** on the **tyrant** in early modern (revenge) tragedies (link in today's OLAT session). Do let me know if you have any questions about the video.
- Answer the **forum question** and engage with the others' entries. Post **discussion questions** for next week.
- Please take the **minute paper** (link in today's OLAT session) for some feedback.

10 15.06.21

Zoom

*George Chapman, The Revenge of Bussy d'Ambois (1611)*¹**reading response – serial revenge***Term Papers*to read / to do:

- read the play 
- hand in a 1½–2 page **drama review** (you need to write two for the seminar) 
- think about your **term paper** – hand in a topic/idea/short abstract if you already have one 
- D. Montuori, "The Confusion of Self and Role in Chapman's *Bussy D'Ambois*" (287-299) 

tasks:

- reading prompt:** Read the play with a focus on **seriality** (for today) and on the **reluctant revenge / poetic justice** for next session.
- prep for class:** Look up the plot of Chapman's *The Tragedy of Bussy d'Ambois* and try to make sense of *The Revenge of Bussy d'Ambois* as a **sequel**. Have a quick look at the **discussion questions** posted in last week's forum.
- Please take the **minute paper** (link in today's OLAT session) for some feedback.

11 22.06.21

*George Chapman, The Revenge of Bussy d'Ambois (1611)*²**poetic justice for the reluctant revenger?**to read / to do:

- R. Ide, "Exploiting the Tradition: The Elizabethan Revenger as Chapman's 'Complete Man'" (159-172) 
- L. Munro, "'Ieronimo in Decimo Sexto': Tragedy and the Text" (*Children of the Queen's Revels* 134-163) 

tasks:

- Research **poetic justice** and use the **Padlet** (link in today's OLAT session) to collaborate on a definition.
- Read Ide's article and **take some notes** – do you agree with his theses/insights? As the article is almost 40 years old, think about how you would treat it as an academic source: is it still relevant? do you see problems with his approach?
- Answer the **forum question** and engage with the others' entries. Post **discussion questions** for next week.
- Please take the **minute paper** (link in today's OLAT session) for some feedback.



- 12** 29.06.21 *Cyril Tourneur, The Atheist's Tragedy (1611) 1*
Zoom
reading response – Neostoicism & failed revenge?
- to read / to do:
- read the play 
 - hand in a 1½–2 page **drama review** (you need to write two for the seminar) 
 - M. Kendrick, "Neostoicism & the Economics of Revenge in Cyril Tourneur's *The Atheist's Tragedy*" (7-26) 
- tasks:
- reading prompt:** Read a play with a focus on how **revenge play conventions** are alluded to and eventually fail (for today) and how it might relate to **gothic literature** for next session.
 - prep for class:** Brush up your knowledge on **Neostoicism**. Have a quick look at the **discussion questions** posted in last week's forum.
 - Please take the **minute paper** (link in today's OLAT session) for some feedback.
- 13** 06.07.21 *Cyril Tourneur, The Atheist's Tragedy (1611) 2*
revenge & the **Gothic Renaissance**
- to read / to do:
- A. Williams, "(1) The Nightmare of History: Acting On and Acting Out" (*Art of Darkness*, 27-37) 
 - P. Lewis, "*The Atheist's Tragedy and the Castle of Otranto: Expressions of the Gothic Vision*" (52-54) 
- tasks:
- Read & comment on **Williams's chapter (Perusall)**, link in today's OLAT session).
 - Look up the **plot** of Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Udolpho*, then watch my **video** on the **early modern gothic** (link in today's OLAT session). Do let me know if you have any questions about the video.
 - Answer the **forum question** and engage with the others' entries.
 - Please take the **minute paper** (link in today's OLAT session) for some feedback.
- 14** 13.07.21 *Round-up and Open Questions*
Zoom
revenge: genre or mode?
- to read / to do:
/
- task:
- prep for class:** Think about the plays we have discussed in class in the context **genre...** or is revenge a **mode** rather than a genre?

Easter Egg: Finished reading the complete syllabus? Well done! Now please log on to OLAT (see link above), sign into the course, go to the forum (thread 00) and post your favourite meme to let me know that you are done.



Literature

primary literature

please note: bibliographical details are for the editions of primary texts I use

- Chapman, George. 1611. *The Revenge of Bussy D'Ambois. Four Revenge Tragedies*. Ed. Katharine Eisaman Maus. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995. 177-248.
- Marston, John. 1600. *Antonio's Revenge*. Ed. W. Reavley Gair. Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1978 [Revels Plays].
- Middleton, Thomas. 1606. *The Revenger's Tragedy. Thomas Middleton: The Collected Works*. Eds Gary Taylor and John Lavagnino. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007. 547-593.
- Shakespeare, William. 1594. *Titus Andronicus*. Ed. Jonathan Bate. London and New York: Routledge, 1995 [Arden Shakespeare].
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secondary literature

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- Bacon, Francis. *The Major Works: Including New Atlantis and the Essays*. Ed. Brian Vickers. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002.
- Baines, Barbara J. 1983. "Antonio's Revenge: Marston's Play on Revenge Plays." *SEL: Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 23.2: 277-294.
- Clare, Janet. 2006. *Revenge Tragedies of the Renaissance*. Tavistock: Northcote House.
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- James I (1598/1616). "The Trew Law of Free Monarchies: Or The Reciproock and Mutuall Dutie Betwixt a Free King, and His Naturall Subjects." *King James VI and I: Political Writings*. Ed. Johann P. Sommerville. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 62-84.
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- Kendrick, Matthew. 2014. "Neostoicism and the Economics of Revenge in Cyril Tourneur's *The Atheist's Tragedy*." *College Literature* 41.3: 7-26.
- Lewis, Paul. 1978. "The Atheist's Tragedy and the Castle of Otranto: Expressions of the Gothic Vision." *Notes and Queries* 25: 52-54.
- Montuori, Deborah. 1988. "The Confusion of Self and Role in Chapman's *Bussy D'Ambois*." *SEL: Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 28.2: 287-299.
- Mukherji, Subha. 2011. "Middleton and the Law." *Thomas Middleton in Context*. Ed. Suzanne Gossett. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 106-13.
- Munro, Lucy. 2005. *Children of the Queen's Revels: A Jacobean Theatre Repertory*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Pollard, Tanya. 2010. "Tragedy and Revenge." *The Cambridge Companion to English Renaissance Tragedy*. Eds. Emma Smith and Garrett A. Sullivan Jr. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 58-72.
- Rice, Raymond J. 2004. "Cannibalism and the Act of Revenge in Tudor-Stuart Drama." *SEL: Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 44.2: 297-316.
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