

Dr. Don Rodrigues
Fall 2021
ENGL 7254

Seventeenth Century Literature: Queer Renaissance

From the gender-bending antics of early Jacobean theater to the foppish wit-wars of late Restoration comedy, seventeenth-century British literature offers a striking array of tropes and types teeming with queerness. This course examines the literature of seventeenth-century Britain with a focus on these types as well as queer or nonnormative representations of sexual desire, identity, temporality, and political imagination. We will consider works of poetry, prose, and drama alongside religious, scientific, and political treatises from the period to situate our readings in historical context, and we will turn to queer and intersectional feminist theorists to make substantive connections to contemporary debates on gender identity, sexual orientation, race, and related topics. Throughout the semester, we will welcome guest experts to assist us in exploring our texts and topics, and we will consult post-Renaissance media to consider the enduring queer afterlife of this remarkable period. Our syllabus will include (but not be limited to) literary works by William Shakespeare, Ben Jonson, Beaumont and Fletcher, Amelia Lanier, Francis Bacon, Mary Wroth, Aphra Ben, John Milton, and Margaret Cavendish.