Course description:
Imagine that 400 years in the future university students learned about late twentieth- and early twenty-first century popular film by watching only movies directed by Steven Spielberg. They would get a pretty good sense of some major genres (with action/adventure films represented by Jaws and Raiders of the Lost Ark and historical epics by Schindler’s List and Saving Private Ryan). But it’s easy for us to see that they would miss out on a lot. After all, Spielberg has never made an animated film, and how can we talk about movies of our time without discussing Disney or Pixar? What would those students in the twenty-fifth century fail to understand about low-budget horror or musicals or teen comedies by only touching on these types of movies as they connect to Spielberg’s filmography?

If your encounters with English renaissance drama have revolved around Shakespeare’s plays, you are in a position much like those future students. This class will introduce you to English Renaissance drama not written by Shakespeare and, in the process, offer you a more expansive perspective on late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century literature, theatre, culture, and society. Expect genuinely funny comedies and bawdy sex scenes. Be on the lookout for gore, violence, and revenge. Meet morally complex warriors; girls who fall in love with other girls; and audience members who highjack the play they are watching. It’s going to be a wild ride.

Proposed assignments:
- Editorial group project:
  - Editing a scene: 10%
  - Historical context: 10%
  - Performance history: 10%
- Individual research project:
  - Review of secondary material: 20%
  - Final paper proposal: 5%
  - Final paper: 20%
- Final exam: 25%

Proposed texts: John Lyly, Galatea; Christopher Marlowe, Tamburlaine; Thomas Kyd, The Spanish Tragedy; Thomas Middleton, The Revenger’s Tragedy; Thomas Middleton and Thomas Dekker, The Roaring Girl; Thomas Dekker, Shoemaker’s Holiday; Francis Beaumont, Knight of the Burning Pestle