Course Description: This course will examine the ways in which the literature of the English Renaissance participated in the production of new and conflicting beliefs about differences between people. How and why did early modern people make distinctions based on differences in skin color, religion, nation, climate or region, language, and even ways of dressing, eating, and acting? To what extent did these differences intersect or undercut differences in gender and in class? To what extent did these distinctions alter or disappear when people traveled, immigrated, married, had children, were captured, enslaved, or converted to a new religion? The class will be structured around those literary texts that have been of the greatest interest to scholars working race and religious difference in recent years, and supplemented with readings drawn from travel writing, costume books, captivity narratives, and visual images of all kinds. Major literary texts will include Shakespeare’s Othello and The Tempest, and Behn’s Oroonoko.

Required Texts (Available at New Jersey Books and the Rutgers Campus Bookstore):

Suggested Texts:

Course Requirements:


3. Discussion Questions: Post 3 questions (or comments) on the week's readings to Blackboard by 9pm Monday evening.

4. Presentations: Lead one class, guiding discussion and providing some overview and background. At least one week in advance, select and distribute 1-2 additional primary or secondary readings. You should also submit separately a short (approx 5pgs) written version of your presentation to me.

5. Edited Play-text: Working in pairs we will build an online edition of an unpublished play-text complete with apparatus (dramatis personae, summary, textual notes, commentary, etc.)

Grading: Attendance and Participation (15%), Discussion Questions (10%), Edited Play-text (15%), Presentation (15%), Book Review & Glossary (15%), Final Paper (30%)

Resources:
1. Disability Accommodations. If you have any special needs I encourage you to speak with me as soon as possible to let me know how I can help. To request specific test or classroom accommodations, contact the Office of Disability Services for Students (disabilityservices-uw.rutgers.edu) or e-mail Ms. Sumski at famoso@andromeda.rutgers.edu.

2. Support. The Rutgers Newark Counseling Center provides free and confidential support. For more information call 973-353-5805 or visit www.rutgersnewarkcounselingcenter.com
Syllabus  
(Readings marked * are on Blackboard)  

Race and the Renaissance

T Sept 3  
Introduction  
Washing the Ethiope  
The “trial” scenes and the “play opening” scenes on Blackboard

T Sept 10  
William Shakespeare, Othello  
Aria Loomba, from Shakespeare, Race and Colonialism*  
Ayanna Thompson, from Passing Strange*  
Ian Smith, “Othello’s Black Handkerchief”*  
Michael Neill, “Response to Ian Smith”*

T Sept 17  
William Shakespeare, The Merchant of Venice  
M. Lindsay Kaplan, “Jessica’s Mother”*  
Peter Berek, ‘Looking Jewish’ on the Early Modern Stage”*  
Geraldine Heng, “The Invention of Race I and II”*

T Sept 24  
Vecellio Cesare, from Clothing Ancient and Modern*  
Karen Newman, from Fashioning Femininity*  
Peter Stallybrass & Ann Rosalind Jones, from Renaissance Clothing and the Materials of Memory*  
Valerie Traub, “Mapping the Global Body”*  
Proclamation Enforcing Statutes and Proclamations of Apparel*

T Oct 1  
William Shakespeare, Twelfth Night  
Bruce Smith, “His Fancy’s Queen’: Sensing Sexual Strangeness in Twelfth Night”*  
Robert Lublin, “Anxious Audiences and the Early Modern English Transvestite Theatre”*  
Helkiah Crooke, from Microcosmographia: A Description of the Body of Man*  
Book reviews due

T Oct 8  
Selected Captivity Narratives*  
Presentation 1

T Oct 15  
Sir Walter Ralegh, The Discovery of Guiana  
Presentation 2

T Oct 22  
William Shakespeare, The Tempest  
Presentation 3

T Oct 29  
Ben Jonson, The Masque of Blackness* and The Masque of Beauty*  
Presentation 4

T Nov 5  
Screening: Aphra Behn’s The Rover

T Nov 12  
Aphra Behn, The Rover  
Presentation 5

T Nov 19  
Aphra Behn, Oroonoko  
Glossary entries due

T Nov 26  
No Class: University follows a Thursday schedule

T Dec 3  
Collaborative Play-text Edition

T Dec 10  
Collaborative Play-text Edition

TBA  
Final Papers due