

SHAKESPEARE'S COMPETITORS

Elizabethan playwrights Christopher Marlowe and John Webster

Course #:	22S-SHC
Format:	Seminar
Moderator:	Linda Honan
Date and Time:	Tues - 9:30 - 11:30 AM 10 weeks, starting 2/21/2021
Location:	Zoom
Max # of Participants:	16
Auditors Accepted:	Yes
Max # of Auditors:	Up to 2

PURPOSE:

The Elizabethan theatrical world was rich in novel and exciting dramas by many playwrights beside Shakespeare. Among these, Marlowe and Webster excelled. In this seminar we will examine their work both on its own and in comparison with Shakespeare's.

DESCRIPTION:

This seminar will examine the lives and dramatic works of two of Shakespeare's most important contemporaries and competitors among Elizabethan playwrights, Christopher Marlowe and John Webster. In the reign of Elizabeth I dramatic plays were a major entertainment for all classes of society. Christopher Marlowe was born in 1564, the same year as Shakespeare. Like Shakespeare, he was born to a working-class family, but unlike Shakespeare, he was highly educated, earning a master's degree at Oxford. He published many translations from the Latin, but wrote plays in English. His works include *Tamburlaine*, followed by *The Jew of Malta*, *Doctor Faustus*, and others. John Webster was born in 1580 to a working-class family, and he became a lawyer. Webster's plays are intellectual, and he is best known for his tragedies: *The White Devil* and *The Duchess of Malfi*, and a tragicomedy, *The Devil's Law Case*.

ROLE OF PARTICIPANTS:

Participants will choose a topic from a list the moderator will supply (or another of their own choosing, after discussion with the moderator) and will present a paper lasting 20-30 minutes to allow time for discussion.

RESOURCES:

Marlowe: *Four Plays: Tamburlaine, Parts One and Two, The Jew of Malta, Edward II and Dr Faustus*, by Christopher Marlowe, ed. Brian Gibbons (Methuen: New Mermaids Anthologies).
John Webster, *The Duchess of Malfi and Other Plays: The White Devil; The Duchess of Malfi; The Devil's Law-Case; A Cure for a Cuckold* (Oxford: Oxford World's Classics)

ABOUT THE MODERATORS:

Linda Honan is a retired museum educator and university administrator who lives happily in the Pioneer Valley.