

Name: Scott O'Neil

Course Description: Dispelling the "Dark Ages": English Theatre in Late Medieval and Renaissance England

The theater of Shakespeare's lifetime was the first professional theater in England; dramatic performances prior to this time are often assumed to have been amateurish or theatrically primitive. This course will be focused on the theatrical work on both sides of that assumed divide between the late medieval and the Renaissance stage. Potential texts include Medwall, Shakespeare, the court comedies of John Lyly, plays written and performed at academic institutions, and a selection of Biblically inspired medieval cycle plays. Likely areas of inquiry include the stage fool and vice, issues of gender and staging, and representations of authority. Performance aspects will also be a focus of the course, with an emphasis on both viewing performances and creating performances of several key scenes. Course assignments may include short response papers, quizzes, and one culminating research project.