

Scott O'Neil

Paper Title: "The Kings of Subjects: Licensed Confinement and the Inversion of Authority in *Love's Labour's Lost*."

Paper Abstract:

I will be presenting a paper that uses the ideas of physical space and authority in order to attempt to explain why a seemingly unimportant character--Holofernes the schoolmaster--has such a prominent role in *Love's Labour's Lost*. Most theatrical representations of schoolmasters show them to be idiots--not because they don't have a good understanding of their subjects, but because they are almost universally depicted as trying to exercise their scholarly authority *outside* of their classrooms. Holofernes appears, at first glance, to be just one more example of this theatrical trope. My paper suggests that Holofernes is something a bit different. At the beginning of the play, the King of Navarre and his closest friends swear to each other that they will spend three full years engaged in a scholarly life. By essentially making the entire kingdom a schoolhouse, the king inadvertently places himself under the authority of the schoolmaster, Holofernes. My paper, through a spatial analysis and a detailed history of professional authority, offers a new reading of the events of the play, particularly the need for the conclusion--a harsh rebuking of Holofernes by the entire court during a play within the play.

Bibliographical Suggestions:

Enterline, Lynn. *Shakespeare's Schoolroom: Rhetoric, Discipline, Emotion*. U of Pennsylvania P, 2011.

Potter, Ursula. "The Naming of Holofernes in *Love's Labour's Lost*." *English Language Notes*, vol. 38, no. 2, 2000, pp. 11-24.