When Shakespeare came to London in the early 1590s, he found an already thriving theatre business - playhouses, companies, audiences and a hunger for entertainment shared by court and city. The bar had been set high by the spectacular success of men like Thomas Kyd and Christopher Marlowe, but the newcomer, described as ‘an upstart crow’, soon turned out to be the ultimate ‘Shake-scene’ of the profession. What is often forgotten in the study of Shakespeare is that he could not have realized his full potential without the theatrical business being already in place, i.e., his achievement is best understood in the context of his time.

The ‘Then’ in the title of this course positions Shakespeare’s plays among some of his contemporaries and attempts to uncover the dynamics of a culture, responding to a variety of pressures.

The course will meet in doubled-class sessions once weekly during the 14-week semester, and will include lectures, seminars, workshops, field trips, student presentations, visits to the theatre and discussion of performances. It includes Thomas Kyd’s The Spanish Tragedy, the blueprint for Titus Andronicus, and Hamlet, as an important stage in the evolution of the tradition.

‘Now’, Shakespeare and his plays are part of global culture, but this does not apply to most of his illustrious contemporaries. Hence, the need to grapple with the question why this is so. The central contemporary aspect, however,
London offers all-year-round theatre productions of Shakespearean and other Early Modern plays, which help to enhance the understanding of the texts, studied in the classroom and develop an enduring love for theatre and its pleasures.

A unique feature of the course are the workshops with theatre practitioners, the visits to the Globe and the Rose theatres on South Bank and the trip to Stratford-upon-Avon.

ND students may have the exclusive opportunity to have a class on *The Spanish Tragedy* at the site of the Rose Theatre Bankside, where it was first performed 400 years ago.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment structure:</th>
<th>Two 2000-word essays (7 sides), comprising 60% of the mark, two class-presentations worth 30%. The remaining 10% reflect the general work in class.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Required resources</td>
<td>The London Undergraduate Program library has multiple copies of annotated editions of the above plays, but some students might need to buy their own copies. <em>For Hamlet</em>, Arden Three, Q2 edition (Ann Thompson &amp; Neil Taylor, eds.) is the preferred one. E-reserve resources will be activated before the beginning of the semester. Apart from the play texts, all reading materials will be on-line.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>There will be a Saturday trip to Stratford Upon Avon, and two or three additional evening performances, or class-related college events. They are typically scheduled between Monday and Wednesday and are mandatory.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom policies</td>
<td>Standard London Undergraduate Program attendance policies apply.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class by class schedule</td>
<td><strong>NB: As currently course arrangements are being made with other institutions (see above) we cannot have a comprehensive date-by-date syllabus at this stage.</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
After week 1, which is included here as a representative sample of the kind of work expected to be done by students, the basic structure is as follows:

Each play is given 2--2 ½ weeks, which typically includes, a field trip, seeing a performance, or a workshop with a theatre professional.

**Week 1**: Introduction

**Lecture**: Shakespeare ‘Then’: the theatrical world, history, politics, memory.

**Seminar**: Discussion. Visuals. **Assignment for next class:**

**Read** *The Spanish Tragedy* including the Introduction.


The next class will be at our regular class time, but will be held at the Rose Theatre, Bankside (15 mins away from Conway Hall).

**Bibliography**:

