

ENGL 825-001 Renaissance Literature in Context

Professor Mary Floyd-Wilson

M 2:30 pm – 5:20 pm

Greenlaw 302

Max Enroll: 15

Historicizing Emotion: English Literature, 1579-1625

In 2004, I co-edited a collection of essays entitled *Reading the Early Modern Passions*, which contributed to the study of emotions in Renaissance literature and helped define some important questions about the historical analysis of emotional expressions and experiences. Today, the Australian Research Council sponsors a center for the *History of Emotions in Europe, 1100-1500* [<http://www.emotions.uwa.edu.au/>], founded on the premise that interdisciplinary research will not only help track how emotions change over time but also enhance our understanding of the causes and categories of pre-modern emotions. This course begins by asking how the study of emotions in early modern literature has developed over the past ten years. What kinds of questions have occupied literary critics and historians? What methodologies have been employed? What has been neglected or over-emphasized? We will examine poetry, drama, and prose, as well as a range of non-literary texts with an eye towards investigating how to write effectively and persuasively about the representation, generation, and significance of emotion in Elizabethan and Jacobean literature. In our assessment of both old and new directions in emotion research, we will review the provocative work published on humoralism, madness, memory, and melancholy and anticipate new scholarship on affect, cognition, magic, and the occult. Canonical authors will include Edmund Spenser, Sir Philip Sidney, William Shakespeare, Thomas Kyd, Thomas Middleton, Christopher Marlowe, and Thomas Dekker.