



Seminar presentation sheet

Academic year	2018/19
Seminar n°	17
Seminar title	EXPLORING CENSORSHIP AND FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION THROUGH SHAKESPEARE
Teacher(s) (Name, SURNAME)	Jean-Christophe MAYER
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Teacher(s)' presentation	Jean-Christophe Mayer is a Research Professor employed by the French National Centre for Scientific Research (CNRS) and a member of the Institute for Research on the Renaissance, the Neo-classical Age and the Enlightenment (IRCL) at Université Paul Valéry, Montpellier. He has worked mainly on the links between literature and history, Shakespeare and religion, Shakespeare and literary theory and the history of reading. His most recent book is a monograph entitled <i>Shakespeare's Early Readers: A Cultural History from 1590 to 1800</i> (Cambridge University Press, forthcoming 2018). Since 2017, he is also an expert for the European Commission in the field of humanities. Read more.
Seminar presentation	For the first time in nearly two and a half millennia the countries of western Europe are no longer at war. This is largely thanks to the work of the founders and builders of the European Union. Yet, paradoxically, Europe is also currently in a state of crisis as its peoples feel arguably misrepresented, or unheard by the Union's governing bodies. Democracy and peace are always at threat when freedom of speech and freedom of the arts are taken for granted, or even jeopardized. This seminar will explore the censorship of one of Europe's greatest authors: William Shakespeare. Students will have the opportunity to look directly over the shoulders of a series of early censors of Shakespearean texts and will be encouraged to explore more broadly the workings of censorship, whether managed by the state, institutions, communities, or individuals themselves. As this seminar hopes to demonstrate, what Shakespeare's censored and maimed texts tell us, may inform our modern notions of artistic and political freedom of expression.



Prerequisites to follow the seminar	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Students will be asked to identify the institutions currently in charge of surveying the arts (especially theatre and television) in their home country and note some of the arguments used by these institutions. Then they will be invited to post a short video of their findings on https://info.flipgrid.com/ using a webcam (exact link provided by teacher when students are registered). Suggested format: 30s personal introduction followed by 1 min 30s to 2 mins 30s of findings (altogether a maximum of 3 mins). 2) To gain a sense of background and acquire a few fundamental theoretical notions before the seminar, students will be asked to read 5 short chapters (see “Bibliography” below).
Seminar objectives /skills to be developed by the students	<p>At the end of the seminar, the student will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • analyse the inscriptions in a number of key early modern annotated texts of Shakespeare (17th to 18th cent. essentially) • identify the workings of censorship and acquire a greater awareness of the way it shapes works of art and freedom of expression • reflect on counter-strategies to oppose new forms of censorship
Session 1 – Presentation / plan	Shakespeare and Early Institutional Censorship
Session 2 – Presentation / plan	Shakespeare and Individual or Community-Based Censorship: A Question of Taste Only?
Session 3 – Presentation / plan	Policing the Arts: Identifying Past and Present Strategies; Developing Awareness and Counter-Strategies in the Present.

Bibliography

❖ Chapters (best read in the following order):

RICHARD DUTTON, “William Shakespeare”, in *Censorship: A World Encyclopedia*, ed. Derek Jones (London: Routledge, 2001), pp. 2213-18.

CYNDIA SUSAN CLEGG, “Liberty, License, and Authority: Press Censorship and Shakespeare”, in *A Companion to Shakespeare*, ed. David Scott Kastan (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999) 464-85.

STEVE NICHOLSON, “Britain: The Lord Chamberlain British Theatrical Censor, 1737-1968”, in *Censorship: A World Encyclopedia*, ed. Derek Jones (London: Routledge, 2001) 327-30.



ROBERT DARNTON, "Conclusion", *Censors at Work: How States Shaped Literature* (London: The British Library, 2014) 229-43.

EVGENY MOROZOV, "Censors and Sensibilities", *The Net Delusion the Dark Side of Internet Freedom* (New York: PublicAffairs, 2011), 85-112.