

ENGL5005 Renaissance material culture (Special Topics: Periods) (Semester 2)

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This Option offers an introduction to early modern material culture, focusing on the circulation of objects in Renaissance drama. Domestic tragedies were often performed in the same intimate chamber spaces which provided their settings, and their playtexts are accordingly saturated with household accoutrements. Through engaging closely with some examples of domestic tragedy, a genre which flourished briefly in England between 1600 and 1625, students will consider how early modern citizens experienced their living spaces and the ways in which life's material trappings shaped early modern identity. Seminars will explore the importance of objects such as tapestries, apostle spoons, handkerchiefs, feathers, starch and ruffs; trace the significance of material tokens such as rings, seals and letters; and consider how and why goods and money were circulating both inside and outside the home. Students will also be invited to engage with archival and manuscript sources in order to explore reading and writing as themselves densely material practices.

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