Whether real or imagined, islands are everywhere in English Renaissance literature. As the Atlantic archipelago of several island nations began to be subsumed under the collective British Isles, writers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries drew on ancient and medieval traditions of travel writing, new developments in cartography, and emerging technologies of exploration to craft stories about islands both near and far. Beginning with Thomas More’s Utopia—a title that evokes a locale that is at once ideal and literally “no place”—we will think about how the island, by virtue of its isolation and often exotic nature, was an experimental space in which writers could use the imagination to test out new political, scientific, and literary ideas. We will read the dramatic work of playwrights such as William Shakespeare, Christopher Marlowe, and John Fletcher, who set many of their plays on islands in the commercially and culturally vibrant Mediterranean, in the distant Spice Islands, and in the New World. We will think about how the stage itself functioned as a playful and productive island-like laboratory for social and cultural interactions that could raise questions about race, religion, and gender. As we connect these isolated landmasses to the larger globe and the lasting legacies of early modern European imperial projects, we will work together in the intellectual space of our Island University to generate a new understanding of the centrality of the island to the writing of the Renaissance and beyond.
**STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES**

Students who successfully complete ENGL 5340 will be able to:

- analyze literary texts through historical, cultural, theoretical perspectives
- facilitate and participate in seminar discussions and debates
- effectively use writing skills and research methods to engage in critical analysis and to contribute to ongoing scholarly conversations
- identify and pursue avenues for academic presentations and publications

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND ASSIGNMENTS**

**Isolario Commonplace Book (20%):** Throughout the semester, each student will maintain an “Isolario Commonplace Book.” This assignment brings together two textual collecting traditions from the Renaissance. The compiler of an *isolario*, or book of islands, collected information, maps, and narrative descriptions of islands across the globe. A commonplace book served as a place where readers could copy quotations and passages and organize them according to topics of interest. For each text we read, you will create an entry that collects key quotations or passages that you find particularly interesting or perplexing. You will first *isolate* these quotations and treat them as islands unto themselves: analyze them in detail, ask questions about them, and pair them with relevant images/drawings/other media. You will then put these quotations in the larger context of the text, the course, and our critical readings. As you create more entries, you will be able to draw more connections across texts and refine your ideas about Renaissance islands. How you go about creating your book is up to you: you can do it on paper, creating a kind of scrapbook, or you can maintain a blog. I am open to all kinds of media as long as you are purposeful and are able to turn in your entries on a weekly basis for my feedback. You should use these entries as an opportunity to prepare for class discussions.

**Presentation and Discussion Facilitation (10%):** Each student will sign up to present an entry from his or her *isolario* and will lead a discussion on the primary sources and critical readings for that week.

**Weekly Attendance and Participation (15%):** Your active participation in class discussion is essential to your learning as well as that of your peers. You should therefore come to class having done all of the reading and prepared to engage actively with the material even if you do not fully understand it before we begin our discussion. I encourage you not only to draw on your *isolario* entries but also to listen carefully to your classmates and profit from the dialogues and debates that develop in the graduate seminar setting.

**Short Paper (15%):** For this short paper of 3-4 pages, you will expand one of your *isolario* entries to develop an argument about a short passage in one of the texts we have read thus far. You will support your argument with close reading and textual analysis. This paper will help you to develop the skills required for the final paper.

**Final Paper Multi-Part Assignment (40% TOTAL):** In a final research paper of 12-15 pages, you will develop a critical argument on a topic of your choice. You will first write a brief proposal and generate a preliminary bibliography, which you will then annotate and
submit before you begin writing the final paper. On the final day of classes, we will hold a mini conference, during which you will present a 15-minute version of the paper, which you will then expand and revise based on the questions and feedback you receive from your peers and instructor. Your paper must clearly state an argument and support it with textual evidence. When using secondary sources, you should maintain emphasis on your own ideas and interpretations throughout while engaging in dialogue with scholars who have written on the texts or topics you are exploring. In addition to those on our syllabus, you may find books and articles through the MLA Bibliography, JSTOR, ProjectMuse, or similar electronic resources in our library system. We will use class time to discuss and practice the selection of appropriate topics, the crafting of a clear and effective thesis statement, research methods, and other essential skills of writing a seminar paper.

**REQUIRED TEXTS**

Christopher Marlowe, *The Jew of Malta* (New Mermaids) ISBN 9781408144909

Additional primary and secondary readings will be available on the Blackboard site for this course under the “Content” section. These texts are marked as **Bb** in the Class Schedule section of this syllabus. Your success in this course depends on always bringing your book and secondary texts to class with you. Our discussions will be based primarily on close analysis of texts, so you must always have a copy of the text in front of you in order to participate fully.

**COURSE POLICIES**

**Attendance/Tardiness:** The success of this course and your success in this course depend on your regular attendance. No more than one unexcused absence is permitted in this course. Any absences beyond this allotted number will negatively affect your grade. It is also important that you arrive to each class on time out of respect for your peers and the instructor. Habitual lateness will also result in the lowering of your grade. In the event of extenuating circumstances, please contact me as soon as possible.

**Deadlines:** Assignments are due on the deadlines listed on the syllabus. In fairness to everyone in this class, I cannot accept late work. If you are experiencing a problem or have an emergency, please notify me in advance of the deadline rather than waiting until the deadline has passed.

**Communication and Office Hours:** I encourage you to schedule an appointment with me during my office hours if you have questions or would like to discuss your writing and your progress in the course. If my office hours do not work for your schedule, please contact me to schedule an appointment at an alternate time. The best way to contact me outside of class and office hours is by e-mail. I will do my best to respond to your e-mail within 24 hours of receiving it, but I check my e-mail less frequently in the evenings and on the weekends. Any communication I send out to
the entire class will be to your Islander e-mail address, so please check your university e-mail on a regular basis.

**Technology Policy:** I request that you do not have your cell phones out during class. I would strongly prefer that you print your readings and avoid using laptops during class, but if you plan to read Bb readings on your screen or take notes electronically, I will allow it on a provisional basis. If I sense that you are not fully present and “multitasking,” I will ask you to close your computer and bring hard copies of the text in future classes.

**Paper Guidelines:** Papers should be double-spaced, in 12-point Times New Roman font. Please do not use Cambria or Calibri font. You should have a consistent documentation style and should always cite your sources; I will upload a guide to citing works and ideas using the MLA citation style on our class’s Blackboard site. If you have any questions about citations, or how to acknowledge ideas or language other than your own, please come visit me in office hours. We will also review citation practices before the first paper. I also strongly encourage you to come to discuss your papers before they are due. I do not read full drafts, but I would be delighted to set up a meeting to discuss your paper with you before it is due.

**DROPPING A CLASS**

I hope that you never find it necessary to drop this or any other class. However, events can sometimes occur that make dropping a course necessary or wise. Please consult with me before you decide to drop to be sure it is the best thing to do. Should dropping the course be the best course of action, you must initiate the process to drop the course by going to the Student Services Center and filling out a course drop form. Just stopping attendance and participation WILL NOT automatically result in your being dropped from the class. Friday, November 11, 2016, is the last day to drop a class with an automatic grade of “W” this term.

**CLASSROOM/PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOR**

Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi has a diverse student population that represents the population of the state. Our goal is to provide you with a high quality educational experience that is free from repression. You are responsible for following the rules of the University, city, state and federal government. We expect that you will behave in a manner that is dignified, respectful and courteous to all people, regardless of sex, ethnic/racial origin, religious background, sexual orientation or disability. Behaviors that infringe on the rights of another individual will not be tolerated.

**SAFETY AND INCLUSIVITY**

I want all of my students to know that this classroom and my office are safe spaces for everyone. I have successfully completed TAMUCC’s Green Zone and Safe Zone trainings and will serve as a resource for student veterans, LGBTQ+ students, and other students in need of help in any way I can.

**GRADE APPEALS**
Students who feel that they have not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in this class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. For complete details on the process of submitting a formal grade appeal, please visit the College of Liberal Arts website, http://cla.tamucc.edu/about/student-resources.html. For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Associate Dean’s Office.

**Disability Services**

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please call or visit Disability Services at (361) 825-5816 in Corpus Christi Hall, Room #116. If you are a returning veteran and are experiencing cognitive and/or physical access issues in the classroom or on campus, please contact the Disability Services office for assistance at (361) 825-5816.

**Statement of Academic Continuity**

In the event of an unforeseen adverse event, such as a major hurricane, that prevents classes from being held on the campus of Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi, this course would continue through the use of Blackboard and/or e-mail. In addition, the syllabus and class activities may be modified to allow continuation of the course. Ideally, University facilities (i.e., e-mails, web sites, and Blackboard) will be operational within two days of the closing of the physical campus. However, students need to make certain that the course instructor has a primary and a secondary means of contacting each student.

**Academic Advising**

The College of Liberal Arts requires that students meet with an Academic Advisor as soon as they are ready to declare a major. Degree plans are prepared in the CLA Academic Advising Center. The University uses an online Degree Audit system. Any amendment must be approved by the Department Chair and the Office of the Dean. All courses and requirements specified in the final degree plan audit must be completed before a degree will be granted. The CLA Academic Advising Office is located in Driftwood #203. For more information, please call 361-825-3466.

**Graduate Student Academic Integrity Statement**

English graduate students are expected to "conduct themselves in accordance with the highest standards of academic honesty” (Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi Graduate Catalog). The Student Code of Conduct defines Academic Misconduct as cheating, plagiarism, multiple submissions, complicity, fabrication, falsification, and misrepresentation; in addition to "any behavior specifically prohibited by a faculty member in the course syllabus or class discussion” (Student Code of Conduct, Article III, 1. Academic Misconduct). Academic misconduct is a serious offense that will result in the professor
assigning a serious penalty, possibly including failure for an assignment, failure in a course, or recommendation for dismissal from a program (TAMUCC Graduate Catalog, Academic Honesty). For each Academic Misconduct case, the faculty member must file a record, including a description of the disciplinary action taken, along with any materials involved, with his or her college dean, who will forward a copy to the Office of Student Affairs. Further information regarding the judicial process is available on the website of the Office for Student Affairs.

**Course Calendar**

You should have completed the reading listed for each day **before** coming to class on that day. This schedule is subject to revision, with advance notice.

W 8/24 Introduction to the Course; discuss selections from **Marc Shell, Islandology: Geography, Rhetoric, Politics** (pre-semester reading)

W 8/31 **Sir Thomas More, Utopia**  
Jeffrey Knapp, selections from *An Empire Nowhere* [Bb]

W 9/7 **Sir Francis Bacon, New Atlantis**  
Jacqueline L. Cowan, “Francis Bacon's *New Atlantis* and the Alterity of the New World” [Bb]

W 9/14 **Henry Neville, The Isle of Pines**  
Steve Mentz, selections from *Shipwreck Modernity* [Bb]

W 9/21 **Christopher Marlowe, The Jew of Malta**  
Virginia Mason Vaughan, “The Maltese Factor: The Poetics of Place in *The Jew of Malta* and *The Knight of Malta*” [BB]

***Short Paper Due Sunday, 9/25 at 11:59PM***

W 9/28 **William Shakespeare, Othello**  
Jonathan Bate, “Shakespeare’s Islands” [Bb]

**Optional Field Trip:** Friday, September, 30, 2016, “Shakespeare, The Book,” Trinity University. San Antonio, TX.

W 10/5 **Thomas Heywood, The Fair Maid of the West, Part I**  
Jean Howard, “An English Lass Amid the Moors: Gender, Race, and Sexuality” [Bb]

W 10/12 **William Shakespeare, The Tempest**  
Michel de Montaigne, “On Cannibals” (from John Florio’s translation) [Bb]  
Andrew Marvell, “Bermudas”  
Barbara Fuchs, “Conquering Islands: Contextualizing The Tempest” [in the “Criticism” section of the Norton Critical Edition and on Bb]
W 10/19 John Fletcher, *The Sea Voyage*  
Steve Mentz, selections from *Shipwreck Modernity* [Bb]

W 10/26 Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher, *The Island Princess*  
Carmen Nocentelli, “Spice Race: The Island Princess and the Politics of Transnational Appropriation” [Bb]

W 11/2 Richard Brome, *The Antipodes*  
Matthew Boyd Goldie, selections from *The Idea of the Antipodes* [Bb]  
David McInnis, “Therapeutic Travel in Richard Brome’s *The Antipodes*” [Bb]

W 11/9 Paper Drafting Workshop

W 11/16 Library Workshop

W 11/23 No Class Reading Day (Happy Thanksgiving!)

W 11/30 Last Class – Conference Presentation and Workshop

Final Exam Wednesday, December 14th 7:15-9:45PM  
Final Papers Due