English 454/554

Major Authors: Ben Jonson

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The man who praised the late William Shakespeare as "not of an age, but for all time" was the most respected living poet and playwright in England at the time. Yet no one has suffered more for not being Shakespeare than Ben Jonson. Eclipsed by the star-power of "the Bard," Ben Jonson wins far less attention in theaters and English departments today than he deserves. This course will give Jonson some serious respect. We will read and interrogate his prose, poetry, masques, and plays. Jonson's career and works are fascinating, high-energy performances that distinguish him vividly from Shakespeare and engage the social and material realities of Renaissance London in brilliant, often hilarious ways.

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