

CALL FOR PAPERS

***Now is the Winter of Our Discontent:* Shakespeare, Marlowe and Contemporary Politics**

An interdisciplinary conference on literary relevance and political thought

Organised by
The Department of Humanities and Social Sciences
at the Cross-border Faculty,
“Dunarea de Jos” University of Galati, Romania

Conference dates: 6–8 November 2025

Conference venues:

- Multimedia Hall, “Dunarea de Jos” University of Galati, Rectorate Building, 47 Domneasca St., Galati, Romania/
- “Dunarea de Jos” Cultural Centre
- Library of “Dunarea de Jos” University of Galati.
- Online sessions on Zoom

Submission deadline: 30 June 2025

In an age defined by populist movements, protest culture, and the reshaping of public discourse, William Shakespeare’s and Christopher Marlowe’s works still resonate with contemporary political concerns. Their plays, rich in explorations of power, authority, and resistance, offer ground for critical inquiry into the politics of our time. From Shakespeare’s nuanced depictions of sovereignty and dissent to Marlowe’s dramatisations of ambition, ideological conflict, and social transgression, early modern drama remains deeply relevant in interrogating the structures and crises of political life today.

This interdisciplinary conference seeks to explore how the political energies embedded in the works of Shakespeare and Marlowe can shed light on contemporary debates about power, protest, legitimacy, voice, and representation in an increasingly fractured public sphere. It aims to bring together scholars from across literature, political theory, media studies and performance studies to re-examine these canonical texts through the lens of contemporary politics, activism, and cultural discourse.

Conference themes may include (but are not limited to):

- Shakespeare and Marlowe on power, authority, and political legitimacy
- Protest, rebellion, and dissent in early modern drama and contemporary politics
- Public rhetoric, persuasion, and populism in Shakespeare and Marlowe
- Race, gender, and intersectionality in early modern political drama
- The politics of tyranny and ambition: from *Tamburlaine* to *Macbeth*
- Adaptations of Shakespeare and Marlowe in film, digital media, and activist theatre

- Religion, extremism, and ideological conflict in *Doctor Faustus*, *The Jew of Malta*, and Shakespearean drama
- Political performance: theatricality and rhetoric in power structures
- Shakespeare and Marlowe in the public sphere: representation, audience, and civic discourse.

Junior Scholar Spotlight Session: Emerging Perspectives on Early Modern Drama and Contemporary Politics

This session will feature early-career researchers (M.A. students and doctoral candidates) engaging with critical approaches to William Shakespeare and Christopher Marlowe in political and interdisciplinary contexts. It aims to provide them with increased visibility, scholarly dialogue, and professional encouragement within an international academic setting.

Suggested topics for Spotlight:

- Shakespeare and Marlowe in youth protest cultures and contemporary resistance/Gen Z political readings
- Digital activism, quotation, and remix culture in early modern political drama
- Post-pandemic politics in adaptations of Shakespeare and Marlowe
- Intersectional politics and outsider figures in *Edward II*, *Othello*, and beyond
- Creative-critical approaches: performative criticism, podcasting, visual art
- Marlowe's radical ambition and Shakespeare's populist rhetoric in today's public sphere
- Early modern drama in the age of post-truth and political illusion
- Creative-critical approaches: performative criticism, podcasting, digital art, etc.

This section will be judged by experts in Renaissance Studies.

The best papers will be awarded prizes and published in the journal edited by the Cross-border Faculty, ACROSS – <http://across.ugal.ro>

***"I understand a fury in your words. But not the words"* (Othello IV.2) – Translating Shakespeare and Marlowe for contemporary staging**

This section will feature a round table and a translation workshop dedicated to students in Translation and Interpreting Studies, conducted under the guidance of members of the team involved in the (re)translation of Renaissance drama into Romanian. With a particular focus on the works of Shakespeare and Marlowe, the sessions will explore strategies for rendering these texts not only accurate and faithful but also performable in contemporary Romanian.

Book launch:

Christopher Marlowe, *Opere III (Tamerlan cel Mare [partea I])*– translated by Oana Celia Gheorghiu and *Evreul din Malta* – translated by Florența Simion), București, Tracus Arte, 2025.

A stage! A stage! My kingdom for a stage!

Admitting that drama, however philological in nature, ultimately comes alive on stage, the conference will feature a dedicated performance section. Undergraduate and graduate students in Acting and Performance from the Faculty of Arts, “Dunarea de Jos” University of Galați, will bring selected soliloquies and dramatic excerpts to life. These performances, curated under the guidance of their mentor – Senior Lecturer, PhD, and actress Oana MOGOȘ (“Fani Tardini” Dramatic Theatre) – will underscore the pedagogical value of embodied practice, illustrating how performance deepens textual understanding and fosters critical engagement through artistic expression.

Submission Guidelines

Please submit a 200-word abstract for a 20-minute presentation and a 100-word bio, including institutional affiliation, to oana.gheorghiu@ugal.ro by 30 June 2025. Please specify “spotlight” if you want to be considered for this section. Notification of acceptance: 30 June 2025.

A selection of papers will be proposed for inclusion in a special journal issue indexed by ERIH PLUS and Scopus.

Conference fees

Early bird: EUR 60/300 RON, payable within a month from the notification of acceptance (30 July 2025)

Regular fee: EUR 80/400 RON (payable by 15 October 2025)

Participation in the Spotlight, translation, and performance sessions is free of charge.

Contact

Associate Professor PhD Habil Oana-Celia Gheorghiu, oana.gheorghiu@ugal.ro