**Essay Assignment using *Shakespeare Documented***

Shakespeare today is renowned as a genius, reigning as one of the most recognizable literary celebrities in the western world. However, he didn’t always enjoy this kind of glowing praise. Using *Shakespeare Documented*, find an artifact that critiques Shakespeare’s works or his endeavors. Do a close reading of this text. In your 10 page essay, consider some of the following questions:

* Consider the medium of critique. Is it a letter? Marginalia? A printed publication? Was it meant for the public eye or was it a private correspondence? How does its medium effect its criticism?
* What is the artifact actually critiquing? Shakespeare’s language? The genre or material medium? Social status? What else?
* How does the speaker disparage or praise Shakespeare? Think about specific word choice, metaphor, comparisons drawn etc. Is this a part of a larger debate happening during this time period?
* How convincing is this critique? Who wrote it and do they have any particular authority? What is the critic’s motivation?
* Are there any examples from the present day of similar methods of critique that seem to echo to the tactics used by Shakespeare's contemporaries? How might that be intriguing?

Do not necessarily answer all of the above prompts, but use them as a jumping-off point for your argument. Outside research is encouraged, but no more than two additional sources are required.

**Due**: 10 page essay, 12 point Times New Roman, double-spaced

Bibliography of 8 sources including the *Shakespeare Documented* artifact

In-class example could be the petition to prevent Blackfriar’s theater: <http://www.shakespearedocumented.org/exhibition/document/neighbors-petition-november-1596-against-playhouse-blackfriars>

**Required Resource (links):**

Shakespeare Documented: <http://www.shakespearedocumented.org/>