***Life in Shakespeare’s Village***

**1 hr. 15 min. session**

**General Goal:** This assignment asks students to uncover details about life in Shakespeare’s Stratford through *Shakespeare Documented* and its contributing institutions. By creating descriptions of Shakespeare’s surroundings, students learn the careful line between evincible and imaginative argument, while considering the limits of the archive.

**Specific Objectives:**

* Students seek out specific evidence from historical documents, becoming familiar with commonplace books, early modern news reports, and guild meeting minutes
* Students learn about the relationships among archive holdings
* Students learn about Shakespeare’s Stratford, which asks further questions about the relationship among literary text, archive, and author’s life

**Pre-assignment:** read introduction to Shakespeare and early modern London in Norton, and on Stratford website; get to know *Shakespeare Documented*([**www.shakespearedocumented.org**](http://www.shakespearedocumented.org))

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**10 Minutes**

* Ask students what they (think they) know about Shakespeare’s time from popular culture
* Direct students towards “Family, legal & property records” in *Shakespeare Documented* (<http://shakespearedocumented.org/exhibition/family-legal-property-records>).

**25 Minutes**

* In small groups, students explore website, finding one facet of life in early modern Stratford to illustrate, and pursuing that facet through to contributor’s research holdings for one more related holding. Groups also create 5 minutes’ worth of material on said aspect (either an oral presentation or a drawing of some kind—projector helpful here)

**20 Minutes**

* Groups present on their aspect of life, including brief description of documents used

**20 Minutes**

* General class discussion about life in Stratford, and how the archive bolsters and limits our appreciate of the artist and the literary work

*Required Resources*

Access to [www.shakespearedocumented.org](http://www.shakespearedocumented.org)

Computer/laptop access for students

Basic scholarly description of Shakespeare’s Stratford/London (Norton introduction, Stratford website)