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Love and Romance in Early Modern British Literature

Sophia Szeneitas
sszeneitas@uri.edu

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Recommended Citation

Szeneitas, Sophia, "Love and Romance in Early Modern British Literature" (2022). *Senior Honors Projects*. Paper 962.

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SOPHIA SZENEITAS (Biological Sciences)

Love and Romance in Early Modern British Literature

Sponsor: Ryan Trimm (English)

This paper seeks to describe and analyze the way in which themes of love and romance were presented in literature in early modern Britain, and how those may differ from or be similar to romantic themes in the media of today. The works being analyzed include plays by William Shakespeare and Christopher Marlowe, as well as some of Shakespeare's sonnets. A few different lenses will be explored, including the interaction that love could have with the societal power structure and hierarchy present within the literature (such as the ways in which someone being the lover of a powerful person might cause them to receive undue social standing and influence), as well as the intersection of love and romance with topics such as gender and sexuality, and how such topics may add complexities to an otherwise more straightforward story, such as with Rosalind's period of disguising herself as a man in *As You Like It*. Works inspired by historical events are also compared to their source material (such as the events in *Edward II* versus the reign of the titular English king), as well as notable historical circumstances of the time at which they were written.