We will be trying to understand Shakespeare historically; this is to say that we will try to understand Shakespeare in something like the way his contemporaries understood him. This means that we will acquaint ourselves with the kinds of pictures he would have seen, the kinds of things he would have read, and the religion he would have known. Our discussions of the plays, then, will be informed by a growing sense of Shakespeare's historical context. We will be reading six plays, and we will be scheduling movie nights (attendance optional), so we can watch movies of most of the plays we'll be reading. The class will decide what six plays we'll be reading.