

English 230: Shakespeare and His Time

Instructor: Rebecca Lemon

Office: Taper Hall 429

Office Hours: Tuesday and Thursday, 12.45pm-1.45pm and by appointment

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Course Description

This course examines a body of dramatic literature that has had a profound and lasting effect on the English-speaking cultures of the modern world. We will ask what has made Shakespeare such an enduring influence in the cultures of the West and in the larger global community surrounding us. In investigating this question, this course will focus on Shakespeare's language, his stagecraft, his literary "genius," and his legacy, exploring his plays through two major themes: villainy and marriage. In both units we will examine how Shakespeare introduces a theme in an early play and reworks it later in his career. We will then see how Shakespeare condenses both themes of villainy and marriage in *Hamlet*.

Learning Objectives

- Cultivate a critical appreciation for one of the highest and most influential forms of human expression, namely the works of Shakespeare;
- Develop an understanding of the contexts from which Shakespearean drama has emerged;
- Engage with lasting ideas and values that have animated humanity throughout the centuries, with the goal of leading a more purposeful, more ethical, and intellectually richer life;
- Learn to read and interpret actively and analytically, to think critically and creatively, and to write and speak persuasively;
- Learn to evaluate ideas from multiple perspectives and to formulate informed opinions on complex issues of critical importance;
- Reflect on what it means to be human – and to represent the experience of being human – through close study of the playwright alleged to have “invented the human.”

Required Readings

Richard III

Othello

Macbeth

Merchant of Venice

Twelfth Night

Winter's Tale

Hamlet

The Tempest

I have ordered the Signet versions of the play into the bookstore (reasonably priced and easy to carry; fyi *Othello* and *Macbeth* are Pelican editions). But any good edition(s) of Shakespeare will do, including the Riverside, Norton, Pelican, Penguin or Folger – beware, however, that if you purchase an edition of Shakespeare other than the official texts your line numbers will likely be different from the ones I announce in class.

Description and Assessment of Assignments

You will be graded on essays and exams, as well as the quizzes and class participation.

Essays:

1. A 3-4 page essay
This essay will ask you to analyze one speech or scene through close reading.
2. An 5-6 page essay
This essay will ask you to compare two plays through close reading.

Exams:

1. Midterm exam
The midterm will take place in class on March 1st. It will include a section of short IDs, a passage identification and analysis section, and a short essay.
2. Final exam
The final exam is will be a take home exam. It will consist of passage identifications and analysis, as well as a short essay.

Participation:

This includes the extra-credit recitation of 14 lines in lecture, as well as careful reading, thoughtful responses, and attendance at both lecture and section. Attendance and class participation are an important part of the course. **SEVEN OR MORE UNEXCUSED ABSENCES COULD RESULT IN A FAILURE FOR THE COURSE REGARDLESS OF THE STUDENT'S PERFORMANCE ON PAPERS AND EXAM.**

Recitation:

This extra-credit assignment asks you to memorize 14 lines of Shakespeare. You might memorize a sonnet to recite in lecture; or you might memorize roughly 14 lines of a play (such as a soliloquy); or you might decide to work with other students to stage a scene or portion of a scene from a play, as long as you each deliver roughly 14 lines worth of text.

Quizzes:

Pop quizzes will be given in lecture. These quizzes will ask you to identify quotations or questions about key points of a text. The questions should be easy to answer if you've done the reading. There are no make up quizzes and you cannot receive credit for the quiz if you are not in lecture that day. To allow for emergencies, illness, and other unforeseen absences, I will allow you to drop **one** quiz over the course of the semester. If you manage to complete all of the quizzes perfectly over the course of the semester, you will receive extra credit.

FAILURE TO COMPLETE THE PAPERS OR FAILURE TO COMPLETE THE MIDTERM AND FINAL WILL RESULT IN AN F FOR THE COURSE.

Grading Breakdown

Participation: 10%

Quizzes: 15%

3-4 page essay: 15%
5-6 page essay: 20%
Midterm exam: 20%
Final exam: 20%

Assignment Submission Policy

All papers are due in lecture on the date listed on the syllabus. Please also submit a copy through Turnitin on Blackboard.

Computer Policy

In this class you are invited to take notes in your book and in a notebook. Please do not use an electronic device (computer, phone, ipad, etc) to take notes, unless you have a documented disability that requires it (in which case, please provide me with this notification). If you need more information on why I have this policy, please feel free to ask me! I put this policy in place with your health, wellbeing, and education in mind. For more information, please see:

<http://www.newyorker.com/tech/elements/the-case-for-banning-laptops-in-the-classroom>

<http://www.scientificamerican.com/article/a-learning-secret-don-t-take-notes-with-a-laptop/>

<http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0360131512002254>

http://www.slate.com/articles/health_and_science/science/2013/05/multitasking_while_studying_divided_attention_and_technological_gadgets.html

<http://pss.sagepub.com/content/early/2014/04/22/0956797614524581.abstract>

Course Schedule: A Weekly Breakdown

Unit One: Villainy

A. Heroic villainy

Week One:

1/12: Introduction: Shakespeare's theater

1/14: *Richard III*: Act 1 [suggested film viewing Ian McKellen, *Richard III*]

Selections from Holinshed's *Chronicles* and Thomas More's *History of Richard III*

Week Two:

1/19: *Richard III*: Act 2

1/21: *Richard III*: Act 3

Documentary: <http://www.pbs.org/wnet/secrets/resurrecting-richard-iii-preview/1896/>

Week Three:

1/26: *Richard III*: Act 4

1/28: *Richard III*: Act 5; scenes from Ian McKellen's *Richard III* and from Kevin Spacey's *Now*

B. Anti-heroic villainy

Week Four:

2/2: *Othello*: Act 1 [suggested film viewing: Laurence Fishburne, *Othello*]

2/4: *Othello*: Act 2

Essay 1 due in lecture

Week Five:

2/9: *Othello*: Act 3

2/11: *Othello*: Act 4-5; scenes from film versions of *Othello*

C. Villainy doubled

Week Six:

2/16: *Macbeth*: Act 1 [suggested film viewing: Ian McKellen and Judi Dench, *Macbeth*]

2/18: *Macbeth*: Act 2

Week Seven:

2/23: *Macbeth*: Act 3-4

2/25: *Macbeth*: Act 5; scenes from *Macbeths* of Orson Wells and Ian McKellen

Unit Two: Marriage

A. Marriage and the law

Week Eight:

3/1: **Midterm**

3/3: *Merchant of Venice* [suggested film viewing: Al Pacino, *Merchant of Venice*]

Week Nine:

3/8: *Merchant of Venice*

3/10: *Merchant of Venice*

Spring break

B. Marriage and gender

Week Ten:

3/22: *Twelfth Night* [suggested film viewing: Trevor Nunn, Imogen Stubbes, *Twelfth Night*]

3/24: *Twelfth Night* [Dr. Alex Young, guest lecturer]

Week Eleven:

3/29: *Twelfth Night*

C. Marriage and magic

3/31: *Winter's Tale*

Essay 2 due in lecture

Week Twelve:

4/5: *Winter's Tale*

4/7: *Winter's Tale*

Unit Three: Bringing it together: Villainy, Marriage, and Theatre

Week Thirteen:

4/12: *Hamlet* [suggested film viewing: Kenneth Branagh, *Hamlet*]

4/14: *Hamlet* [TBD: class visit from James Frain, actor]

Week Fourteen:

4/19: *Hamlet*

4/21: *Hamlet*

Week Fifteen:

4/26: *The Tempest*

4/28: *The Tempest*

Final Exam: Mandatory take home exam, due on Tuesday May 10th at 11am. I will be in my office from 9-11am to collect the exams. If you complete your exam early, you may hand it into my mailbox in Taper Hall 420.

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

Statement for Students with Disabilities

Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me (or to TA) as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open 8:30 a.m.–5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Website and contact information for DSP:

http://sait.usc.edu/academicssupport/centerprograms/dsp/home_index.html, (213) 740-0776 (Phone), (213) 740-6948 (TDD only), (213) 740-8216 (FAX) ability@usc.edu.

Statement on Academic Integrity

USC seeks to maintain an optimal learning environment. General principles of academic honesty include the concept of respect for the intellectual property of others, the expectation that individual work will be submitted unless otherwise allowed by an instructor, and the obligations both to protect one's own academic work from misuse by others as well as to avoid using another's work as one's own. All students are expected to understand and abide by these principles. Before writing your papers, be sure and read and understand *Trojan Integrity: Guide to Avoiding Plagiarism*. Any plagiarism will be grounds for an F in the course. *SCampus*, the Student Guidebook, (www.usc.edu/scampus or <http://scampus.usc.edu>) contains the University Student Conduct Code (see University Governance, Section 11.00), while the recommended sanctions are located in Appendix A: <http://www.usc.edu/dept/publications/SCAMPUS/gov/>.

Students will be referred to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs and Community Standards for further review, should there be any suspicion of academic dishonesty. The review process can be found at: <http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/SJACS/>.

Emergency Preparedness/Course Continuity in a Crisis

In case of a declared emergency if travel to campus is not feasible, USC executive leadership will announce an electronic way for instructors to teach students in their residence halls or homes using a combination of Blackboard, teleconferencing, and other technologies.

Statement on Student Behavior

Behavior that persistently or grossly interferes with classroom activities is considered disruptive behavior and may be subject to disciplinary action. Such behavior inhibits other students' ability to learn and an instructor's ability to teach. A student responsible for disruptive behavior may be required to leave class pending discussion and resolution of the problem and may be reported to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs for disciplinary action. These strictures may extend to behaviors outside the classroom that are related to the course.