THEATRE 220

Shakespeare

Instructor: Armin Shimerman Spring 2018

phone: 818-371-0336

Office Hours : by appointment

contact info: [Shimerma@usc.edu](mailto:Shimerma@usc.edu)

**Course Description and Overview**

1. Understanding Shakespeare for actors and communicating Shakespeare to modern audiences
2. To develop acute interpretation skills that will enable the actor to discover the meaning and intention of the playwright and the complex subtleties of the characters
3. To point each student towards researching Shakespeare and using the source materials to learn about the Elizabethan world, its language, and its ethos
4. To remind the actor that in the pursuit of acting, the actor must be disciplined, dedicated, and committed to learning the craft of Theater which requires rigorous attention to language, intention, sub-text, and connotation
5. To instill an addiction to rehearsal and personal investigation

**ASSIGNMENTS**

1. The student will be required to memorize and perform 1-3 Shakespearean scenes of 8-10 minutes length. They will be asked to share their understanding of character,language, and History
2. The student will be called upon to write several 1-2-page paper assignments on Elizabethan or Jacobite historical or linguistic topics of the teacher’s choosing.
3. The student for their midterm will need to write a 6 page paper on a Historical topic taken from their reading of Stephen Greenblatt’s “Will in the World” or Shapiro’s “A Year in the Life of William Shakespeare.”
4. Reading, preparation, memorization, and rehearsal will be required for outside of class.

**Attendance**

Learning in class depends on focus on individual work and collective sharing of discoveries by all members of the class. Therefore, no absentees are allowed. However, a student may be excused from class once, but only after the teacher gets a written and oral explanation. Attendance shall be weighted at no more than 15% per university guidelines. You will be considered absent if you come to class more than 5 minutes after class starts. You are allowed to be late no more than three times. No one may leave class early without first giving me an explanation before the class. Unless told otherwise, students will surrender their iphones during the class session.

**Description of Grading and Assessment of Assignments**

1) Active class participation including textual analysis - 20%

2) Class preparation including memorization and rehearsal– 5%

3) Oral and written presentation of Assignments and midterm paper/exam – 15%

4) Attendance - 5%

5) improvement of understanding and performance - 20%

6) Scene work - 20 %

7) FINAL Exam: Performance achievement of Last scene 15%

**Grading scale**

**Excellent: A** (4) **=** 100-96; **A-** (3.7)= 95-90

**Good: B+** (3.3)=89-85; **B** (3) **=** 85-84; **B-** (2.7) = 83-80

**Average: C+** (2.3) = 79-76; **C** (2) = 75-74; **C-** (1.7) =73-70

**Poor: D** (.7 -1.3) =60’s

**Fail: F** (0) -59 and below

**Workspace:**

No food or smoking or unauthorized computer usage is permitted in classroom or theatre. Bottled water is permitted for hydration and acting work. Students must bring their own props and the spaces must be returned to a tidy condition at the end of class. Pen and writing paper is required at every class.

**Proposed Schedule:**

Week One: Discuss Students preparations of class and lectures on Rhetoric, Elizabethan mores, History, and Reference materials. Language diagnosis. Choice of monologues.

Week two: Presentation of monologues and character and language analysis

Week three: Continued character and language analysis

Week four: Continue work on monologues. Push on to look for new scenes.

Week 5: Either Continued work on monologues or assignment of new scenes. Presentation of 6 page midterm paper based on Historic incidents from “Will in the World” or “A Year in the Life of William Shakespeare.”

Week 6-7: Work on assigned materials

Week 8: Work on assigned materials

Week 9: Assignment of new scenes

After assignment, outside reading of the significant play. Textual, historical, and character analysis of scenes and characters

Work on assigned scenes

Week 10-15: Continued work on scene and the choice and work on final scene leading to the performance for the final exam.

**Texts:**

**A**rden or New Variorum versions of plays that contain the assigned scenes.

A Year in the Life of William Shakespeare by James Shapiro

**W**ill in the World by Stephan Greenblatt

**Recommended Reading:**

**E**lizabethan World Picture by E.M.W.Tilyard

Playing Shakespeare: An Actor’s Guide by John Barton

Access to Oxford English Dictionary

**Academic Conduct**

Plagiarism – on the mid-term is an academic offense.

Discrimination, sexual assault, and harassment will not be tolerated in class. When it is part of a scene, it will be allowed only to the extent that the professor allows and is necessary for the completion of the scene.

**Guidance:**

I am open to meeting with students on a regular basis and will do so before class for any period of time that the student deems necessary as long as neither they nor I am late for class. I look forward to getting to know all my students both in and before class.