

## English 230: Shakespeare and His Times

**Instructor: Professor Rebecca Lemon**

**Office:** Taper Hall 429

**Office Hours:** Tuesday 1.00-3.00pm and by appointment

**Contact Info:** [rlemon@usc.edu](mailto:rlemon@usc.edu); 213-740-3732 (email is the best way to reach me)

### 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 Reading

*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; *Othello* and *Macbeth* are Pelican editions). But any good edition(s) of Shakespeare will do, including the Riverside, Norton, Pelican, Penguin or Folger – beware, if you purchase an edition of Shakespeare other than the official texts your line numbers will 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. A 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 Feb 26th. It will include a section of short IDs, a passage identification and analysis section, and a short essay. I will offer a handout with precise directions the week before the exam. Please bring a blue book.
2. Final exam  
The final exam will be a take home exam. It will consist of passage identifications and analysis, as well as a short essay. I will hand out precise directions the final week of class.

### **Participation:**

This includes 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 IN LECTURE/SECTION COULD RESULT IN A FAILURE FOR THE COURSE REGARDLESS OF THE STUDENT'S PERFORMANCE ON PAPERS AND EXAM.**

### **Extra-credit Recitation:**

I highly encourage all of you to do this extra-credit assignment, as it introduces your own voices and talents into lecture. 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. I will assign the extra credit where you need it (it could serve as a perfect score on a quiz, if you are missing a quiz grade or didn't perform well on one of them; or it could serve as an extra 3 points on a paper; or as an aid to your participation grade).

### **Joint Educational Project (JEP):**

Our course will include a service-learning option for those of you interested in teaching our material to students in elementary, middle or high school in the neighborhood around USC. This will be a potentially rewarding and time-intensive opportunity to design lesson plans and visit classrooms, where you will teach Shakespeare (or related poetry/drama) to younger students. You will receive a bump of 1/3 of a grade for successful completion of the JEP requirements (based on a report generated by their office at the end of the semester). So, for example, a B grade for the course would become a B+.

### **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**

All assignments are graded on a point scale from 0-100. Uncompleted assignments receive a zero. Late papers will be penalized by 3 points a day, starting immediately after the paper is due in lecture. **There are no make up quizzes.**

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. **You are also required to 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\\_studyi ng\\_divided\\_attention\\_and\\_technological\\_gadgets.html](http://www.slate.com/articles/health_and_science/science/2013/05/multitasking_while_studyi ng_divided_attention_and_technological_gadgets.html)

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

### **A Course Schedule: A Weekly Breakdown**

#### **Unit One: Villainy**

##### **A. Heroic villainy**

Week One:

1/8: Introduction: Shakespeare's theater

1/10: *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:

1/15: *Richard III*: Act 2

1/17: *Richard III*: Act 3

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

(requires PBS membership); or <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fDHDvnnK4nI>

Week Three:

1/22: *Richard III*: Act 4

1/24: *Richard III*: Act 5; scenes from Ian McKellen's *Richard III* and from Kevin Spacey's *Now*  
**Last day to change enrollment option to Pass/No Pass (Jan 25)**

### **B. Anti-heroic villainy**

Week Four:

1/29: *Othello*: Act 1 [suggested film viewing: Laurence Fishburne, *Othello*]

1/31: *Othello*: Act 2

**Essay 1 due in lecture**

Week Five:

2/5: *Othello*: Act 3

2/7: *Othello*: Act 4-5; scenes from film versions of *Othello*

### **C. Villainy doubled**

Week Six:

2/12: *Macbeth*: Act 1 [suggested film viewing: Ian McKellen and Judi Dench, *Macbeth*]

2/14: *Macbeth*: Act 2

Week Seven:

2/19: *Macbeth*: Act 3-4

2/21: *Macbeth*: Act 5

**Last day to drop a course without a mark of "W" on the transcript (Feb 22)**

**Last day to change a Pass/No Pass course to letter grade (Feb 22)**

## **Unit Two: Marriage**

### **A. Marriage and the law**

Week Eight:

2/26: **Midterm**

2/28: *Merchant of Venice* [suggested film viewing: Al Pacino, *Merchant of Venice*]

Week Nine:

3/5: *Merchant of Venice*

3/7: *Merchant of Venice*

### **Spring break**

### **B. Marriage and gender**

Week Ten:

3/19: *Twelfth Night* [suggested film viewing: Trevor Nunn, Imogen Stubbes, *Twelfth Night*]

3/21: *Twelfth Night*

Week Eleven:

3/26: *Twelfth Night*

### **C. Marriage and magic**

3/28: *Winter's Tale*

Week Twelve:

4/2: *Winter's Tale*

4/4: *Winter's Tale*

### **Essay 2 due in lecture**

**Last day to drop a class with a mark of "W" (April 5)**

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

Week Thirteen:

4/9: *Hamlet* [suggested film viewing: Kenneth Branagh, *Hamlet*]

4/11: *Hamlet*

Week Fourteen:

4/16: *Hamlet*

4/18: *Hamlet*, guest lecturer

Week Fifteen:

4/23: *The Tempest*

4/25: *The Tempest*

**Final Exam: Mandatory take home exam, due on Tuesday May 7<sup>th</sup> at 10am.** I will be in my office from 9-10am to collect the exams. If you complete your exam early, you may hand it into my mailbox in Taper Hall 420.

### **University Policies**

#### **Academic Accommodations**

Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services 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 as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open 8:30am-5:00pm, Monday through Friday. The phone number for DSP is (213) 740-0776.

#### **Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems**

##### **Academic Conduct:**

Plagiarism – presenting someone else’s ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in SCampus in Part B, Section 11, “Behavior Violating University Standards” <https://policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b/>. Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in SCampus and university policies on scientific misconduct, <http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct>.

##### **Support Systems:**

Student Counseling Services (SCS) - (213) 740-7711 – 24/7 on call  
Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention. <https://engemannshc.usc.edu/counseling/>

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline - 1-800-273-8255  
Provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. <http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org>

Relationship & Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP) - (213) 740-4900 - 24/7 on call  
Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm. <https://engemannshc.usc.edu/rsvp/>

Sexual Assault Resource Center  
For more information about how to get help or help a survivor, rights, reporting options, and additional resources, visit the website: <http://sarc.usc.edu/>

Office of Equity and Diversity (OED)/Title IX compliance – (213) 740-5086  
Works with faculty, staff, visitors, applicants, and students around issues of protected class. <https://equity.usc.edu/>

Bias Assessment Response and Support  
Incidents of bias, hate crimes and microaggressions need to be reported allowing for appropriate investigation and response. <https://studentaffairs.usc.edu/bias-assessment-response-support/>

Student Support & Advocacy – (213) 821-4710  
Assists students and families in resolving complex issues adversely affecting their success as a student EX: personal, financial, and academic. <https://studentaffairs.usc.edu/ssa/>

Diversity at USC – <https://diversity.usc.edu/>  
Tabs for Events, Programs and Training, Task Force (including representatives for each school), Chronology, Participate, Resources for Students

### **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.

Discrimination, sexual assault, and harassment are not tolerated by the university. You are encouraged to report any incidents to the Office of Equity and Diversity <http://equity.usc.edu/> or to the Department of Public Safety <http://capsnet.usc.edu/departments/departments-public-safety/online-forms/contact-us>. This is important for the safety whole USC community. Another member of the university community – such as a friend, classmate, advisor, or faculty member – can help initiate the report, or can initiate the report on behalf of another person. The Center for Women and Men <http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/cwm/> provides 24/7 confidential support, and the sexual assault resource center webpage [sarc@usc.edu](mailto:sarc@usc.edu) describes reporting options and other resources.