

English 230g
Monday and Wednesday, 12-1:50
MRF (Montgomery Ross Fisher) 340

Professor Heather James
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Office Hours: Wed. 2-3, Taper Hall 417

Shakespeare and His Times

How did Shakespeare come to sum up an entire era, that of Renaissance England, whose art still inspires any number of artistic, cultural, political, and economic enterprises? This course places Shakespeare's drama in the cultural ferment that ultimately produced modern ideas about the theatrical or performative self, perspectives on social change, and the idea of nationhood as simultaneously and paradoxically universal and polarizing. Shakespeare wrote and performed in a collaborative spirit, and we may better understand how the Renaissance relates to modern ideas about identity, society, and nation or empire when we place the period and its most famous author in the context of the broader theatrical scene of London at the turn of the century from the 1590s to the early 1600's.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Shakespeare, William. *Hamlet* (Folger Shakespeare)
Henry IV, pt. 1 (Folger Shakespeare)
Macbeth (Folger Shakespeare)
A Midsummer Night's Dream (Folger Shakespeare)
Much Ado About Nothing (Folger Shakespeare)
Richard II (Folger Shakespeare)
Richard III (Folger Shakespeare)
Taming of the Shrew (Folger Shakespeare)
The Tempest (Folger Shakespeare)

Also Required: 2 Blue Books, one for in-class writing exercises and one for the Final

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Cultivate a critical appreciation for Shakespeare's language, imagery, genres, themes, as well as theatrical and staging conventions;

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;

Engage in intellectual dialogue and exchange in discussion sections;

Achieve a deeper understanding of why it is worth it to work harder than you strictly have to (i.e., lay claim to your own intellectual ambition and life).

REQUIREMENTS

—five in-class writing exercises (15 minutes each), four of which will go towards a cumulative grade for these exercises. This means you may choose which ones you wish to be “keepers.” In addition, you may submit one revised exercise within two weeks of the assignment if you have a fantastic second thought or development you wish to pursue. One of these exercises will likely become the basis of your final paper. It is a good choice, not a lazy one, to take an idea you came up with in an in-class writing assignment and develop it into a paper. Further note: you can only do a make-up if you have an excused absence.

—two close-reading exercises conducted in class. This exercise will help you immeasurably when it comes to the close readings of the final exam.

—a short staging paper or creative paper (3-4 pages) early in the semester.

—a somewhat longer paper (5-6 pages, no fewer and no more) near the end of the semester. Both papers must be formatted in New York Times 12-pt font and double-spaced except for block quotation which should be single-spaced. Both papers will be evaluated for their use of lively, unpadding, grammatical, and analytic writing.

—two quizzes on reading and retention of the comedies and the histories and lectures: these are multiple-choice, fill-in-the-blank, and otherwise detail-oriented quizzes.

—a final examination devoted to close readings and a short essay.

Extra credit. There are two ways to raise your grade on the quizzes.

- 1) You may memorize up to three speeches (from the plays on the syllabus) for face-lifts to either of the quiz grades. The speeches should each be about 12 or so lines, which you will recite to me or to your discussion leader. You may also perform a dialogue with a classmate. All memorizations must be completed within 10 days following either quiz.
- 2) You may also submit up to three two-page, single-spaced reviews of a film or live version of any play on our syllabus. The reviews should not be comprehensive but should show that you came, you saw, and you thought carefully about choices and implications. Your review should be intellectually thoughtful and lively. Reviews give the same upward mobility to quiz grades or the first paper. One step up (e.g., from B- to a B) for each one. The reviews must be completed within 2 weeks from the day you received your graded quiz or paper.

EXPECTATIONS

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 EXAMS.

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: 10% for each one, 20% all told

In-class writing exercises: 15%
3-4 page essay: 15%
5-6 page essay: 20%
Final exam: 20%

COMPUTER POLICY

In this class all students will 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://pss.sagepub.com/content/early/2014/04/22/0956797614524581.abstract>

Week One

8/26 Introduction
8/28 *Taming of the Shrew* "Induction" & Act 1 and Act 2, scene 1, lines 1-280

Week Two

9/2 Labor Day Holiday
9/4 *Taming of the Shrew* Acts 3-4 + love poems

Week Three

9/9 *Taming of the Shrew* Act 5 + 2 short lectures for daughters, wives, and widows
+ in-class exercise on conformity
9/11 *A Midsummer Night's Dream* Acts 1-2 + in-class close reading exercise, pt. 1

Week Four

9/16 *A Midsummer Night's Dream* Act 2-3 + in-class close reading exercise, pt. 2
9/18 *A Midsummer Night's Dream* Act 5 + a classic story
9/20 paper #1: 3-page staging paper due: submit to Blackboard by 5pm

Week Five

9/23 *Much Ado About Nothing* Acts 1-2
9/25 *Much Ado About Nothing* Act 3 and Act 4, scene 1, lines 1-143

Week Six

9/30 *Much Ado About Nothing*, Acts 4-5 + in-class exercise on your favorite buffoon
10/2 *Richard III* Act 1 + QUIZ on the Comedies

Week Seven

10/7 *Richard III* Acts 2-4.3 (Act 4, scene 3)

10/9 *Richard III* Act 4.4 and Act 5

Week Eight

10/14 *Richard II* Acts 1-2

10/16 *Richard II* *Richard II* Acts 3-4

Week Nine

10/21 *Richard II* Acts 4-5 + in-class exercise on loss and selfhood

10/23 *Henry IV, Part 1* Act 1

Week Ten

10/28 *Henry IV, Part 1* Acts 2-3 + in-class exercise on being busy or being idle

10/30 *Henry IV, Part 1* Act 4-5

Week Eleven

11/4 *Hamlet* Act 1 + QUIZ on the Histories

11/6 *Hamlet* Acts 2-3

Week Twelve

11/11 *Hamlet* Act 5

11/13 *Macbeth* Acts 1-2 + in-class exercise on “from prop to specter”

Week Thirteen

11/18 *Macbeth* Acts 3-4

11/20 *Macbeth* Act 5

11/22 5-page Paper due in Blackboard by 5pm

Week Fourteen

11/25 *The Tempest* Acts 1-2

Thanksgiving Break

Week Fifteen

12/2 *The Tempest* Acts 3-4

12/4 *The Tempest* Act 5

12/13 Final Examination 11am-1pm