

English 455/Theater 455: SHAKESPEARE
Fall Semester, 2006
Prof. Warren J. Doody
T 3:00 - 6:00 Heath 107: Exam Group 4

Office Hrs.: 10:00 - 12:00 MW; 11:00 - 12:00 TTH;
or by appointment.
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TEXTS: THE RIVERSIDE SHAKESPEARE, 2nd Edition.

COURSE OBJECTIVES: This course is designed to introduce the advanced student of English and theatre to a liberal sampling of the Shakespeare canon. To this end, we will read and examine two of his comedies, a "dramedy," a history play, a romance, a history/tragedy, and the four great tragedies, a variety of work that will help us to understand why Shakespeare is generally considered the greatest writer of all time. By semester's end, this course will succeed in building a strong foundation in Shakespearean drama.

COURSE PROCEDURE: The primary focus of this course involves the reading and discussion of Shakespeare's plays. Each play should be read prior to the class period in which it is to be discussed. There will be required reading each time we meet, and you are responsible for staying on par irrespective of whether or not you were there the day the reading was assigned. Generally speaking, we will be reading one play per week.

I expect each student to come to class prepared to involve themselves in the discussion. As there is seldom a definitive interpretation of any given literary work, everyone should feel free to offer an evaluation, a subjective response, and a defense of one's position. When appropriate, outside help in the way of films/videos of the discussed plays will be brought in to better shed illumination on the various works.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

1. EXAMINATIONS: To help facilitate the reading requirement for this course, there will be a "quiz" of five questions, (worth five points), over the play in question prior to its discussion.

In other words, if we are beginning the discussion of "Much Ado About Nothing" on a Tuesday, then expect to be quizzed on that play first thing Tuesday afternoon. We will take the quiz, then we will begin the discussion. There will be ten such quizzes over the semester, one for each play covered. However, you are only required to take nine of them. As there will be no "make-up" quizzes, this caveat should allow for the unexpected absence.

2. FINAL PAPER: There will be one paper of eight to ten pages in length. The specifications will be forthcoming.
3. CRITIQUE: Each student is responsible for attending a Shakespearean production and writing a critique on it. This semester, our own theater arts department is producing "Othello" from Dec. 1 - 10, and this will serve as an option for the fulfillment of this requirement. However, if you would prefer to attend an off-campus production of a Shakespearean play, you may do so.
4. FINAL PROJECT: Shakespeare did not write his plays to be read; he wrote them to be staged. Therefore, to better understand his work, you are required to stage a two-minute monologue from one of the plays covered this semester.
5. ATTENDANCE: The absence policy will be that of VU: there are no excused/unexcused absences. Students may miss up to 20% of the class meetings - 3 absences for a course meeting once a week - after which students are dropped from the course, receiving no credit.
6. PUNCTUALITY: Three days of tardiness equals one day of absence. Please make every effort to be here on time.

GRADING BREAKDOWN:

Quizzes - 9	45%
Paper	25%
Critique	10%
Final Project	10%
Attendance/Participation	10%

PLAGIARISM: Do not attempt to pass off someone else's work as your own. This is an extremely, punishable offense. Anyone caught plagiarizing in this class will receive an automatic F for the course.

LATE WORK: If you know ahead of time that you are going to miss class, either turn in your work early or give it to a fellow classmate to give to me. Except for cases of extreme emergency, I will not accept late work.

CALENDAR: General speaking, we will be reading one play per week. "Hamlet," given its length, stature, and placement in the semester, will be given two weeks for discussion. Each class session will begin with a quiz.

Note: Because the semester begins on a Wednesday, "Week 1" of this course is actually "Week 2" of the semester.

Week 1: 9/5 - Introduction to the course.

Week 2: 9/12 - "Much Ado About Nothing" and "The Mythos of Spring" - quiz and discussion.

Week 3: 9/19 - "Othello" and lecture on tragedy - Quiz and discussion.

Week 4: 9/26 - "A Midsummer Night's Dream" - quiz and discussion.

Week 5: 10/3 - "The Merchant of Venice" - quiz and discussion.

Week 6: 10/10 - "Hamlet" - quiz and discussion.

Week 7: 10/17 - Continue with "Hamlet"

Week 8: 10/24 - "MacBeth" - quiz and discussion.

Week 9: 10/31 - "King Lear" - quiz and discussion.

Week 10: 11/7 - "Antony and Cleopatra" - quiz and discussion.

Week 11: 11/14 - "Henry V" - quiz and discussion.

Week 12:11/21 - "The Tempest" - quiz and discussion.

Week 13:11/28 - Assign Final Project and discuss
performance expectations.

Week 14:12/5 - Rehearsal.

FINAL EXAM: Tuesday, Dec. 12 @3:30 - 5:30.

Performances.

Critiques due.

Paper due.