

English 212

Shakespeare

Fall 2011



MWF 11:00AM – 11:50AM, Oddfellows 105b

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Office: Oddfellows 213 (x2320)

Office Hours: Mon & Wed, 3:30-5PM; Thurs, 2-5PM; & by appointment

William Shakespeare is considered by some critics to be the greatest author, poet, and playwright to have ever put pen to paper. Yet many of today's readers fear his works as almost insurmountably difficult. In this class we will learn how to read and write about Shakespeare, how his plays created meaning on the stage and in the imaginations of his time, and discover in what ways, if any, his works remain important.

Together we will read a number of William Shakespeare's plays. We will develop a sense of the breadth of Shakespeare's career and how he captured – and criticized – the world around him, studying such issues as political authority, gender roles, sexuality and desire, national identity, and racial conflict. However, we will never lose sight of the texts as works of art, specifically works for the stage, and we will learn to appreciate their power and beauty as such. This is not to say that this is a class in the uncritical worship of Shakespeare. We will be critical of the works and the culture that produced them, and we will also analyze our own interpretations and see what Shakespeare has to offer us today.

Some of you have never read Shakespeare and may never study him again. Part of this class, then, will be geared toward helping students broaden their cultural and personal horizons through the study of Shakespeare's plays. Class will be part lecture but mostly discussion. It is crucial that every student come to class prepared and ready to ask questions and express ideas. The work of the class will be both academic and personal, and I hope that you will leave the course with a deeper appreciation of Shakespeare, the theater, and your own relationship to art and literature.

Course Advice

This is not a course about Shakespeare's plots; these can be gleaned from many online sources. Come to class having familiarized yourself with what happens in the acts we are discussing, since plot summary may not be an explicit part of the discussion. I recommend reading, seeing, and/or listening to the plays at least twice: once before we discuss it in class, and once after to deepen and strengthen your understanding of the text.

Use the supplementary material provided in the *Norton Shakespeare*. Each play is prefaced by a short introduction that discusses important themes, and the footnotes provide excellent information about unfamiliar terms and concepts. If you find words that seem particularly odd, powerful, or intriguing, be sure to check the *Oxford English Dictionary*, available through Allegheny's network at <http://www.oed.com>.

Be an active reader: annotate your text with questions and ideas, and keep a reading journal. The people of Shakespeare's times were readers as well as writers; most kept "commonplace books" that catalogued important or memorable phrases from their reading for reflection and later use. Keep a notebook of your own that records interesting phrases, situations, or words that you might want to think about further in class or for a writing assignment.

Be patient. Learning to read Shakespeare well is like learning a second language. It takes practice and diligence. Do not expect that a quick skim of the text will be enough to understand it or to succeed in class; you will need to pay careful attention to what you are reading, and often you will need to read it again and again. You will also find that the plays make reference to problems, concepts, and events that are quite removed from the action on stage and from your own experience. This is a part of their appeal, and we will be exploring the plays' "long reach" in class.

Course Objectives

- Learn to read and interpret Shakespeare's language in close detail
- Understand and analyze the works as plays to be performed before an audience
- Analyze Shakespeare's plays in its historical and cultural context
- Identify and discuss key thematic, poetic, and performance issues relevant to the plays
- Analyze and appreciate the strengths and weaknesses of specific Shakespearean performances.
- Learn to craft thoughtful, complex, and intelligent arguments about Shakespeare's works.

Student Responsibilities

- Attend class every day
- Prepare for every class thoroughly by completing all assigned readings and reviewing your notes
- Take copious notes on class lectures and discussion
- Participate actively in class discussion with original and insightful comments
- Complete all assignments
- Meet with your fellow students, your instructor, and/or members of the Learning Commons staff as necessary to discuss course materials and assignments
- Adhere to all Allegheny College and classroom policies on academic integrity, classroom behavior, etc

Course Texts

Required

The Norton Shakespeare, Second Edition. Edited by Stephen Greenblatt, et al. Norton, 2008.

Recommended

A good dictionary. In addition to keeping a pocket dictionary with you when you read, I would highly recommend you familiarize yourself with the *Oxford English Dictionary*, available online through the Pelletier Library website. It is far superior to free online dictionaries and should **always** be used instead.

The MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers. Seventh Edition.

Film Viewings

During the course of the semester, we will watch excerpts from a variety of film adaptations of Shakespearean works. You will also be required to watch some films on your own outside of class. These will be on reserve at Pelletier Library; see pp. 7-8 of the syllabus for more info. If you anticipate having difficulties coordinating your schedule, please speak to me at once.

Extra Credit Opportunities

There will be two opportunities for extra credit during the semester:

- 1) Attend a performance of *The Crazy Things We Do: Love and Loss* on September 30th or October 1st, 8pm at the Gladys Mullenix Black Theatre, and write a review/analysis of "The Juliet Project," a new dramatic work based on Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*. This will also involve reading *Romeo and Juliet*.
- 2) Perform a 5-10 minute scene/speech from any of Shakespeare's works in class. This could be a solo or group performance, and you are not restricted to works that we have read in class (I can provide you with a list of good scenes or speeches for performance). This will require you to meet with me at least 2 times prior to your in-class performance for feedback and advice.

Grades and Other Class Policies

(more info on General Course Policies handout)

- Quizzes: 15%
- Paper 1 (Due 9/26): 15%
- Paper 2 (Due 11/22): 15%
- Class Participation: 10%
- Take-Home Midterm (Due 10/19): 20%
- Final Exam (12/12): 25%

The **Quizzes** are designed to test your knowledge of the course material, your ability to think critically, and your ability to read carefully and retain important information. They are **NOT** designed to test your ability to memorize minute details or to deceive you with trick questions, but your ability to understand and remember the plays and supplementary material is important. Any material read or discussed during the course of the semester could appear on these quizzes. They will take a variety of forms: passage identification, short answer, short essay, group presentation, etc.

The **Papers** will assess your ability to read and interpret Shakespeare's language, your ability to construct a thoughtful, original, and well-organized essay, and your demonstration of a thorough knowledge of the text (or texts) to be analyzed. Topics will be announced in due time.

The **Exams** will test your knowledge of both the texts and the historical/cultural contexts of Shakespeare's works. The **Take-Home Midterm** will be a series of short essays, while the **Final Exam** will be a combination of passage identification, short answer, and short essay.

Active participation in class discussion and activities is essential for your success and the success of the class as a whole. So, attendance and class participation are **Mandatory**. You should come to class every day prepared and excited to engage with the material and your fellow students. Each student is allowed 3 unexcused absences without penalty, with each additional unexcused absence incurring a 3% penalty to your final grade. Medical, college-related, and religious absences will be excused only with proper documentation, and advance notice is greatly preferred. And please, turn your cellphone ringers off, and no texting.

All students are responsible for making up any missed work; in-class assignments missed for unexcused absences cannot be made up. If you know in advance you will be absent on a day that a paper is due, turn it in early or make other arrangements with me. Late papers are penalized 1 letter grade per class-day late.

Students with disabilities who believe they may need accommodations in this class are encouraged to contact Disability Services at (814) 332-2898. Disability Services is part of the Learning Commons and is located in Pelletier Library. Please do this as soon as possible to ensure that such accommodations are implemented in a timely fashion.

Daily Syllabus

This schedule is subject to change with reasonable notice.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic</u> -- Please complete reading assignments <i>BEFORE</i> the date assigned
F 9/2 – M 9/5	Introduction to the course: Shakespearean Language & Performance <i>Please begin to read <u>A Midsummer Night's Dream</u> Immediately</i>
W 9/7 – W 9/14	<i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i> Norton: "Haves and Have-Nots" (p.7); "Riot and Disorder" (pp.8-9); "Music and Dance" (pp. 33-34) Topics for discussion: Desire, Transformation, Comic Structure, Gender Relations Quiz #1: Wednesday 9/14
F 9/16 – F 9/23	<i>Much Ado about Nothing</i> Norton: "The Legal Status of Women" (pp.9-11); "The Play of Language" (pp. 63-67) Topics for discussion: The Battle of the Sexes, Sexual Morality, Social Identity Quiz #2: Friday 9/23

Paper 1: Due Monday 9/26

M 9/26 – *Richard III*
M 10/3 *Norton*: “A Shakespearean Genealogy” & Royal Family Trees (inside covers)
Topics for discussion: History and/as Propaganda, Power, Rhetoric
Quiz #3: Monday 10/3

Friday, September 30 & Saturday, October 1

“The Juliet Project,” part of *The Crazy Things We Do: Love and Loss*
8PM, Gladys Mullenix Black Theatre

W 10/5 – *Henry V*
F 10/14 *Norton*: “A Female Monarch in a Male World” & “The Kingdom in Danger” (pp. 18-21); “The Theater of the Nation” (pp.51-53)
Topics for discussion: Kingship, Nationalism, the Responsibilities of Power
Quiz #4: Friday 10/14

Take Home Midterm: Due Wednesday 10/19

10/15 – 10/18

FALL BREAK

W 10/19 – *The Merchant of Venice*
M 10/24 *Norton*: “The English and Otherness” (pp. 22-25)
Topics for discussion: Race & Religion, the Spirit & the Flesh
Quiz #5: Monday 10/24

W 10/26 – *Othello*
F 11/4 Ania Loomba, “Outsiders in Shakespeare’s England” (on SAKAI)
Topics for discussion: Difference and Identity, Violence and Sexuality
Quiz #6: Friday 11/4

M 11/7 – *As You Like It*
M 11/14 *Norton*: “The Enemies of the Stage” (pp. 36-38); “The Fetishism of Dress,” “The Paradoxes of Identity” & “The Poet of Nature” (pp. 59-63)
Topics for discussion: Pastoralism, Cross-dressing, Sexuality, the City vs. the Country
Quiz #7: Monday 11/14

Paper 2: Due Monday 11/14

W 11/16 – *Hamlet*
M 11/21 Topics for discussion: Corruption and Decay, the Personal and the Political, the Inner Self

11/23-11/27 THANKSGIVING BREAK

M 11/28 – *Hamlet*
W 11/30 **Quiz #8: Wednesday 11/30**

F 12/2 – *Macbeth*
M 12/12 Topics for discussion: Ambition, the Supernatural, Order and Disorder
Quiz #9: Monday 12/12

W 12/14 Review

Final Exam: Wednesday December 21, 9:00AM

FILMS

The following films are on reserve at the Pelletier Library. They may be checked out at the Main Desk for in-library viewing. Films in **bold** are required viewing for all students.

A Midsummer Night's Dream

791.43 M5843 fo
(Director: Michael Hoffman)

791.43 M5843 c
(Director: Adrian Noble)

822.33 M5 bbc
(Director: Elijah Moshinsky)

Much Ado About Nothing

822.33 M6 me
(Director: Kenneth Branagh)

822.33 M6 bb
(Director: Stuart Burge)

Richard III

822.33 K8 un
(Director: Richard Loncraine)

822.33 K8 bo
(Director: Michael Bogdanov)

822.33 K8 Lo
(Director: Laurence Olivier)

822.33 K8 bbc
(Director: Jane Howell)

Henry V:

822.33 K2 go
(Director: Kenneth Branagh)

822.33 K2 ra
(Director: Laurence Olivier)

822.33 K2 bo
(Director: Michael Bogdanov)

Henry V continued

822.33 K2 bbc
(Director: David Giles)

Merchant of Venice

822.33 M3 mo
(Director: Michael Radford)

822.33 M3 p
(Director: Trevor Nunn)

822.33 M3 it
(Director: John Sichel)

822.33 M3 bb
(Director: Jack Gold)

Othello

822.33 O r
(Director: Trevor Nunn)

822.33 O ca
(Director: Oliver Parker)

822.33 O p
(Director: Janet Suzman)

822.33 O bbc
(Director: Jonathan Miller)

791.43 O1 c
(‘O’; Director: Tim Blake Nelson)

As You Like It:

822.33 As op
(Director: Thea Sharrock & Kriss Russman)

822.33 As cz
(Director: Paul Czimmer)

As You Like It continued

822.33 As bbc
(Director: Basil Coleman)

Hamlet

822.33 H ko
(*Gamlet*; Director: Grigory Kozintsev)

822.33 H tw
(Director: Laurence Olivier)

791.43 H18 m
(Director: Michael Almereyda)

822.33 H ca
(Director: Kenneth Branagh)

822.33 H wa
(Director: Franco Zeffirelli)

822.33 H iL
(Director: Gregory Doran)

792.0233 B79 b
(Director: Peter Brook)

822.33 H bbc
(Director: Rodney Bennett)

Macbeth:

822.33 M1 pL
(Director: Roman Polanski)

822.33 M1 wiL
(Director: Orson Welles)

822.33 M1 bbc
(Director: Jack Gold)

791.43 Sco83 a
(*Scotland, PA*; Director Billy Morrisette)

Additional Class Policies

Please turn off all electronic devices when you come to class. You may use laptop computers, but **only** for taking notes or other work directly related to class.

Students are encouraged to stop by during office hours with any questions or concerns. You may also stop by my office at any time convenient for you, but I may or may not be available. If you absolutely cannot make my office hours, you may set an appointment with me for an alternate time.

I do not meet with students to discuss papers or other assignments the day before they are due. If you would like to meet with me to discuss an assignment, please meet with me as early as you can so that we can develop a productive course of action.

The best way to contact me is via email. I am regularly available during “business hours” (Monday – Friday, 9AM – 5PM), and if you email me during this time I usually will respond within a few hours. If you email me in the evening, over holidays, or during the weekend, I probably will not get back to you in less than 12 hours. I **do not** chat or instant message through the Allegheny webmail system.

I do not discuss grades via email or phone. I also do not discuss your performance on an assignment until you have thoroughly reviewed your work and my comments. If you would like to discuss how you did on a particular assignment, please wait at least one day after I have returned it to you.

Essay-grading Criteria

So you can understand what is expected of you, I have indicated the general criteria I use to evaluate all writing assignments in this class. I base my grades on careful consideration of all aspects of a writing assignment, from the author’s fluency with language to the concepts being explored. Grades are determined based on actual product, not on intention; if you intend to make a particular argument but are unable to do fully articulate it, you will be graded on the quality of the argument you do produce, not on the ideas that you were trying to write.

An essay in the A range is founded on an original, logical and coherently organized set of ideas; it makes a clearly discernible and persuasive argument (even if the reader disagrees with its argument) and articulates this argument with a clear, direct, and thoughtful thesis statement. Its thinking is, at each turn, absolutely clearly articulated: words carry thought, they don't obscure it; its sentences use only the words their ideas require, not any more; its paragraphs have distinct though related roles in the essay's larger argument, each holding one thoroughly asserted idea (not two competing ideas, not one idea half-asserted). Its sentences are without the grammatical, spelling or typographical mistakes that exacting proofreading would catch. An A paper produces a nuanced argument, considers multiple perspectives, carefully examines and explains the evidence put forth by the author, makes a clear and persuasive case for the validity of its thesis, and clearly and cogently states the significance of its argument. All of this takes *a lot of work*. If it is all very nearly accomplished, the essay usually earns an A-.

An essay in the B range: a very good paper, founded on solid, persuasive thinking, the writing of which is clearly and effectively executed. What usually prevents an "A" is a lack of originality, complex and thorough thinking, or careful proofreading. If two of these virtues are absent, the essay will usually earn a B- or rest between a B and a C; these papers often contain potential but some crucial flaw (a weak thesis statement, unclear organization, etc.) keeps it from being a solid B. Other common attributes of a B paper include: a thoughtful but not entirely persuasive argument, omission

of key examples or textual evidence, inability to integrate textual evidence smoothly into your own writing, failure to fully address a perspective important to making the argument, a conclusion that does not articulate the full significance of the argument, some tangents or digressions that detract from the coherence and logic of the argument.

An essay in the C range: some conspicuous flaw usually earns an essay a C; its argument is really underdeveloped, it lacks a clear thesis statement, it is disorganized, its diction is consistently inarticulate, or it is in dire need of proofreading. Note that a C denotes “average” or sufficient work: it accomplishes the bare minimums established by the assignment and demonstrates that the student has “done the work” to a level of adequate competence but has not shown a mastery of the material or assignment. A C paper will put forth an argument, but one that is simple, obvious, or vague; it supplies some evidence from the text, but this evidence is often not suited to the case being made; its conclusion simply restates the introduction without articulating the overall significance of the essay; its introduction is often too broad and vague, or it does not suit the topic and/or argument; it follows slavishly the five paragraph structure. C papers also often include many assertions without explanation, clarification, or support; for example, a C paper will include statements like “I will analyze the importance of X” or “Y is a significant moment in the text” with little or no follow-up.

A D essay either contains more than one of the large problems cited in the "C" description or finds another way to convince its reader that the author has not spent nearly enough time on the thinking or writing in the essay. It is insufficient in multiple areas, usually lacking an argument, focusing on summary rather than analysis, and without a clear articulation of distinct ideas in each paragraph across the paper. D papers often contain numerous factual errors, unsupported assertions, digressions completely inappropriate to the topic, illogical or incomprehensible interpretations, or numerous and distracting problems in organization, grammar, spelling, etc.

An F essay misses the mark on all criteria (originality, articulateness, persuasiveness, organization, the absence of writing mistakes) or is handed in very late.

Some other factors:

A paper that lacks an identifiable thesis or argument will earn *at best* a C-

A paper that lacks evidence in the form of direct textual quotation (or contains only minimal textual evidence) will earn *at best* a C-

A paper that contains no argument or analysis but instead is largely summary, description, or observations without a unifying thesis will earn *at best* a C-

A paper that adheres slavishly to the five paragraph structure or is otherwise not organized logically based on its content and argument will earn *at best* a C-

A paper that contains numerous errors in spelling, syntax, word usage, formatting, citation, etc. will earn a *minimum* penalty of one full letter grade (from an A to a B, from a B- to a C-, etc)

Please note that these factors are solely negative, and if your paper does not fall under one of these flaws that does *not* guarantee a higher grade. For example, if you have an abundance of textual evidence that does not mean you will necessarily get a grade any higher than a C-

Class Participation

While it is difficult to quantify the success of a student's contributions to class discussion (at our best we all of course contribute differently), here are the general standards I will use to grade participation:

A range: Participation at this level is marked by its active nature, its consistency, and its quality. When **A** participants read an assignment, they *prepare* to participate in a class discussion; they read the assignments fully, carefully and critically enough to be ready not just to respond to my questions but also to initiate discussion with comments and questions of their own. Such participants will also come to class ready to make and argue assertions about the reading and to think out loud about a text's relation to its contexts; they will attend to the comments of others in class, agree, elaborate or civilly disagree with them, bring our attention to passages from the reading to make their point and at times connect such thinking with earlier readings or previous class discussions. In short, students who by their engagement in class discussion throughout the semester show themselves to be true students of the course material – persistently conscientious and inquiring – will get an **A** for their efforts. They will also make the course a lot better. (By the way, substituting quantity of participation for quality will not work.)

B range: Students who come to every class, have almost always done all the reading, and consistently respond to the questions of others in a way that demonstrates their command of the reading will earn a **B** participation grade. What separates this effort from an **A** one is not so much quantity (teachers are remarkably good at detecting bs) as the level of preparation – one's reading and thinking – that has gone on before one gets to class, especially the kind that enables students to *initiate* discussion. But you can't get a **B** participation grade by just showing up, either, or by talking every once and a while.

C range: A **C** participant comes to almost all the classes, usually has done most of the reading most of the time, but not with the energy necessary to demonstrate through participation their ongoing engagement with the material. Such a discussant contributes infrequently, maybe one time every other class.

D range: Automatic pilot mode. You were physically there most of the time, spoke a few times all semester maybe, but that was it.

F: Not coming to class is the traditional route.

Please Note: Students who are reluctant to talk in class can partially compensate for their silence by e-mailing me comments and questions about the reading *before* the class discussion of it. If you define yourself as “shy,” though, please don't convert this definition into permission not to talk. People get “writer's block” but still must hand papers in on time; others have “test anxiety” and take tests. In this class, participating in discussions is an obligation as important as test and papers, so keeping mum isn't really an option for those who expect to succeed.