

ENGL 212: The Age of Shakespeare

Overview

In this course you will read intensively a representative sample of plays and poems by William Shakespeare. Our semester's study will fall into two units, the first on Shakespeare's non-tragic work and the second on his major tragedies. We will also be using these texts as a lens to focus on wider historical and cultural contexts, including early modern contexts of print and performance that helped condition how Shakespeare's texts were produced and how they are read today.

The approach will be learner-oriented: that is, students will contribute in equal part with the professor in exploring the very many dimensions of the Shakespearean readings.

Student Learning Outcomes

After completing this course, students will be able to:

- Recall and articulate information about character, language, and plot in eight Shakespearean plays in fine detail
- Analyze these plays with respect to scenic form, character, and plot and communicate that analysis orally and in writing
- Analyze the theatrical context of Shakespearean drama and of specific scenes, lines, and stage directions and communicate that analysis orally and in writing
- Analyze the cultural context of Shakespearean drama and of specific scenes, lines, and characters and communicate that analysis orally and in writing
- Apply the literary category of genre to the scenic form, characters, and plot of Shakespearean drama and explain the dramatic effects of genre in the contexts of performance and text
- Apply elements of contemporary criticism and theory in the written analysis of Shakespearean drama
- Employ the categories of poetics in analyzing the Shakespearean language
- Read and recite Shakespearean text aloud with accuracy and pleasure

Outcomes achieved through this course will also be applicable to unread Shakespearean texts, early modern drama, and the field of literature more generally.

Texts

The following plays are available at the AUB Bookstore in the Pelican editions (general editors Stephen Orgel and A.R. Braunmuller):

A Midsummer Night's Dream

Henry IV, Part One

Twelfth Night

The Tempest

Hamlet

Othello

King Lear

Macbeth

Additional readings will be made available online, either through links to the Internet Shakespeare Editions (<http://internetshakespeare.uvic.ca>) or as a pdf file on the class website.

Assignments

Assessed work will take the form of quizzes, two 50-minute tests and a research paper. There is also a participation component to your final grade.

The quizzes – one for each play – will be multiple-choice format and conducted at the beginning of the last class devoted to each play and will cover the play in its entirety. No make-up quizzes are given, so be punctual!

The tests – one for each unit – will be conducted in class and comprise multiple-choice questions, identification of passages, and short written responses to open-ended prompts.

The final research paper will be 6-8 pages in length and present an argued thesis concerning one of the plays on the syllabus, properly citing at least three critical sources. The paper should be formatted according to these specifications: typed, double-spaced, with 1-inch margins, in 10-to-12-point font, without gratuitous spelling or grammatical errors, and using MLA citation format (i.e. in-text citations with a Works Cited section at the end). Submission will be online and late submissions will be penalized 25%/day.

Grading

Quizzes (8%) + Test 1 (16%) + Test 2 (16%) + Paper (35%) + Participation (25%) = Grade (100)

The substantial “participation” segment expresses the importance of continuous in-class engagement as well as private study for developing your critical approach to literary texts. This component of the grade will take into account punctuality, attention to colleagues and professor, evidence of preparation, and, above all, frequency and thoughtfulness of discussion contribution. There will be frequent occasion for all of us to read Shakespeare’s text aloud; such theatrical participation will also be duly recognized.

Policies

The course will be administered in conformity with the University Catalogue and Student Handbook. This course depends on the exchange and development of ideas and arguments in seminar and your attendance is required; repeated unexcused absence will result in an automatic fail. It depends equally – as does all humanistic study – on the unique encounter of your individual mind with the text. All work must be original and must correctly cite any external sources on which you rely. Instances of academic dishonesty will be automatically reported to the Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, so be sure to familiarize yourself with policies surrounding plagiarism and cheating and ask in advance if you have questions.

Provisional Class Schedule with Reading Assignments

Assigned readings are for you to do in advance of the scheduled class. In the case of assignments from Shakespeare's plays, an inclusive range by act and scene is provided (e.g. *A Midsummer Night's Dream* III.2-IV.2 assigns *A Midsummer Night's Dream* from Act III, Scene 2 to Act IV, Scene 2 inclusive).

Introduction

M 17 /9 Overview of semester. Syllabus. *To the Beloved Memory of My Master, William Shakespeare*

W 19/9 Shakespeare's career and Elizabethan England

F 21/9 Shakespeare on page & stage. *Introductory matter in any of the Pelican Shakespeare Volumes*

Unit 1: Non-tragic works

M 24/9 *A Midsummer Night's Dream* I.1-I.2

W 26 /9 *A Midsummer Night's Dream* II.1-III.1

F 28/9 *A Midsummer Night's Dream* III.2-IV.2

M 1/10 *A Midsummer Night's Dream* V.1

W 3/10 *Henry IV, Part One* I.1-I.2

F 5/10 *Henry IV, Part One* I.3-II.4

M 8/10 *Henry IV, Part One* III.1-IV.4

W 10/10 *Henry IV, Part One* V.1-V.4

F 12/10 *Twelfth Night* I.i-I.5

M 15/10 *Twelfth Night* II.1-III.1

W 17/10 *Twelfth Night* III.2-IV.2

F 19/10 *Twelfth Night* IV.3-V.1

M 22/10 *The Tempest* I.1-I.2

W 24/10 *The Tempest* II.1-III.3

M 29/10 *The Tempest* IV.1-epilogue

W 31/10 Shakespeare the poet.

F 2/11 UNIT ONE TEST

Unit 2: Major Tragedies

M 5/11 *Hamlet* I.1-I.5

W 7/11 *Hamlet* II.1-II.2

F 9/11 *Hamlet* III.1-III.4

M 12/11 *Hamlet* IV.1-IV.7

W 14/11 *Hamlet* V.1-V.2

F 16/11 *Othello* I.1-I.5

M 19/11 *Othello* II.1-III.3

W 21/11 *Othello* III.4-IV.3

F 23/11 *Othello* V.1-V.2

M 26/11 *The Tragedy of King Lear* (1623) I.1-I.5

W 28/11 *The Tragedy of King Lear* (1623) II.1-III.2

F 30/11 *The Tragedy of King Lear* (1623) III.3-IV.4

M 3/12 *The Tragedy of King Lear* (1623) IV.5-V.3

W 5/12 Special class: The Shakespearean Text

F 7/12 *The History of King Lear* (1608) entire

M 10/12 Special class: On Writing Research Papers

W 10/12 *Macbeth* I.1-II.1

F 14/12 *Macbeth* II.2-III.6

M 17/12 *Macbeth* IV.1-V.8

W 19/12 Retrospective. Test and paper preparation.

F 21/12 UNIT TWO TEST

W 4/1 Special class: Moodle upload of research plans and initial bibliography

M 9/1 FINAL PAPER DUE

Ben Jonson, *To the Beloved Memory of My Master, William Shakespeare*

To draw no envy, SHAKSPEARE, on thy name,
 Am I thus ample to thy book and fame ;
 While I confess thy writings to be such,
 As neither Man nor Muse can praise too much.
 'Tis true, and all men's suffrage. But these ways
 Were not the paths I meant unto thy praise ;
 For seeliest ignorance on these may light,
 Which, when it sounds at best, but echoes right ;
 Or blind affection, which doth ne'er advance
 The truth, but gropes, and urgeth all by chance ;
 Or crafty malice might pretend this praise,
 And think to ruin where it seemed to raise.
 These are, as some infamous bawd or whore
 Should praise a matron ; what could hurt her more ?
 But thou art proof against them, and, indeed,
 Above the ill fortune of them, or the need.
 I therefore will begin: Soul of the age!
 The applause ! delight ! the wonder of our stage!
 My SHAKSPEARE rise ! I will not lodge thee by
 Chaucer, or Spenser, or bid Beaumont lie
 A little further, to make thee a room :
 Thou art a monument without a tomb,
 And art alive still while thy book doth live
 And we have wits to read, and praise to give.
 That I not mix thee so my brain excuses,
 I mean with great, but disproportioned Muses :
 For if I thought my judgment were of years,
 I should commit thee surely with thy peers,
 And tell how far thou didst our Lyly outshine,
 Or sporting Kyd, or Marlowe's mighty line.
 And though thou hadst small Latin and less Greek,
 From thence to honour thee, I would not seek
 For names : but call forth thund'ring Aeschylus,
 Euripides, and Sophocles to us,
 Pacuvius, Accius, him of Cordova dead,
 To life again, to hear thy buskin tread
 And shake a stage : or when thy socks were on,
 Leave thee alone for the comparison
 Of all that insolent Greece or haughty Rome
 Sent forth, or since did from their ashes come.
 Triumph, my Britain, thou hast one to show
 To whom all Scenes of Europe homage owe.
 He was not of an age, but for all time !
 And all the Muses still were in their prime,

When, like Apollo, he came forth to warm
 Our ears, or like a Mercury to charm !
 Nature herself was proud of his designs,
 And joyed to wear the dressing of his lines !
 Which were so richly spun, and woven so fit,
 As, since, she will vouchsafe no other wit.
 The merry Greek, tart Aristophanes,
 Neat Terence, witty Plautus, now not please ;
 But antiquated and deserted lie,
 As they were not of Nature's family.
 Yet must I not give Nature all ; thy art,
 My gentle Shakspeare, must enjoy a part.
 For though the poet's matter nature be,
 His art doth give the fashion : and, that he
 Who casts to write a living line, must sweat,
 (Such as thine are) and strike the second heat
 Upon the Muses' anvil ; turn the same,
 And himself with it, that he thinks to frame ;
 Or for the laurel he may gain a scorn ;
 For a good poet's made, as well as born.
 And such wert thou ! Look how the father's face
 Lives in his issue, even so the race
 Of Shakspeare's mind and manners brightly shines
 In his well torned and true filed lines ;
 In each of which he seems to shake a lance,
 As brandisht at the eyes of ignorance.
 Sweet Swan of Avon ! what a sight it were
 To see thee in our waters yet appear,
 And make those flights upon the banks of Thames,
 That so did take Eliza, and our James !
 But stay, I see thee in the hemisphere
 Advanced, and made a constellation there !
 Shine forth, thou Star of Poets, and with rage
 Or influence, chide or cheer the drooping stage,
 Which, since thy flight from hence, hath mourned
 like night,
 And despairs day, but for thy volume's light.