

EL 305: Studies in Shakespeare
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Please note that this syllabus is a draft!

Course Description

This course aims to introduce students to a selection of plays from the Shakespearean canon and situate these works against the political, cultural and aesthetic background of early modern England. We will pay specific attention to the genres, materialities and institutions of the Shakespearean stage and where and how we find remnants of the era's performance practices in the playwright's texts. Throughout, we will think about how the "idea" of William Shakespeare has informed discussions around literary authenticity, authorship and intention, and canon-formation.

Course Materials

All of the texts for this course are available at Pandora Bookstore on North Campus. Please purchase the Folger Shakespeare Library Editions.

Requirements

Attendance and Participation*	%10
Four Response Papers**	%40
Midterm Exam	%20
Final Paper***	%30

* Our work in this course will be developed through classroom exercises, discussions and lectures, so your presence and active participation is crucial. Active participation means that you have completed and reflected on the assigned reading for the day, that you have the day's texts, your notebook and other materials with you, that you are not using your phone in class and that you are an active listener to your classmates and share your own ideas with the group. Attendance is mandatory: if you attend less than %75 of the total class hours, you will automatically fail the course.

** The four scheduled response papers will supplement the traditional midterm and push us to think about questions related to the Shakespeare industry, Shakespearean adaptation and Shakespeare in performance. The final response paper will be a preparatory assignment geared towards developing students' final papers in the course. The response papers will consist of one single-spaced page (or approximately 750 words). I will be providing a detailed prompt for these papers during the first week. The due dates are marked below.

*** The culminating assignment in this course is a 10-page (or approximately 2500 words) paper that will build on a concept, problem or image of your choice. You may choose to compose a paper on one of the plays that we have read in class, however the preparation process will include finding sources related to your paper's question and deciding how to frame your own approach to the material. I will be providing a detailed prompt for the paper during the semester.

Course Schedule

Week 1

Introduction

Feb 6 Situating Elizabethan England
Feb 9 The Shakespearean Stage

Week 2

From the Early Comedies to the Later Tragedies

Feb 13 *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Act 1
Feb 16 *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Acts 2-3

Week 3

Feb 20 *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Acts 4-5
Feb 23 *Richard II*, Act 1
***Response Paper 1: Shakespeare in Love**

Week 4

Feb 27 *Richard II*, Acts 2-3
Mar 2 *Richard II*, Act 4

Week 5

Mar 6 *Richard II*, Act 5
Mar 9 *Anthony and Cleopatra*, Act 1

Week 6

Mar 13 *Anthony and Cleopatra*, Acts 2-3
Mar 16 *Anthony and Cleopatra*, Act 4

Week 7

Mar 20 *Anthony and Cleopatra*, Act 5
Mar 23 ***Response Paper 2: Shakespeare's Sources**
Hamlet, Act 1
Guest Visitor: Margaret Litvin

Week 8

Mar 27 *Hamlet*, Acts 2-3
Mar 30 *Hamlet*, Act 4

Week 9

Apr 3 *Hamlet*, Act 5
Apr 6 *Hamlet*, continued.

Week 10

Apr 10

As You Like It, Act 1

Apr 13

As You Like It, Acts 2-3

***Response Paper 3: Shakespeare and Performance**

--- Spring Break ---

Week 12

Apr 24

As You Like It, Act 4

Apr 27

As You Like It, Act 5

Week 13

May 1*

King Lear, Act 1

May 4

King Lear, Acts 2-3

Week 14

May 8

King Lear, Act 4

May 11

King Lear, Act 5

***Response Paper 4: Towards the Final Paper**

*** We will re-schedule our May 1st course meeting for another day.**