

English 380 Shakespeare Section 44512

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Tuesday & Thursday 12.30-1.45
MIN 206
Office Hours: 2.00-3.00 PM T & Th
and by appointment

Objectives

In this course we will explore Shakespeare's plays and poetry, as well as the cultural institution that has grown around the man and his work. We will be engaging with Shakespeare using two primary strategies, performance and cultural history.

Requirements

We will pursue our study of Shakespeare through a mixture of lecture, discussion, and student presentations. I will be giving brief lectures on a variety of cultural and historical topics. In groups, you will make presentations on concepts more specifically related to Shakespeare. You will also write two reviews of performances of Shakespeare, and perform a short scene. There will also be ten unannounced quizzes and a term paper.

Grading		Scale	
Performance Project	50 points	A	100-90 %
Two Reviews	200 points	B	89-80 %
Group Presentation	50 points	C	79-70 %
10 Quizzes	100 points	D	69-60 %
Term Paper	100 points		
Total	500 points		

Texts

The Complete Pelican Shakespeare ed. Stephen Orgel and A.R. Braunmuller
Shakespeare David Bevington
A dictionary (bring to every class)

Students with Special Needs

Any students with disabilities or other special needs who need special accommodations in this course are asked to share these concerns with me as soon as possible.

Academic Honesty

I assume that all work you turn in for this course is yours, and any material that you have acquired from an outside source is documented properly. Failure to do so is considered plagiarism and will result in possible failure of the course. See NDSU University Senate Policy, Section 335: Code of Academic Responsibility and Conduct <http://www.ndsu.nodak.edu/policy/335.htm>.

Late Papers

Late papers will lose ten points per day until they are turned in. You are responsible for turning in all work assigned in this class. Failure to do so will result in failing this class.

Attendance and Participation

Important parts of the work for this course will be done in small and large groups. This means that your consistent presence is important to the success of the class as a whole. If you are unable to attend class, you must contact me via phone or email within twenty-four hours. You are still responsible for any work done or due in class that day. Similarly, you are responsible for contacting your group members if you miss a class.

Participation includes not only contributing to class discussion, it also covers prompt attendance, listening and responding constructively to your classmates, attending class prepared to discuss the readings, and bringing your books and writing material to every class meeting.

Paper Format

Unless otherwise noted, all assignments are to be type-written, double-spaced, with one-inch margins, in twelve-point Times font. Your name, the date, the class, my name and the assignment are to be at the top of the first page. Don't forget to title your work. Any papers longer than one page must have page numbers and be stapled.

Group Presentations

I will divide you into five groups and each group will give the class a presentation on a particular aspect of the course. Specific instructions will be handed out.

Performance Project

The last week of class will be devoted to staging performances of scenes or parts of scenes from plays that we've read. Details of this project will be handed out.

Quizzes

There will be ten, brief, ten-item unannounced quizzes. They will consist of short answer and identification questions. They will cover the reading for that day and any recent terms and concepts discussed in class. The quizzes will be handed out at the beginning of class and collected after fifteen minutes. Quizzes may not be made up.

Review

You will be responsible for a review of a Shakespeare film and of NDSU's performance of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* that we will attend. Details of the assignment will be handed out later in the course.

Calendar (subject to change)

- 14 January Introductions
 16 January *Romeo and Juliet* (Act 1)
- 21 January *Romeo and Juliet*
 23 January *Romeo and Juliet*
 Presentation: Shakespeare's Biography
 Bevington, Chapter 2
- 28 January *The Taming of the Shrew*
 Presentation: Shakespeare and Genre
 Bevington, Chapter 3
- 30 January *The Taming of the Shrew*
- 4 February *The Taming of the Shrew*
 6 February *Henry V*
 Bevington, Chapter 4
- 11 February *Henry V*
 13 February *Henry V*
- 18 February *A Midsummer Night's Dream*
 Presentation: Shakespeare's Actors
 Bevington, Chapter 9
- 20 February *A Midsummer Night's Dream*
 Presentation: Shakespeare's Theater
 Bevington, Chapter 8
- 25 February *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (film)
 27 February *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (film)
 28 February *A Midsummer Night's Dream* performance 7.30 PM The Little Country
 Theater (on campus)
- 4 March *A Midsummer Night's Dream*
 6 March *A Midsummer Night's Dream*
 Theater company visit
- 11 March Sonnets
 Presentation: Shakespeare's Poetry
 Bevington, Chapter 1
- 13 March Sonnets
 Review 1 due
- 18-20 March Spring Break, no class

25 March	<i>Othello</i> Bevington, Chapter 7
27 March	<i>Othello</i>
1 April	<i>Othello</i>
3 April	<i>Macbeth</i>
8 April	<i>Macbeth</i> Bevington, Chapter 6
10 April	<i>Macbeth</i>
15 April	<i>Twelfth Night</i> Bevington, Chapter 5
17 April	<i>Twelfth Night</i>
22 April	<i>Hamlet</i> Term Paper Abstract due
24 April	<i>Hamlet</i>
29 April	<i>Hamlet</i> Review 2 due
1 May	Scene Rehearsals
6 May	Scene Performances
8 May	Scene Performances
15 May	Term Paper due in my office before 12.00

Group Presentations

Your presentation should be twenty minutes long and involve all members of your group. You are encouraged to use audio/visual or other aids in your presentation. If you need specific equipment, please let me know at least a week in advance. You should also prepare a type-written outline (one page) and a bibliography of the sources you used as well as other sources that a student of Shakespeare might find helpful (at least six total). No more than one quarter of the sources may be on-line.

The group will receive one grade for the project based on organization and clarity of presentation. Each group member will receive the same grade unless it is apparent that someone has not contributed, e. g. not shown up for group meetings.

Your course texts will provide you with some basic information on these topics. More material is available in the library. Do not hesitate to contact me if you need assistance.

Group 1: Shakespeare's Biography

Who was Shakespeare? What was his religious and class background? What was his profession? What was his family background? Where was he from? Did he write the plays we give him credit for?

Group 2: Shakespeare's Genre

What is genre? How did Shakespeare and his contemporaries conceive of, and use genre? How is genre thought of today?

Group 3: Shakespeare's Theater

What was theater like in the Elizabethan and Jacobean periods? How was it different than today? What theaters did Shakespeare use? Why did theaters look the way they did? Where were they located and why?

Group 4: Shakespeare's Actors

What sort of profession was acting? How did actors make money? Why were women not allowed to act professionally? Who played the female roles? Did Shakespeare have any competitors? What was an acting company?

Group 5: Shakespeare's Poetry

What did Shakespeare write besides plays? What genres did he use? Are there any contested poems? How were the poems published? How did dedications work?

Reserve Books

Cox, John D. and David Scott Kastan, eds. *A New History of Early English Drama*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1997.

Kastan, David Scott ed. *A Companion to Shakespeare*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1999.

McDonald, Russ ed. *The Bedford Companion to Shakespeare*. New York: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2001.

Reviews

This is a three to four page formal review of a performance of a film of a Shakespeare play. The film must be a commercial production, not a filmed stage performance. This is to be a formal review, not like a brief newspaper or popular magazine review. The review should have three parts:

1. An introduction, which gives the basic information about the play/film, date, director, lead actors, length, etc.
2. The second part is a summary of the play/film. Note, this is not a summary of the playscript, but of the performance or film that you saw. This is usually fairly conventional, but you must address issues of any changes made in the basic playscript.
3. The third part is your analysis of the play/film. As an interpretation of a Shakespeare play, what do you feel are its strengths and weaknesses? The handouts on watching Shakespeare will be helpful in writing this section.

The introduction should be no more than a paragraph and should only introduce characters who are mentioned later in the review. The summary should be no longer than two paragraphs. The analysis should take up about two-thirds of the review.

We will watch several clips and see an entire film in class. The ideas that come up in the discussion of these videos will be helpful for you in writing your review. In general, what you are doing is comparing a director's vision of what a play is like with your own vision. The director has taken the same text you have read and altered it. Think about the alterations and how they affect the final experience.

If a performance is particularly good, you will find yourself caught up in it. You will not watch it critically. This is why I urge you to watch whatever it is you are reviewing at least twice.

A helpful guide to watching Shakespeare both on film and in performance can be found here: <http://www.jetlink.net/~massij/shakes/films/filmgen.htm>
Another good resource for Shakespeare on film research is the Internet Movie Database: <http://www.imdb.com>

Term Paper

This paper is to be type written, 750-1250 words (five to seven pages) focusing on a play we are not reading this term. The paper is to be entirely your own thoughts and analysis. I am not asking you to do any research. The purpose of the paper is for you to examine a particular play closely and on your own to see what you can make of it. Any ideas or research that used and not cited properly (MLA style) will be considered plagiarism and grounds for failing the class and possible further disciplinary action.

A short abstract, 250 words (one page) typewritten, describing your paper will be due on 22 April. The paper itself is due on 15 May. The abstract is worth 20 points of the final paper score.

Possible ideas for the term paper:

- choose a minor character and describe how he/she is important to the particular play (Mercutio in *Romeo & Juliet*, Cassio in *Othello*)
- choose a scene (but not the opening or closing), explain what is happening in it and describe how it relates to the play as a whole (the closet scene in *Hamlet*, the hanging of Bardolph in *Henry V*)
- locate the source/s of a play and discuss how Shakespeare altered the source to create a new play (*A Taming of a Shrew*, *Holinshed's Chronicles* & *Henry V*)
- choose a word or idea that seems particularly important to a given play. Check the word in Spevack's concordance to Shakespeare to see how often the word appears in the play. Write about how that word or idea relates to that play.

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