

“Shakespeare and Film: Thick Description”
English 482/682 Renaissance Literature
Section 6499/6500 Summer 2006 3 credits

M. G. Aune
320D Minard Hall
231-7176
m.aune@ndsu.edu

MTWTF 9.00-11.15
CI Nelson 104
Office Hours: 12-12.30 PM T & Th
and by appointment

website: <http://www.ndsu.edu/ndsu/maune>
<http://blackboard.ndsu.nodak.edu/>

Objectives

The initial objective in this class is to understand Shakespeare’s plays as they are interpreted, transformed, adapted and otherwise altered by the medium of film. The plays were written to be performed, that is as texts to be seen and heard rather than read. Further, the medium of drama was accessible to a great range of the early modern population, literate and not. In these regards, film is not an alien form for Shakespeare. It is a highly visual and auditory medium that is generally available to a large and diverse audience.

This class is called thick description because of the comparatively short span of time we have, we will be examining four plays in-depth rather than a greater number in less detail. Our first task in this class is to gain an understanding of Shakespeare’s plays as visual/auditory texts. We will do this by reading the plays with a specific set of criteria in mind. We will read paying attention to visual cues such as explicit and implicit stage directions, settings, costumes, and props.

Our second task in this class is to understand the medium of film and acquire a literacy in that medium that allows us to be critical about it. We will work to develop a vocabulary of critical terms for talking about film. We will do this through reading of critical material, classroom discussion and several homework assignments.

Our third goal is to bring these first two together in a way that allows us to be critical about Shakespeare on film as more than just a text to be discussed formally. We will strive to examine, discuss, and write about these films (and perhaps television shows) as films rather than simply new versions of the plays. Ideally, we will employ several basic critical approaches including feminist, psychoanalytic, and reception studies.

Requirements

We will work towards these outcomes through a variety of means including discussion, in-class writing, researched writing, and viewing journals. Details of these assignments are found below.

Grading Undergraduate		Scale	Grading Graduate		
Reception Project	100 points	A	100-91 %	Reception Project	100 points
Journals (20 x 10 pts)	200 points	B	90-81 %	Journals (20 x 10 pts)	200 points
Term Paper	200 points	C	80-71 %	Term Paper	300 points
Total	500 points	D	70-60 %	Total	600 points

Texts

Shakespeare: Script, Stage, Screen, Bevington, et. al.

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. This includes work done for other courses used without informing that instructor or me. 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 not be accepted and receive a score of zero. Papers must be physically turned in at the beginning of the class in which they are due. No emailed or faxed papers will be accepted.

Attendance

Because this class is an advanced course and will be conducted as a seminar, prompt and regular attendance is crucial even on screening days. Each member of the class is responsible for being prepared and contributing to class discussion every day. Being prepared for class includes bringing the course texts, having read and annotated the assigned homework, and having prepared topics or questions for discussion. Failure to be prepared will result in your being marked absent. Leaving class early will also constitute an absence. If you are unable to attend class because of an unforeseen circumstance, 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.

Because this course is so brief, two absences will result in the loss of a full grade from your final grade. Three absences will result in a loss of two grades. Four will result in failure. In order to be considered present, you must be in class for the entire course meeting time, this includes screenings.

Paper Format

Unless otherwise noted, all assignments are to be typed, 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 a title. Any papers longer than one page must have page numbers.

Journal

You will write twenty journal entries this semester, one entry for each of the nine films we will see and one entry each of the eight essays we will read. The other three journals may be on any course-related topic. The film journals are due the day after we screen the film. The essay journals are due the day we are to discuss the essay. (You may end up turning in more than one journal on a particular day.) Journals are to follow the paper format above and identify the text(s) being addressed. They should be no more than one page in length. In your journal, you are to respond thoughtfully to the essay assigned for that day or to the film screened the previous day. You are encouraged to express your opinion, but be sure to support it with quotations from the text(s) and discussion. These journals may contain your responses to class discussion or comments made on previous journals. You may also use the journal to explore potential term paper topics or test new critical approaches. You are welcome to use the first person. The journals are not as formal as term papers, but neither are they to be unedited thoughts off the top of your head. The journal should have a particular point or idea that it explores. Be sure to number your journals to keep track of how many you have written.

Calendar

- 15 May Introductions
 Read: Chapter 5 in Bevington, et al.
- 16 May Read: *Taming of the Shrew* & Close-Up: Franco Zeffirelli in Bevington et al.
 Screening: *Taming of the Shrew* (1967)
- 17 May Read: Diana E. Henderson. “A Shrew for the Times Revisited.”
 Discuss: *Shrew* (1967), Henderson essay
- 18 May Screening: *10 Things I Hate About You* (1999)
- 19 May Read: Richard Burt. “T(e)en Things I Hate About Girlene...”
 Screening: *Animated Shakespeare: The Taming of the Shrew*
 Discuss: *10 Things, Animated Shakespeare*, Burt essay
- 22 May Read: *Romeo & Juliet*
 Screening: *Romeo & Juliet* (1968)
- 23 May Read: Deborah Cartmell. “Franco Zeffirelli and Shakespeare”
 Discuss: *R&J* (1968), Cartmell essay
- 24 May Screening: *William Shakespeare’s Romeo + Juliet* (1996)
 Read: Close-Up: Baz Luhrmann in Bevington et al.
- 25 May Read: Barbara Hodgdon. “*William Shakespeare’s Romeo + Juliet...*”
 Discuss: *R+J* (1996), Hodgdon essay
 Evening Screening: *Tromeo & Juliet* (1996) Nelson 104 6-8.00 pm
- 26 May Screening: *Animated Shakespeare: Romeo & Juliet*
 Discuss: *Animated R&J, Tromeo & Juliet*
- 29 May Memorial Day No Class
- 30 May Read: *Hamlet* & Close-Up: Laurence Olivier in Bevington et al.
 Screening: *Hamlet* (1948)
 Reception project due
- 31 May Discuss: *Hamlet* (1948)
 Reading: Neil Taylor. “The Films of *Hamlet*.”

- 1 June Screening: *Hamlet* (2000)
Reading: Katherine Rowe. “Remember Me...”
- 2 June Discuss: *Hamlet* (2000), Rowe essay
Screening: *Animated Shakespeare*
- 5 June Screening: *Macbeth* (1948)
Read: *Macbeth*
- 6 June Discuss: *Macbeth* (1948)
Evening Screening: *Kumonosu jô (Throne of Blood)* (1957) Nelson 104 6-8.00 pm
Read: Close-Up: Akira Kurosawa in Bevington et al.
- 7 June Read: Jack Jorgens. “Kurosawa’s *Throne of Blood*”
Discuss: *Kumonosu jô (Throne of Blood)* (1957) and Jorgens essay.
Evening Screening: *Macbeth* (1971) Nelson 104 6-8.30 pm
- 8 June Discuss: *Macbeth* (1971)
Evening Screening: *Men of Respect* (1991) or *Scotland, PA* (2001) Nelson 104 6-8.30 pm
- 9 June Read: Pearlman. “*Macbeth* on Film”
Discuss: Pearlman essay & *Men of Respect* or *Scotland PA*
Screening: *Animated Shakespeare Macbeth*
- 16 June Term Paper due in my office before noon.

Bibliography

These essays are available for download from the Assignments part of the Blackboard site.

- Richard Burt. “T(e)n Things I Hate About Girlene Shakesploitation Flicks in the Late 1990s, or, Not So Fast Times at Shakespeare High.” *Screening the Bard: Shakespearean Spectacle, Critical Theory, Film Practice*, Eds. Lisa Starks and Courtney Lehmann. American University Presses, 2001. 205–32.
- Deborah Cartmell, “Franco Zeffirelli and Shakespeare,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare*, ed. Russell Jackson, New York: Cambridge UP, 2000. 212-221.
- Diana E. Henderson. “A Shrew for the Times, Revisited.” .” In Richard Burt and Lynda Boose, eds. *Shakespeare the Movie II: Popularizing the Plays on Film, TV, Video, and DVD*. New York: Routledge, 2003. 120-39.
- Barbara Hodgdon. “William Shakespeare’s *Romeo + Juliet*: Everything’s Nice in America?” *Shakespeare Survey* 52 (1999): 88-98.
- Jack J. Jorgens. “Kurosawa’s *Throne of Blood*: Washizu and Miki Meet the Forest Spirit.” *Literature/Film Quarterly* 11.3 (1983): 167-73.

E. Pearlman. "Macbeth on Film: Politics." Anthony Davies & Stanley Wells, eds. *Shakespeare and the Moving Image: The Plays on Film and Television*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1994. 250-60.

Katherine Rowe. "'Remember Me': Technologies of Memory in Michael Almereyda's *Hamlet*." In Richard Burt and Lynda Boose, eds. *Shakespeare the Movie II: Popularizing the Plays on Film, TV, Video, and DVD*. New York: Routledge, 2003. 37-55.

Neil Taylor. "The Films of *Hamlet*." In Anthony Davies & Stanley Wells, eds. *Shakespeare and the Moving Image: The Plays on Film and Television*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1994. 180-95.

Books on Reserve at the Library

Michael Anderegg. *Cinematic Shakespeare: (Genre and Beyond)*. New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2003.

Stephen Buhler. *Shakespeare in the Cinema: Ocular Proof*. Albany State U of New York P, 2002.

Richard Burt, ed. *Shakespeare After Mass Media*. New York: Palgrave, 2002.

Samuel Crowl. *Shakespeare at the Cineplex: The Kenneth Branagh Era*. Athens, Ohio: Ohio U P, 2003.

Sarah Hatchuel. *Shakespeare from Stage to Screen*. Cambridge: Cambridge U P, 2004.

Jack J. Jorgens. *Shakespeare on Film*. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1977.

Roger Manvell. *Shakespeare and the Film*. New York: Praeger, 1971.

Kenneth S. Rothwell. *A History of Shakespeare on Screen*. 2nd ed. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2004.

Filmography

Hamlet (2000) FPL DVD;

Hamlet (1948) FPL DVD; TriCollege VHS;

Kumonosu jō (Throne of Blood) (1957) FPL DVD

Macbeth (1971) FPL DVD; FPL VHS;

Macbeth (1948)

Men of Respect (1991)

Romeo & Juliet (1968) FPL DVD; FPL VHS;

Scotland, PA (2001) FPL DVD

The Taming of the Shrew (1967) FPL VHS; TriCollege VHS;

Ten Things I Hate About You (1999) FPL VHS;

Tromeo & Juliet (1996)

William Shakespeare's Romeo + Juliet (1996) FPL DVD; FPL VHS;

FPL: Fargo Public Library, TriCollege: TriCollege Film Library The Tri College Film Library catalogue may be found here: <<http://www.mnstate.edu/tcufilm/>>. Only faculty may borrow films, so if you'd like to borrow one or more let me know and I'll order it. It typically takes 24 hours to be delivered to NDSU. Some of these films are likely also available at local video rental establishments.

Reception Project

For this paper you will research, summarize, and analyze the critical reception of a particular film of a Shakespeare play. You do not have to restrict yourself to one of the films we will be watching. Using the research databases available through the library, ProQuest, JSTOR, ProjectMUSE, FirstSearch, etc., you must locate and read at least ten reviews of your film. These reviews may come from newspapers, magazines, academic journals, and/or reputable on-line journals such as *EMLS*. Most useful for this project and for your term paper will be the *World Shakespeare Bibliography Online* <<http://www.worldshakesbib.org/index.html>> You may log in with the username: MGAune and password: prospero. The advanced search feature will be the most useful. You may not use personal websites. They must, however, be reviews of the film on its American or international theatrical release. You may not use reviews of the film on VHS or DVD. Basic information on the film's cast, crew, release dates, earnings, etc. can be found at the Internet Movie Database (www.imdb.com). Your paper should be four to six pages long and include a bibliography of all the reviews you found in MLA or Chicago style. For your analysis of the reviews you might focus on how the film gets compared to the play (or not compared); the reviewers' attitude toward Shakespeare, the reviewers' attitudes toward film; who the reviewers seem to see as their audience; who the reviewers seem to see as the film's audience.

The project is due 30 May, in class.

Term Paper

Your term paper should be 2,500 to 3,000 words (undergraduate) or 3,000 to 4,000 words (graduate) in length. Double-spaced, typed, with one-inch margins and formatted and cited consistently using the style of your preference (MLA, APA, Chicago, etc.). The paper should demonstrate your ability to both interact with the primary text(s) and with secondary sources. You may well have to resort to interlibrary loan to acquire the secondary sources needed for this paper. With that in mind, start early.

You have several options for this paper. You may take up the argument from one of the essays we have read, either extending it or challenging it. You may conduct a close, formalist reading of one or two films we have seen this term. This would involve careful attention to one or more filmic elements. Potential topics for close, formalist readings include focusing on gender, race, class, postcolonialism, or queer theory. A genre study would consider a particular film as representative or not representative of a particular film genre such as the western or film noir. You may contrast/compare two films of the same play, again following a careful filmic close reading. You may develop an idea that you have introduced in your journals. You may conduct a reception project which considers how a particular film was received in terms of its reviews, its persistence, and its profitability.

The paper is due Friday 16 June in my office before noon.

Grade Guidelines

These descriptions apply to the final grade in the class and the score on particular assignments.

A work is outstanding. It goes beyond the basic requirements of the assignment and the class. In terms of grammar, spelling, and typography there are few, if any errors and none impair

understanding. The work shows evidence of critical and original thinking. Ideas are clearly supported and explained.

B work is above average. It shows understanding of the given task and an understanding of the rules for writing as set out in the syllabus. In terms of grammar, spelling, and typography there are errors but none impair understanding. Thinking is clear, though not necessarily highly critical or highly original. Ideas are supported and explained, although not always clearly or consistently.

C work is satisfactory. It shows familiarity with though not a complete understanding of the given task and rules for writing as set out in the syllabus. In terms of grammar, spelling, and typography there are errors that impair understanding. Thought shows inconsistent critical engagement or originality. Ideas are too broad and not clearly supported with evidence. Writing tends to summarize or describe rather than analyze.

D work is below average. It shows an inconsistent understanding of the given task, text, and rules. There are more than single grammar, spelling, and typographical errors that impair understanding. Thought and writing are often disorganized and do not communicate an understanding of audience or genre. Paper seems to be written quickly with little attention to revision or proofreading.

F work is unsatisfactory. It shows little if any understanding of the given task, text, or rules. There are numerous grammar, spelling and typographic errors that impair understanding. Thought and writing are disorganized and do not communicate an understanding of audience or genre.