



Shakespeare * English 533:
 Spring 2015
 Schedule # 21214
 MW 3:30-4:45 Ah 3110
 T Cummings A&L 236

Overview

Hm, let's see...what have people said about Shakespeare and his plays?

"He was not of an age, but for all time!"
 Ben Jonson

"Hamlet is a coarse and barbarous play... One might think the work is a product of a drunken savage's imagination." His "plays please only in London and Canada."
 Voltaire

"The nearest thing...to the eye of God."
 Laurence Olivier

"The remarkable thing about Shakespeare is that he really is very good, in spite of all the people who say he is very good."
 Robert Graves



What will you say?

To give you plenty of opportunities to shape your own opinion of Shakespeare, we'll read and discuss five of his plays, and you will write an informal essay about your own interpretation of a play, perform research on the critical reception of that play, and write a research paper that incorporates your own and scholars' opinions about that same play.

Requirements

Participation	15%	Literature Review tracker sheets (3)	2% (each)
Midterm	10%	Research Proposal	2%
Informal Essay	10%	Small Group Presentation	10%
Quizzes	6%	Class, "Large Group" Presentation	10%
Literature Review	10%	Final Paper	21%

Format: Process class

-Discussion & Participation: In order to foster learning through direct engagement, this will be a process class instead of an exclusively lecture class. As a process class, we will focus on your participation. Participation includes reading all shared texts, speaking in class in both small and large groups, listening to your group members' presentations of their research, asking them questions, and responding to my presentations as well. If you cannot commit to attending the vast majority of class sessions (90%), do not take this class.

Statement on non-participation: As a process class, you, your group, and the rest of your peers are inspired by your presence. Although we seem to be able to function online to a great extent and avoid much contact with the outside world, the truth is that our sheer presence with others affects us in dramatic...er, powerful ways. Many of these ways influence your learning, engagement, and interest...and others'. When you are present, you change our lives. When you are not present, you cannot affect us in such important ways. We miss you.

Since this is a process class, you will be rewarded by being in class, ready to work and to engage. Alternatively, if you are not here, you will lose points. If you are not in class the day that you are required to present, whether as the leader for your group reading, the presenter to your small group on your informal essay and discussion questions or your large class presentation, you will lose 5 points unless you have a university-recognized excuse (in writing). If you must miss a class, especially one in which you are a leader, notify your group and me as soon as possible. Sign-in sheets will keep track of your presence.

-Groups: We will facilitate greater participation and ensure mastery of shared texts by working in small groups. Every student will belong to a small group, and this small group will be the center of class sessions for you. One of the major functions of these small groups will be to *re*-read the texts aloud as a group to the class.

To be specific: For each play, you will read the work before our class meeting. Feel free to consult online summaries & other helpful tools (just include them in your works cited & bibliographies, but do not consider them scholarly sources). I will assign which groups will read and summarize which acts to read aloud. When it is your group's turn, you and the people in your group will summarize the act and read aloud/casually perform scenes and moments you deem most important.

To avoid complete chaos, one or two leaders will be in charge of the specific play & will orchestrate the reading for their group by assigning roles. Each group will have two co-leaders who will share duties with the leader. I will make assignments of groups, leaders, co-leaders, and texts the first weeks of class. Act assignments will arrive via Blackboard and/or emails before the in-class reading. Note: If you are a leader or co-leader on a play, you are responsible for being able to summarize the entire act & choosing which lines to read.

These in-class readings make you read Shakespeare aloud -- one of the best ways to learn his works -- and make you think through the act you are in charge of and decide what is most important. This will help you key into important moments and vital dia- or monologues.

Groups will have two days to read the play aloud in class. The first day, I will make a 10-15 minute presentation, groups will have a maximum of 15 minutes to prepare, and readings will take the remaining 45 minutes of class. Groups will have only 20 minutes to sum up the play & read key moments from it. It leaves us 75 minutes to complete our reading of the play the second day we read it in class. Since some acts are particularly long, they will need two groups to sum up & read (Act Three of *Othello*, Act Five of *Measure for Measure*, for example).

Access to your groups will be available through Blackboard. Please stay in contact with one another. If you cannot attend a class, especially one in which you are making a presentation,

send your group an email. It may be possible for your group to also help you with turning in assignments in case of emergencies (including printer “emergencies”).

After the weeks we read the plays aloud, leaders will present their informal essays and discussion questions to their group. Along with these short, informal papers, leaders will pose open-ended questions and lead a small group discussion. Each group will present its findings it makes during discussion to the class as a whole. (See “small group presentations” and the schedule)

Another group that will exist and that you will have access to will include the people who are also leaders of the play you will be a leader of. Since you and the other leaders on this play will most likely be making your large group presentation and writing your papers on, it is important to be in touch with one another.

-Leaders & Co-Leaders: I will assign you a play to be the leader on for our class. Groups will include 1-2 leaders on every play and two co-leaders. It will be possible for you to negotiate with your small group members to re-assign leadership of the texts. That is, if I assign you to be the leader on *Othello*, but you would like to be the leader for *The Tempest* then you must work with your group members to re-assign the leadership of the text. *Your & your group's decision on the play must be turned in, in writing, by February 8.*

Materials and Statement on Electronic devices

Bring paper, books, and writing materials to all classes. While many of our texts are available online, purchase the Arden versions of the text that our class is sharing. Also, please do not only read online versions. Studies demonstrate that readers retain more information when they read physical, not virtual, manifestations of the material. Since all our shared material was created under circumstances different from our own, versions of the plays exist and are different from the ones assigned. We have had incidents in which students cannot read aloud with their group because their materials are not the same. If this happens to you, you will lose participation points.

Be prepared to talk in small and large groups. Bring your tracker sheets -- that is, the materials you are preparing for research -- when they are due to discuss your research with other students and me. Bring yourself to class. Reveal your opinions, questions, concerns, and interests to us.

*I do not allow electronic devices in my class
(except when required by a certain department in the university.)*

Let's be dramatic: We live at a moment when many people cannot seem to survive more than a few minutes without their electronic gadgets. To be less dramatic, when a student texts in class, the student misses out on what else is occurring. That may or may not be important, but what is highly relevant is that student involvement with their electronic devices has a negative impact on class morale. As such, electronic devices will not be allowed in class. This refers to computers, laptops, tablets, smart phones, and all the other wonderfully helpful, horribly tempting devices we surround ourselves with on a day-to-day basis.

Requirements

Written assignments and late papers in general: All written assignments must be typed in MLA format -- single sided, double-spaced, 12-point font, stapled, name on every page, page numbers included. You can refer to Owl Purdue MLA guide for instructions. <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/> Written assignments will include a works cited page, and this page will not count towards the number of pages required. The works cited can, however, be on the last page of the content you turn in, not its own page. Written assignments will be turned in during class, not emailed. I do not read papers online. .

Late assignments will lose 1/3 of possible points for each day, including weekends, they are late. Late assignments that assist the research paper or review of the literature, if turned in so late they receive zero points, will receive feedback but not points.

Please refer to the schedule of readings and assignments for all due dates. Turn in papers on time, in paper, in class. If you are unable to turn your paper in to me on paper during class, please turn the paper copy of it into the English and Comparative Literature Department on the second floor of Arts & Letters before class. Give your paper to one of the great members of our staff & ask them to time-stamp the paper. Do not submit it under my office door; it is unclear whether I will receive it. If you are having difficulties with printers, please work with your group members and or the SDSU library for help.

Informal essay * Due in class, typed, February 9

Assignment: You will write a 2-3 page informal essay in which you respond to the play you have been assigned to lead for our class.

Overview: Early in the semester, before the class reads your play aloud, you will read the play you are assigned on your own and will write and turn in a short, two to three-page response paper on the play. This response paper is relatively informal. In it, you will discuss your interpretation. What do you find interesting about the play? What do you think is particularly noteworthy? What are the quotes that support how your interpretation?

This informal essay will guide your research. Your response will be your first entry into your research questions. For instance, perhaps the sexual harassment Isabella faces in *Measure for Measure* interests you in particular. What have people written about it? That can guide your research questions, keyword searches, and schools of thought that you will use as frameworks. When you perform your research, you will find that you have to revise your original argument, but you can keep ahold of your response as worthy & interesting.

Turn in at least three questions that will promote discussion in your group along with this paper. When it is time for your small group presentation, you will present your informal paper, how you have revised your initial notions because of your research, and you will also pose your discussion questions to your peer group. This will promote conversation, and you will, as a group, present the findings of your discussion to the class. (See small group presentation). Include a works cited.

Literature Review * Due March 25

Assignment: You will write an essay known as a "review of the literature." In our class, this will be a 2-5 page essay that includes both a description of and an argument regarding the

ways scholars have received, discussed, and argued about the play you are the leader of. Since many of the plays we are reading have been studied and written about by unwieldy numbers of scholars, you will focus your review of the literature on the area of research, school of thought, and/or topic you are studying.

Overview: Having written your informal essay about the play for which you are a leader, you have a sense of what is interesting to you about it. Now you will research and read scholarly articles and books about the play and your topic and see how your ideas fit with what scholars have written about that same play.

When you begin your research, you will see that scholars' articles and books always join a pre-existing conversation on a topic. With scholars who write on Shakespeare's plays, that conversation might be about the play, but it might also be about a topic or school of thought. The scholars demonstrate their perspicacity -- their learning, wits, and, well general scholarliness -- by showing that they know what previous scholars said about the topic or the play. This is one of the key ways in which we demonstrate we are, in fact, scholars. Sometimes, the scholars take what has been written before a few new steps forward; sometimes, they break with previous notions.

For example, when scholars write about Shakespeare's play *Pericles*, they invariably mention previous scholars' discoveries regarding the co-writer on the play, George Wilkins. They then take a position on this co-authorship. Or, with Shakespeare's Henry VI plays, after E. M. W. Tillyard wrote about the Tudor myth and the so-called great chain of being, every scholar writing about the Henry VI plays after him referenced Tillyard's work, how other scholars positioned themselves with or against Tillyard's notions, and explained where they positioned themselves in light of the original theory and subsequent scholars' positions.

You will do the same thing in your research paper. However, you first have to learn what the scholarly conversation about your play and/or topic is. So, you will locate, identify, research, read, and master books and articles written by scholars about your assigned play or topic. In your review of the literature essay, you will name, describe, summarize, and analyze ten scholarly sources. Although the main focus of your review of the literature will be descriptive and summative, you will also argue how the scholars responded to one another.

Your literature review should **include probative quotes** from the vast majority of your sources. Your review will include a minimum of ten peer-reviewed, scholarly texts. You will be able to share work & research findings with the other students who are researching your play, even though each student's review will ultimately be unique and reflect individual research interests.

Requirements: Typed, two to five-page paper with complete works cited in MLA format. Includes description and analysis of scholarly reception of topic and/or play.

Tracker Sheets due on three dates:

Tracker sheets for sources 1, 2, and 3: February 11

Tracker sheets for sources 4, 5, and 6: February 25

Tracker sheets for sources 7, 8, 9, 10: March 11

Assignment: Turn in descriptive summaries with complete bibliographic information on each of the ten outside sources you locate in MLA format.

Overview: In order to ensure you have adequate time to locate, identify, review, read, analyze, and synthesize your ten sources for your Literature Review, you will turn in Tracker Sheets on specific dates during the semester. These sheets will track your research. They will include either three or four of the sources you have identified, read, and may or may not use for your final paper. Each tracker sheet will list complete bibliographic information for each of ten sources, a scholarly summary of the source (“abstract”), and a 4-sentence annotation.

The four-sentence annotation states what the **author’s credibility** is, the author’s **school of thought**, a one-line sentence that **sums up** the article, and the intended **audience** for the source.

If you turn your tracker sheets in on time but do not receive as many points as you would like, you may re-submit for full credit. If you do not turn in your tracker sheets on time, you can receive feedback on them, but you will not receive full credit.

Requirements: Minimum one-page for each source, MLA format, demonstrates having read the source, includes quotes and complete bibliographic information.

Midterm: On March 2, you will take an in-class midterm that will cover the content and major interpretive questions on all of our five plays. Details to be announced.

Small Group Presentation: You will present the argument and your interpretation from your informal essay to your group. In your group, your presentation should take at least five but no more than ten minutes. Once you finish, you will also pose at least three of open-ended questions for your group. These questions will promote discussion of the play. You will let me know what your group has discussed, and I will give you the topic to present from your discussion to the class as a whole. This ensures transparency and accountability. In order to ensure your presentation is scholarly, creative, thorough, and probative, you will have 10 minutes to present your discussion points to the class.

Research proposal due April 8

Assignment: Propose in writing the argument you will make for your research paper.

Include how you will deploy the four sources you will use in your argument.

Overview: Your final paper will most likely be an amalgamation between your informal essay and your research. To keep up with this process, you will write a 50-75 word research proposal for your final paper.

Requirements: 50-75 words proposing the major and minor lines of argument, with sources described. Outline, if detailed, is sufficient.

Final Paper due April 29 for *Romeo & Juliet* and *Othello*; May 6 for *Much Ado, Measure*, and *The Tempest*

Assignment: Write an 8- to 10-page thesis-driven argument analyzing your assigned play or an aspect of it.

Overview: Your final paper will argue for a particular interpretation of your play and/or an aspect of it. You will situate your argument in light of the scholarly discussion of your play or the topic you write about. Although you can include up to ten scholarly sources for this

paper, you must use at least four. These sources will be those you have listed, annotated, summarized, and analyzed in your Literature Review.

The final paper will reflect your original interpretation of your play, but it will also reflect your re-envisioning of that original interpretation as a result of the research you have performed.

To make your argument, you will need to include ample, apt, quotes from the play and the sources you deploy. I reward close readings and elaborations of arguments.

Requirements: Minimum 8 pages (2000 words), preferably 10 pages. MLA format. Include complete works cited listing all sources consulted, read, reviewed during the semester.

Class Presentation: You will present your argument from your final paper to the class as a whole. You can include elements from your review of the literature. Your presentation must be rehearsed and take between 10 and 12 minutes. Include visual material, whether film clips, images, or commercial presentation materials (Powerpoint is the most familiar of these). Visuals should complement and not overwhelm the presentation.

Quiz: To ensure you read the syllabus thoroughly & understand class requirements, as well as keep up to date with the reading, you will take at least one quiz...on the syllabus. Depending on student participation and involvement, there may be additional quizzes.

Changes of dates: If you cannot make a presentation, whether for your small group or the class as a whole, please notify me as soon as possible.

Additional Opportunities

We have the great opportunity to see live performances of scenes from our plays during one of the last days of the semester. Stay tuned for performance dates.

Required statement: SDSU Goals: Explorations class

The university requires I inform you of the goals for this class. Here is its statement:

Courses that fulfill the 9-unit requirement for Explorations in General Education take the goals and skills of GE Foundations courses to a more advanced level. Your three upper division courses in Explorations will provide greater interdisciplinary, more complex, and in-depth theory, deeper investigation of local problems, and wider awareness of global challenges. More extensive reading, written analysis involving complex comparisons, well-developed arguments, considerable bibliography, and use of technology are appropriate in many Explorations courses. Completing this course will help you to do the following in greater depth:

- 1) Analyze written, visual, or performed texts in the humanities and fine arts with sensitivity to their diverse cultural contexts and historical moments
- 2) Describe various aesthetic and other value systems and the ways they are communicated across time and cultures
- 3) Argue from multiple perspectives about issues in the humanities that have personal and global relevance

4) Demonstrate the ability to approach complex problems and ask complex questions drawing upon knowledge of the humanities.

I agree with the goals the university sets for you with this class. I just think they forgot to let you know how fascinating, enjoyable, wonderful and fun it is to learn these things. To paraphrase Edith Hamilton, there is great joy in becoming an educated person. It means being able to engage critically and creatively with the world around you in ways that are sophisticated but also that just have to do with you and your personal approach. I suppose I can't speak for you, but I get to see you thinking and feeling your way through these notions, and I find what you have to say very interesting. It's really pretty amazing.

Required Statement: Students with Disabilities

If you are a student with a disability and believe you will need accommodations for this class, it is your responsibility to contact Student Disability Services at (619) 594-6473. To avoid any delay in the receipt of your accommodations, contact Student Disability Services as soon as possible. Please note that accommodations are not retroactive, and that accommodations based upon disability cannot be provided until you have presented your instructor with an accommodation letter from Student Disability Services. Your cooperation is appreciated.

Negotiations, Re-Envisioning and Revising Your Topic

As you research your Literature Review & Final Paper, your interpretation of the play will change. This is a natural response to research, re-reading, learning, and discussion. You may find that you would like to focus your paper on a different play [or topic] from the one assigned. It will be possible for you and me to discuss this; indeed, I expect we will. However, it is also required that you do discuss this with me. Stay in touch about your research through the Literature Review, Tracker Sheet, and Research Proposal process and also during informal discussions during class, in email, and during office hours. When you alter your argument, do not simply switch topics. Stay in dialogue with me & pitch me a thesis statement. I am open to discussion, and I can help with research possibilities.

Texts

Purchase the Arden version of the play through either the campus bookstore or KB Books.

Romeo and Juliet

Othello

Much Ado about Nothing

Measure for Measure

The Tempest

Optional: In lieu of additional texts, consult <http://www.luminarium.org/renlit/renaissanceinfo.htm> for background information. Hyland's *An Introduction* is solid. Papp's *Shakespeare Alive* is fun.

Works Cited

Laird, Benjamin. "Shakespeare, The Land of the Dead: Review." *Applause! Meter*. 29 March, 2014. <http://applause-meter.com/2013/03/29/land-of-the-dead-review/> Web. Downloaded 13 January, 2015.