

English 403: Shakespeare, The Early Works

Mondays/Wednesdays 11:00am - 12:15pm, Tawes Hall 0201

Professor: Scott Trudell
trudell@umd.edu

Office hours: Mondays and Wednesdays, 3:30-4:30pm, and by appointment
Tawes Hall 3243

This is a course on the early career of William Shakespeare. We will attend closely to language and meter, spending a substantial section of the course on Shakespeare's sonnets and his narrative poem *Venus and Adonis*. We will also think carefully about the performative dimensions of Shakespeare's work, tracking the intersection between written and theatrical traditions in comedies, histories and tragedies. Throughout the course, we will ask how and why embodied performance becomes so prominent and dynamic a vehicle for Shakespeare's art, how the theater engages with its historical and political moment, and what ideas, themes, philosophies and emotions emerge in Shakespeare's work as he rises to prominence during the 1590s.

This course requires immersing yourself in Shakespeare in a new way. Many of you will know Shakespeare from other courses and contexts: plan to go further. Work on drawing connections between Shakespeare and contemporary culture, reimagining his work in performance, and reading closely, with fresh eyes.

Books:

- Margreta de Grazia and Stanley Wells, eds. *The New Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare*. 2nd ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010. ISBN: 978-0521713931. **Make sure to buy the second edition.**
- You have a few options for what Shakespeare text to use.

I suggest purchasing the Pelican edition of the complete works, since you will likely consult passages from plays not on the syllabus, and we will sometimes flip back to texts from earlier in the semester. *The Complete Pelican Shakespeare* is available cheaply online and good to own:

William Shakespeare. *The Complete Pelican Shakespeare*. Ed. Stephen Orgel and A. R. Braunmuller. Penguin, 2002. ISBN: 978-0141000589.

Another option is to use separate editions of the texts we will be reading. You might want to do this if you anticipate a problem lugging around a large book. This is also a good option for you if you are new to Shakespeare. The Folger Shakespeare Library editions (ed. Mowat and Werstine) provide explanations and notes that are very helpful for beginners, and they are inexpensive:

A Midsummer Night's Dream, ISBN: 978-0743477543

Romeo and Juliet, ISBN: 978-0743477116

The Merchant of Venice, ISBN: 978-1439191163

Richard III, ISBN: 978-0743482844

Henry IV, Part 1, ISBN: 978-0743485043

Much Ado About Nothing, ISBN: 978-0743482752
Shakespeare's Sonnets and Poems, ISBN: 978-0743273282
Julius Caesar, ISBN: 978-0140714545

Alternatively, you may use recent editions published by Riverside, Oxford, Signet, Cambridge, Norton, Arden or the recent Pelican individual editions edited by Orgel and Braunnmuller. **Remember that, in addition to the plays on the syllabus, you will need editions of the sonnets as well as *Venus and Adonis*.**

Check other editions with me in advance: online editions and some printed editions are not acceptable. The edition of Shakespeare you use makes a big difference - you need a recent, professional edition including notes and introductory material.

Check www.addall.com and www.amazon.com for used copies.

I will distribute all other readings as handouts, and they are available for download on our ELMS course site.

Course requirements:

- Participation (15%)
- Reading quizzes and sonnet memorization (10%)
- Weekly blog posts and comments (15%)
- First paper, 4-5 pages (15%)
- Research paper, 8-9 pages (30%)
- Final exam (15%)

Policies

- Attendance and participation are extremely important in this course.
- I grade participation based on thoughtful, consistent engagement with the class. This is not simply about speaking often: more important is how you listen and respond to your peers.
- I take attendance daily. Absences that are not excused under University policy will result in lowered or failing participation grades.
- Reading quizzes begin on time at the beginning of class, and they cannot be made up.
- If you miss class for any reason, follow these three steps:
 - 1) You are required to post a reaction to that day's readings on the course blog. Make-up posts are in addition to your weekly blog postings (they do not count as your post for the week). Post within three days of the class you missed and title it "Make-up post." Failing to complete make-up posts will result in lower or failing grades for participation and blog performance.
 - 2) You are responsible for obtaining notes. Find a partner and exchange contact information early in the semester to help with this.
 - 3) You are responsible for following the University policy on medically necessitated absence. For further information, see <<http://www.president.umd.edu/policies/docs/V-100G.pdf>>

- Turn off phones and computers completely (not to vibrate or silent) and leave them in your bag. See me if you require an exception.
- You are responsible for following the university code on academic honesty. If I detect plagiarism, I will report it to the Honor Council, and you will be subject to receiving an "XF" for the course, with the notation on your transcript, "Failure due to academic dishonesty." For information on plagiarism, visit: <http://www.lib.umd.edu/guides/citing.html>

What to expect:

You will be required to memorize a sonnet of your choice. You will write down your sonnet from memory halfway through the semester, and again (the same sonnet) in the final weeks of class.

Reading quizzes will be unannounced, but the only preparation necessary is to complete the assigned reading for each class. Failing quizzes after having done the reading is a warning sign of comprehension problems and/or a warning sign that you have not read closely enough. Those of you who are new to Shakespeare: it is normal to have comprehension trouble right away, and I emphasize improvement when I tabulate your final reading quiz grades. If you are having comprehension trouble, email me to make an appointment or drop into my office hours.

Your final research project will involve pairing a Shakespeare text on the syllabus with another play - a play written before 1640, that is not by Shakespeare, that you have not read before and that a classmate has not already chosen.

The final exam will take the form of five short-essay questions, each asking you to pair two texts on the syllabus. The exam touches on many texts and rewards those who have read attentively engaged actively throughout the course. Halfway through the semester I will distribute a sample exam so that you are able to practice your responses on the blog and on your own. You will be allowed to use your books and your marginal notes (though not notebooks or loose sheets of paper) on the exam - so it will help to write or paste notes in the margins during the semester.

If you have a disability that requires accommodation, please let me know during the first two weeks of class.

If there are other hardships that will affect your course performance, I encourage you to me know early in the semester. We can discuss strategies for succeeding in this course.

Pay close attention to the due dates on the syllabus: most of your writing assignments have deadlines outside of class, in electronic form.

Blog requirement:

Please bookmark our course blog and sign up for email alerts:

english403fall13.wordpress.com

You are required to contribute to the blog at least once per week. Vary your entries so that some are posts and some are comments. Each week's contribution should add up to one substantial post, or a few shorter comments.

I encourage you to be informal and creative. Try posting further thoughts about something that came up during class discussion. Or, bring up a passage that we didn't discuss in class. Or, try out an idea you have been mulling over in a paper. Experiment with pairing texts on the syllabus with texts from other courses, literature of other periods, or media from contemporary culture. For example, you might link to a clip on YouTube that helps to illuminate something at stake in an early modern play. Make sure to explain how your pairing helps us understand the course text in a new way.

I will occasionally provide blog prompts, but in general I'd like you to generate the discussion. Any topic that relates to the issues of the course is welcome. This is your chance to set the agenda for discussion: if there are issues you'd like to talk about in class, bring them up on the blog!

Please make your contribution **by midnight Tuesday each week**. Make sure to read the blog regularly and respond to your peers. To make a post, it is best to use the "Write a new post" link, in the "Get to work" column on the right (using the drop-down menu sometimes leads to technical problems). Don't forget to comment as well: your grade will depend upon how thoughtfully you respond to your classmates as well as the quality of your own posts.

Wednesday, September 4

- Introduction
- Christopher Marlowe, Prologue to *Tamburlaine the Great, Part I*

Monday, September 9

- *A Midsummer Night's Dream*: Act 1-2

Tuesday, September 10

- Blog post due by midnight

Wednesday, September 11

- *A Midsummer Night's Dream*: Acts 3-4

Monday, September 16

- *A Midsummer Night's Dream*: Act 5
- Tiffany Stern, "The Theatre of Shakespeare's London," chapter 4 in *The New Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare (NCC)*

Tuesday, September 17

- Blog post due by midnight

Wednesday, September 18

- *Romeo and Juliet*: Acts 1-2

Monday, September 23

- *Romeo and Juliet*: Act 3
- Michael Neill, "Shakespeare's Tragedies," chapter 9 in *NCC*

Tuesday, September 24

- Blog post due by midnight

Wednesday, September 25

- *Romeo and Juliet*: Acts 4-5
- Stephen Greenblatt, "The Traces of Shakespeare's Life," chapter 1 in *NCC*

Monday, September 30

- Sonnets 1, 12, 15, 18, 20, 29, 31
- Stephen Orgel, "Shakespeare, Sexuality and Gender," chapter 15 in *NCC*

Tuesday, October 1

- Blog post due by midnight

Wednesday, October 2

- Philip Sidney: *Astrophel and Stella*, Sonnets 1 and 45 (handout)
- Edmund Spenser: *Amoretti*, Sonnets 1 and 75 (handout)
- Shakespeare: Sonnets 33, 35, 42, 55, 60

Sunday, October 6

- Draft of first paper due: minimum 3-4 pages uploaded to ELMS **by 5pm**.

Monday, October 7

- Revision workshop. Bring a hard copy of your draft to class.

Tuesday, October 8

- Post a paragraph from your paper on the blog by midnight

Wednesday, October 9

- Sonnets 71, 73, 86, 94, 106, 107, 127, 128
- Colin Burrow, "Shakespeare the Poet," chapter 7 in *NCC*

Sunday, October 13

- First paper due: **upload to ELMS by midnight**

Monday, October 14

- Decide which sonnet you will memorize
- Sonnets 129, 130, 136, 138, 144, 147, 152

Tuesday, October 15

- Blog post due by midnight

Wednesday, October 16

- Shakespeare: *Venus and Adonis* (read the whole poem by this date)
- Ovid, from *Metamorphoses* (handout)

Monday, October 21

- Shakespeare: *Venus and Adonis* (continued)
- Coppélia Kahn, "Self and Eros in *Venus and Adonis*" (handout)

Tuesday, October 22

- **Research agenda due** (post on the "Research projects" page of the blog)

Wednesday, October 23

- *Much Ado About Nothing*, Acts 1-2

Monday, October 28

- **Sonnet memorization due**
- *Much Ado About Nothing*, Acts 3-5
- Katherine Rowe, "Shakespeare and Media History," chapter 20 in *NCC*
- Have a look at the film adaptations of the play, dir. Kenneth Branagh (1993) and dir. Joss Whedon (2013) available in the "Library Video Reserves" module on our ELMS site.

Tuesday, October 29

- Focus your blog post this week on film adaptations of Shakespeare, and include clips and links (due by midnight)

Wednesday, October 30

- Research exercise: meet in Tawes 0224
- *Richard III*: Act 1
- Ton Hoenselaars, "Shakespeare's English History Plays," chapter 10 in *NCC*

Monday, November 4

- **Textual reports due** (in hard copy)
- *Richard III*: Acts 2-3
- Flash presentations

Tuesday, November 5

- **Wikipedia report due** (post on the blog by midnight)

Wednesday, November 6

- *Richard III*: Acts 4-5
- Flash presentations

Monday, November 11

- *Henry IV, Part 1*: Act 1
- Paul Prescott, "Shakespeare and Popular Culture," chapter 18 in *NCC*

Tuesday, November 12

- Blog post due by midnight

Wednesday, November 13

- *Henry IV, Part 1*: Acts 2-3

- Annotated bibliography **hard copy due in class**

Monday, November 19

- *Henry IV, Part 1*: Acts 4-5

Tuesday, November 20

- Blog post due by midnight

Wednesday, November 21

- *The Merchant of Venice*: Act 1
- Jonathan Gil Harris, "Shakespeare and Race," chapter 14 in *NCC*

Monday, November 25

- *The Merchant of Venice*: Acts 2-3

Tuesday, November 26

- First version of final paper due: **minimum 6-7 pages uploaded to ELMS by 5pm**
- No blog post due by this week

Wednesday, November 27

- Revision workshop: **bring a hard copy of your draft to class**

Monday, December 2

- *The Merchant of Venice*: Acts 4-5

Tuesday, December 3

- Blog post due by midnight

Wednesday, December 4

- **Sonnet memorization (second round)**
- *Julius Caesar*, Acts 1-2

Monday, December 9

- Course evaluations: meet in Tawes 0224
- *Julius Caesar*, Acts 3-4

Tuesday, December 10

- Final paper due: **upload to ELMS by midnight**
- No blog post due this week

Wednesday, December 11

- *Julius Caesar*, Act 5
- Heather James, "Shakespeare's Classical Plays," chapter 11 in *NCC*

Wednesday, December 18, 8:00-10:00am, in our normal classroom

- Final exam: bring all Shakespeare editions