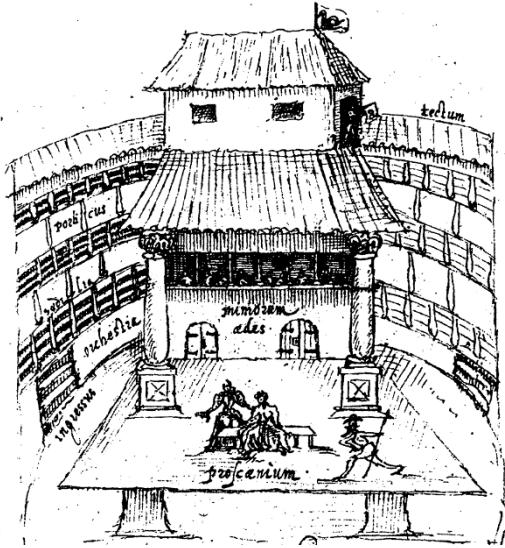


LIT 2501: Shakespeare



Bard College, Fall 2015
M/W 10:10-11:30
Olin 202
Moodle Key: **sonnetsF15**

Course texts:

Note: All texts are The Pelican Shakespeare

Richard III
Shakespeare's Sonnets
As You Like It
Henry IV, part 1
Twelfth Night
Macbeth
Othello
The Tempest

Course Description

“Shakespeare” is an icon, an industry, an aesthetic category, and, admittedly, sometimes a force of Western cultural hegemony. This course endeavors to strip away the quotation marks around “Shakespeare” and build, from the ground up, a firsthand understanding of the dramatic works of a talented poet and playwright who lived during a time of tremendous social, political, artistic, and intellectual upheaval. We will start without any assumptions, and pursue our curiosity about why Shakespeare’s plays are worth reading and why they have achieved such wide-ranging significance. Through cooperative and rigorous close readings, in-class performances, and viewings of eight representative plays, this class will explore what Shakespeare’s work has to say about broad topics such as power, gender, class, race, identity, and knowledge. What makes Shakespeare’s plays unique? What makes them endure? We will explore these broad overarching questions through more direct, local inquiries about how Shakespeare’s art of representation works, what his plays have to say about human nature, and how historical, social, and philosophical issues inform his writing.

In this course, you will:

- **Learn about Shakespeare’s writings as the products of a specific historical period with its own methods, practices, and assumptions** by reading primary and secondary materials about early modern England.
- **Develop your skills as a close-reader and interpreter of Shakespeare’s plays and poems** by engaging in class discussions, directly considering the design and structure of a play in written assignments, and by writing essays focused on form and the interrelations between form and history.
- **Adapt and consider adaptations of Shakespearean theater** by designing and enacting for the class a group adaptation of one of Shakespeare’s works and responding to others’ adaptations.
- **Demonstrate your knowledge about Shakespeare’s plays and their cultural environment** by preparing executing a research-oriented essay rooted in your own interests and taking a capstone final exam exploring the course’s themes.

Requirements and Policies

1. Attendance and Participation (15%)
2. First Paper (20%)
3. Final Paper (25%)
4. Four Short Assignments (20%)
5. Presentation & Write-up (10%)
6. Final Exam (10%)

Course Etiquette and Contacting Me

- Please call me Adhaar.
- You don't need to make an appointment with me if you come to see me during office hours. The best way to reach me, aside from dropping in during office hours, is via email. I am generally pretty quick to respond via email, but will not be responsible for immediately answering emails between 8pm and 10am, or during the weekend. Bear this in mind!
- This is a discussion-oriented course, so please be conscious of how your behavior affects other members of the class. This means: do not fall asleep in class. Do not have side conversations. Turn off your cell-phone. You may not bring food to class, but covered drinks are fine.
- Bring your book to class! They're tiny little plays! You may use laptops/iPads etc., but only for note-taking and for referring to assignments/responses. I reserve the right to ask you to close your electronic devices if I think it is unnecessary or you are being disruptive and/or inattentive. (In which case it will be super awkward. Avoid being disruptive or inattentive.)

Books: There are dozens of iterations of Shakespeare's plays, each with their own sets of assumptions and editorial decisions. Please purchase the editions I have ordered for this course –individual texts from *The Pelican Shakespeare* – so that we are all on the same page (quite literally) with one another when we refer to the texts. We will discuss in class why the variation in different editions of his plays is such an important issue!

Attendance: This is a very discussion and interaction oriented course, so your attendance and preparation are **essential** to its success. Any student who misses more than two classes (for any reason) will see their overall grade significantly lowered for each missed class. You should arrive to class on time with your books, having completed the readings assigned for that day.

Papers, Extensions, Revisions, and Lateness: Papers must be submitted on time and formatted to the specifications indicated on the formatting guidelines sheet available on Moodle2. Unless you are granted an extension, papers will be docked 1 letter grade (an A- becomes a B-) for each day the paper is late, starting on the first day. Please see the attached “Extensions, Revisions, and Lateness” document for more details.

Short Assignments: These assignments will not be essays, but will be shorter written prompts asking you to engage with and demonstrate your facility with different aspects of Shakespeare's works – i.e., poetics, theatrical effects, adaptations, and historical background. These assignments are explicitly intended to be useful for you as you prepare your papers! See them as ways to test out ideas and get some feedback from me!

Presentations: Starting with our second play – *As You Like It* – we will begin our discussion on one of our class days by viewing the performance or adaptation of a scene by a group of classmates. This performance will be critiqued by your fellow students, and you will do a write-up reflecting on the

experience and the decisions you've made. Think about which play you'll want to sign up for, and then, when we have groups finalized, come and talk with me about your plans!

Final Exam: The final exam will be held on the last day of class and will be an open-book exam. No laptops, notebooks, or other materials will be allowed. The exam will consist of fact-based and identification questions, but the bulk of it will be an essay question that will require you to cite from and analyze course texts.

Academic Honesty: This course is designed to help you become a more confident reader of Shakespearean theater. Your reactions to the course materials, therefore, must first be your own. In all written work, including weekly responses, you are encouraged to flesh out your own ideas before consulting other thinkers; if you do consult others (as you will be required to do on the research paper), you must cite them appropriately (see citation guidelines document). **There is a zero-tolerance policy for plagiarism.** Instances of plagiarism will cause the assignment to receive an F; a repeated instance will risk an F in the course. For more on the definition of plagiarism and Bard's official policy see:

<http://inside.bard.edu/doso/handbook/index.php?aid=1201&sid=705>

Grading for this course is described in further detail on the course Moodle2 site, in the section titled *Grades*. Also on the site is a standard rubric for your essay assignments; your grade is not wholly determined by this rubric, but it will be a useful tool as you design and execute your assignments.

Course Schedule

Please note: schedule subject to change, but not without fair warning

All response prompts/assignments will be on Moodle2!

Week	Class	Topic / Text	Assigned Reading (to be done by date assigned!)	Written Assignments
1	08/31	Introduction to Shakespearean Theater		
	09/02	<i>Richard III</i>	Acts 1-2	
2	09/07	<i>Richard III</i>	Acts 3-5	
	09/09	<i>Richard III</i>	See Moodle2 for reading	
	09/11			Short Assignment 1 due
3	09/14	Close Reading Workshop	See Moodle 2 for reading	
	09/16	The Sonnets	1-20	
4	09/21	The Sonnets	21-126	
	09/23	The Sonnets	127-154	
5	09/28	<i>As You Like It</i>	Acts 1-3	
	09/30	<i>As You Like It</i>	Acts 4-5	
	10/02			Short Assignment 2 due
6	10/05	<i>As You Like It</i> Presentation group:	See Moodle2 for reading	
	10/07	<i>Henry IV pt. 1</i>	Acts 1-2	
7	10/12	FALL BREAK		

	10/14	<i>Henry IV pt. 1</i>	Acts 3-5	
	10/16			Essay 1 Due (5 pages)
8	10/19	<i>Henry IV pt. 1</i> Presentation group:	See Moodle 2 for reading	
	10/21	<i>Twelfth Night</i>	Acts 1-3	
9	10/26	<i>Twelfth Night</i>	Acts 4-5	
	10/28	<i>Twelfth Night</i> Presentation group:	See Moodle2 for reading	
10	11/02	<i>Macbeth</i>	Acts 1-3	
	11/04	<i>Macbeth</i>	Acts 4-5	
	11/06			Short Assignment 3 due
11	11/09	<i>Macbeth</i> Presentation group:	See Moodle2 for reading	
	11/11	<i>Othello</i>	Acts 1-2	
12	11/16	<i>Othello</i>	Acts 4-5	
	11/18	<i>Othello</i> Presentation group:	See Moodle2 for reading	
13	11/23	<i>The Tempest</i>	Acts 1-2	
	11/25	Open class		Short Assignment 4 due
14	11/30	<i>The Tempest</i>	Acts 3-5	
	12/02	<i>The Tempest</i> Presentation group:	See Moodle2 for reading	
15	12/07	Final Exam		
	12/09	Advising Day		
16	12/14	Completion Days		
	12/16	Completion Days		Final Papers Due

Revision, Extension, and Lateness

What (I assume) you care about most, academically and intellectually:

1. Improving your ability to think carefully about and analyze texts.
2. Sharing your ideas in clear, focused, persuasive ways.

What course assignments are designed to help you accomplish:

1. Develop and evaluate your ability to think carefully about and analyze texts.
2. Assess whether your ideas are being shared in clear, focused, persuasive ways.
3. Understand that thinking and writing take time, demand patience and are hard work. As a result, managing your time wisely and producing writing in a responsible manner are also integral to what you must learn in this class and in college in general.

So, in case it isn't clear: if you manage your time well, we can talk entirely about what I think matters most to you. My commitment to helping you do #1 & #2 depends on #3, and has led me to institute a course-wide revision policy:

REVISION POLICY

You are allowed to revise and resubmit every written assignment if you so choose, in order to receive a better grade or improve your writing.

Some caveats:

- The deadline for these revisions will be 2 weeks from the day I give you your grades on the initial iteration.
- In order to write a revision, you *must meet with me personally* to talk about what you plan to do as you revise. It doesn't have to take long; we can just make sure you understand my comments.
- The timeline for doing revisions expires on the day the final paper is due at the end of term.
- You are not guaranteed a better grade on the revision. It will be graded as a standalone piece of writing. You are, however, guaranteed not to receive a *lower* grade if your revision is a disaster. So, be ambitious and take risks in your revision; good writing, unfortunately, is not always reflective of the effort that went into it.

If you submit your essays on time, you'll get a maximum amount of time to do revisions, and you'll get to focus exactly on what you're in this class to focus on. I understand, however, that your schedules are hectic and sometimes these deadlines are a burden. So, I have what I believe is a fairly generous extension policy:

EXTENSION POLICY

For all assignments that will not be subject to in-class peer-review (and I'll let you know beforehand which those are), you are entitled to an extension if you request one.

Caveats:

- You must request your extension **at minimum 48 hours before the assignment is due**. To clarify: if the assignment is due at 10:10am on a Wednesday, you must ask me for an extension at the latest by 10:10am on Monday, and we can then have a conversation about when it would make sense for the new deadline to be set (usually, I give up to 5 days).
- You are still allowed to revise an essay you submit after receiving an extension, but the deadline for your revision will be the same as it is for everyone else. You might get comments on your essay back after everyone else, so you'll have less of a window for that revision (and to meet with me to discuss it beforehand).

So now let's talk about what it means to submit an assignment late, and what happens if you make the unwise decision to submit an assignment late...

☠ LATENESS POLICY ☠

The assignment will be docked 1/3 of a letter grade (an A becomes A-; a B+/B becomes B/B-) for each day the assignment is late.

What "late" means: if an assignment is due "in class," it is due at precisely the moment that I say "hey gimme your papers" in class. If you are late to class and don't hand it in at that moment, it is already 1 day late. It is 2 days late at 12:01 after midnight that night, and so on. If your printer is unreliable or you don't have time to print it, EMAIL ME THE ESSAY to safeguard yourself and avoid lateness. Assignments requested in hard copy will be accepted via email, but won't be formally graded until I also receive a hard copy.

More details:

- If an assignment is at all late, you will not be allowed to revise it. Oh snap.
- After 10 days of lateness, the assignment will automatically receive an F ($100 - [10 * 3.3333] = 66.6666$). Though of course it can also get an F if it is less than 10 days late and also, um, not an A+ paper. An F goes into my grade calculations as a 65; you won't get lower than a 65 on an assignment you complete and submit (whenever it is handed in).
- If you never submit the assignment at all, it goes into the gradebook as a 0. If the assignment is worth 20% of your grade, an F will still get you 13% ($.65 * 20$). A 0 will get you 0%, and the highest possible grade you can get in the class (all else being perfect) will be B- (80%).

Don't try to game this system.

- If you submit a file that I cannot open or a corrupted file, I will send you an email asking you to submit it again in a format I can work with. If you don't respond to this email within 3 hours, the assignment will be marked late. I prefer .docx/.doc/.pdf, or a Google-docs link. If you can avoid it, please don't submit .pages documents.
- One obvious hole in this system is that you can submit an unfinished draft "on time" and know that you'll have an opportunity to revise. Since you can't revise something submitted late, you might choose to send me something unfinished rather than risk losing the opportunity to revise. This, actually, is okay—the goal here, after all, is for you to understand the revision process and the stages that writing must go through. So, if you cobble together an outline and just send me that, yeah, you'll get a really bad grade on it, but you can revise it *and* you'll get helpful comments from me. Submit *something*. Start early and give me *something we can work with together*. That's what this is all about.
- HOWEVER: if you submit, like, a single sentence or a paragraph, or some random musings that I determine are not actually a plan for an essay but a panicked last-second spewing (and this is basically up to my judgment), it'll still count as late. And I'll be pretty salty about it.

NOTE: I reserve the right to adjust this system as I see fit, but all adjustments will be made in students' favor (I will never change the rules to punish you more than is stated here, but I might decide not to be as strict as it says here if I so choose).

Rationale

Please realize that grading essays is work and takes time, and that my ability to grade your papers effectively requires careful planning. Getting a late essay means getting something I have to set aside time for later in my week, and I have other classes to teach and other work to grade. I want you to get your work back quickly, so you can plan the next step along with me. To ensure I do that effectively, I need to get your assignments on time. Moreover, the better you meet deadlines, the easier it will be to revise and learn from the writing process. Also, it's frankly just important to meet deadlines!