ENG 3802-002: Shakespeare

C Wharram
Eastern Illinois University

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Welcome to ENGLISH 3802, a course designed to provide a sustained gaze at a selection of Shakespeare’s vast oeuvre. Since this course is intended to be an introduction to Shakespeare, I do not expect you to have a critical familiarity with the Bard’s plays. I do hope that some of you will have read one or two plays at some point in your educational careers—perhaps Romeo and Juliet or Hamlet. In choosing the works for this course, I have leaned toward thematic coherence rather than scope. Shakespeare wrote around thirty-nine plays: an attempt to survey these works would therefore be doomed to utter superficiality in the fifteen weeks we have available to us.

Shakespeare’s plays are generally divided into four types: the comedies, tragedies, histories, and romances. This course concentrates on the comedies for a variety of reasons, not the least of which is the fact that, despite their broad appeal to audiences of both the Elizabethan period and today, they have been considered lesser than the more “serious” histories and tragedies. The question we may begin to ask ourselves is: why, if we enjoy comedy so much, do we have such a difficult time thinking and writing critically (or analytically) about it?

It may come as a surprise to some of you that Shakespeare never intended for his plays to be read any more than the Farrelly brothers expect to sell many screenplays for their movies. In a certain way, then, it is unnatural to be reading these plays—we should truly be watching them, or, perhaps, performing them. Since this would constitute a somewhat too radical shift from EIU classroom norms, we will, instead, think about possible ways of making our classroom experience a little more theatrical, or dramatic. In any case, we must always keep in mind that the plays we are studying were never meant to be read as closet dramas.

Having made this disclaimer with regard to the plays, I want to note that we will be starting the course with the sonnets, pieces Shakespeare indeed intended for a reading public. Why begin with the sonnets? Firstly, they are quite short, giving us a chance to dive into the Bard’s language without having to read an entire play in two days. Secondly, the sonnets have become such crucial writing in our aesthetic heritage—who has not heard the words “Shall I compare thee to a summer’s day”—that, in my opinion, it is important we understand the context from which they came. The sonnets are so deeply misunderstood that it may be difficult to convince you of another way of reading this series of poems. We shall see.
The final play we will study in this course is *The Tempest*, one of Shakespeare’s late works. Critics have grouped *The Tempest* under the category of the Romances, a set of plays written between 1607 and Shakespeare’s death in 1616 which includes *The Winter’s Tale*, *Pericles*, and *Cymbeline*. We will read *The Tempest* as a sort of deformed version of the Comedy: it will provide us with the opportunity to scrutinize some of the elements of comedy in a relatively grotesque form. *The Comedy of Errors* and *The Taming of the Shrew* are early comedies, written around 1592 and not studied in the classroom as often as the great tragedies. The others—*Twelfth Night* and *Much Ado About Nothing*—are often staged, have each been filmed recently, and are amongst the most beloved of Shakespeare’s works.

**Required Texts**


You are not, however, required to use this heavy textbook. Most of the plays are likely to be found at used bookstores or online (try half.com). Purchasing these books, at a modest cost, will allow you to take notes in your books. If you order a number of copies (of more than one play or find some classmates to buy multiple copies of the same play), you will save on shipping costs.


**ALL ASSIGNMENTS AND EXAMS MUST BE COMPLETED TO PASS THE COURSE**

**Academic honesty:** Students are responsible for knowing Eastern Illinois University regulations and policies regarding academic honesty. Plagiarism will likely result in your failing the course and in further action by the university. Here is the English Department’s statement on plagiarism:

Any teacher who discovers an act of plagiarism — “The appropriation or imitation of the language, ideas, and/or thoughts of another author, and representation of them as one’s own original work” (Random House Dictionary of the English Language) — has the right and the responsibility to impose upon the guilty student an appropriate penalty, up to and including immediate assignments, of a grade of F for the assigned essay and a grade of F for the course, and to report the incident to the Judicial Affairs Office.

**Paper Policies**

Papers—and all other assignments—are due at the beginning of class. **Late papers will not be commented upon, and be marked a half grade lower for every class period late.** Essays turned in a week past the deadline will be given a “zero,” but must nevertheless be submitted in order to pass the course.

Your paper should be stapled and include page numbers. Format: 12-point Times New Roman font, double-spaced, with one-inch margins.

**Absence Policy:**

When you are absent—especially when you are frequently absent—two things happen. First, your participation grade drops substantially. Second, you naturally fall behind in understanding course material and neither the class nor the Professor can catch you up on everything missed in a day’s class. **YOU need to decide when it is absolutely necessary to miss class.** Be wise. It bears repeating: you cannot make up missed work and late assignments will be penalized. **Whether these are excused or unexcused absences does not matter for this course.** Being late for class will be counted as an absence.

If you are late for or miss more than five (5) class meetings, you cannot pass this course. If you think you will be late for or miss more than five classes, you should strongly reconsider registering for this class. Once you have missed six classes, you are welcome to continue visiting the class, but you will receive a failure on your transcript.
Emailing Policy:
I want to get to know you and your work this semester. Thus I ask that you call me or stop by my office during office hours (or scheduled times) so that we can talk. DO NOT EMAIL ME TO ASK FOR AN "UPDATE" ON MISSED ASSIGNMENTS, OR TO EXPLAIN AN ABSENCE. Working groups will be assigned so that you can contact group members for notes and missed work.

Requirements
All assignments and exams must be turned in to pass the course.

Sonnet paper (10%)
Shrew paper (5%)
Annotated bibliography (10%)
The "other" assignment (10%)
Final research paper (30%)
Collaborative Pedagogical Exercise (5%)
Midterm and Final Exams (5% and 10%)
Participation (15%)

Sonnet Paper (10%)
This first paper is intended to give you the opportunity to demonstrate your ability to write an original critical paper on a very short piece of writing (i.e., fourteen lines of poetry). You will write a two- to three-page analysis of the rhetorical strategy that you see at work in your chosen sonnet.

Shrew Paper (5%)
TBA.

The "other" Assignment (10%)
You will need to complete an assignment of your own creation sometime during the term. The assignment is up to you, but I will want to discuss it with you beforehand. Class time will be set aside for those who prepare something spectacular (or audible).

Collaborative Pedagogical Exercise (5%)
For our study on The Tempest, you will collaborate with one or two other classmates to prepare a lesson on the play, which you will present in Week 14 or 15. No use of power-point allowed.

Annotated Bibliography (10%)
By Week 12, you will have found three critical works (i.e., secondary sources) on any one of the plays we will read in this course. These articles should be at least ten pages in length. You should "annotate" these works by summarizing the main argument presented in each essay (approx. ½ page each, single-spaced, due in Week 12). You own critical interests should determine which play you decide to research (i.e., I would recommend you reading all the plays before you decide, and not make an arbitrary decision that you might later regret.) Your annotations will be graded on your ability to summarize and analyze an article accurately, clearly, and interestingly. You should present your ideas in no more than four paragraphs; each paragraph should have one clear purpose (e.g., introduce context and thesis, summarize points and evidence, analyze effectiveness). Your paragraphs should follow the organizational principals of topic sentence, logical order, and coherence. As always, I am looking for accuracy in spelling, grammar, and proofreading, and a clear writing style.

You will need to hand in a photocopy of the first page of each of the articles you annotate.

Final Research Paper (30%)
Your work in the course should be directed towards the final paper, a six- to eight-page paper on one of Shakespeare's plays. You will be responsible for creating your own topic, but I am always available to help with ideas during office hours, and appointments can be arranged outside these times.

Midterm and Final Exams (5% and 10%)
The exams will verify your engagement with the class material through identification and short-answer questions.
Class Participation (15%)
There will be a number of required, yet ungraded assignments throughout the quarter, constituting a substantial portion your class-participation grade. I will expect you to come to class having read the material, and with questions or comments on the readings. Some of the course material may be quite tough slogging; you should pinpoint specific moments of reading difficulty, and query me (“test” me, if you will) about them. If you attend class without reading the texts carefully and completely, you will almost certainly fail the two exams, and your class-participation grade will suffer immensely. Since the final paper will be much easier to write after we discuss the plays, your grade for this assignment will likewise be compromised if you come to class ill-prepared.

Important disclaimers...

Conduct
Instructors are responsible for maintaining order and a positive learning environment in the classroom. Students whose behavior is disruptive either to the instructor or to other students may be required to discontinue course activities and to cancel the course registration (or be disenrolled). In addition, students may be subject to disciplinary action.

Grades
Your instructor sets the requirements and grading criteria for specific assignments. Here are general standards for grades:

- A = Achievement that is outstanding and unique
- B = Achievement that is significantly above the level necessary to meet the requirements
- C = Assignment meets the basic requirements in every respect
- D = Assignment meets only some of the requirements and is worthy of credit
- F = Assignment does not substantially meet the basic requirements

For in-class or other brief writing assignments, you will be graded on a scale of √+, √, or √-. Work that is strongly engaged and on-topic will receive a √+. Satisfactory work that is on-topic will receive a √. Work that shows little engagement or is off-topic will get a √-.

Incompletes
Incompletes are not given except in the most extraordinary circumstances (e.g., medical emergency), which a student must be able to document, and only if just a small part of the course remains to be finished. The student and teacher must make a written agreement concerning the condition of the incomplete.

Cell Phones
All those caught not having turned off their cells and/or other electronic devices will be subject to relentless mockery, public shaming, and, if necessary, unimaginably medieval tortures.
English 3802-002: Schedule of Classes—subject to revision

WEEK ONE
T 1/9     Introductions
Th 1/11   sonnets

WEEK TWO
T 1/16    sonnets
Th 1/18   sonnets; **Sonnet Paper (Part I) due**

WEEK THREE
M 1/22    DEADLINE TO DROP WITHOUT A GRADE
T 1/23    sonnets
Th 1/25   Comedy of Errors; **Sonnet Paper (Part II) due**

WEEK FOUR
T 1/30    Comedy of Errors
Th 2/01   Comedy of Errors

WEEK FIVE
T 2/6     Comedy of Errors
Th 2/8    The Taming of the Shrew

WEEK SIX
T 2/13    The Taming of the Shrew
Th 2/15   The Taming of the Shrew

WEEK SEVEN
T 2/20    The Taming of the Shrew
Th 2/22   NO CLASS—Dr. Wharram will be away at a conference

WEEK EIGHT
T 2/27    Twelfth Night; **Shrew Paper due**
Th 3/1    Twelfth Night

WEEK NINE
T 3/6     Twelfth Night
Th 3/8    Twelfth Night
WEEK TEN  SPRING RECESS—NO CLASS

WEEK ELEVEN  
T 3/20   Much Ado About Nothing
Th 3/22  Much Ado About Nothing

WEEK TWELVE  
T 3/27   Much Ado About Nothing
Th 3/29  Much Ado About Nothing; Annotated bibliography due

WEEK THIRTEEN  
T 4/3   Conferences
Th 4/5   Conferences

WEEK FOURTEEN  
T 4/10  The Tempest
Th 4/12  The Tempest

WEEK FIFTEEN  
T 4/17  The Tempest
Th 4/19  The Tempest

WEEK SIXTEEN  
T 4/24  The Tempest
Th 4/26  Review for FINAL EXAM

FINALS WEEK  

Thursday, May 3—FINAL EXAM—8:00 to 10:00
Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood
Clean from my hand? No, this my hand will rather
The multitudinous seas incarnadine,
Making the green seas red.  
(Macbeth. II. ii. 57-60)

All the world's a stage,
And all the men and women merely players;
They have their exits and their entrances,
And one man in his time plays many parts,
His acts being seven ages.  
(II. vii. 139-43)

Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player,
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage,
And then is heard no more. It is a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury
Signifying nothing.  
(V. v. 24-28)

Sonnets to concentrate on for the first week:

1, 3, 4, 13, 15, 17-20, 22-24, 27, 28, 36
55, 60, 62, 71, 73, 75-77, 87
92, 93, 106, 110, 116, 126, 134-136, 143, 147
18 Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?
   Thou art more lovely and more temperate.
   Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,
   And summer's lease hath all too short a date.
   Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,
   And often is his gold complexion dimmed;
   And every fair from fair sometime declines,
   By chance, or nature's changing course, untrimmed:
   But thy eternal summer shall not fade
   Nor lose possession of that fair thou ow'st,
   Nor shall Death brag thou wand'rest in his shade
   When in eternal lines to time thou grow'st.
   So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,
   So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.

19 Devouring Time, blunt thou the lion's paws,
   And make the earth devour her own sweet brood;
   Pluck the keen teeth from the fierce tiger's jaws,
   And burn the long-lived phoenix in her blood;
   Make glad and sorry seasons as thou fleet'st,
   To the wide world and all her fading sweets,
   But I forbid thee one most heinous crime:
   O, carve not with thy hours my love's fair brow,
   Nor draw no lines there with thine antique pen;
   Him in thy course untainted do allow
   For beauty's pattern to succeeding men.
   Yet do thy worst, old Time: despite thy wrong,
   My love shall in my verse ever live young.

20 A woman's face, with Nature's own hand painted,
   Hast thou, the master-mistress of my passion;
   A woman's gentle heart, but not acquainted
   With shifting change, as is false women's fashion.
   An eye more bright than theirs, less false in rolling,
   Gilding the object whereupon it gazeth;
   A man in hue all hues in his controlling,
   Which steals men's eyes and women's souls amazeth.
   And for a woman, wert thou first created,
   Till Nature as she wrought thee fell a-doting,
   And by addition me of thee defeated.
   By adding one thing to my purpose nothing
   But since she pricked thee out for women's pleasure,
   Mine be thy love, and thy love's use their treasure.
Your first paper ENG 3802 will be a close analysis of a sonnet not discussed at length in class. We will discuss in class the form of the sonnet and the relatively restrictive rules that it imposes on sonneteers. You should concentrate on the way that this particular form of writing gives shape to Shakespeare’s argument.

Your paper will begin with a brief translation of the sonnet into contemporary lingo. Feel free to be creative.

Some questions you may want to ask yourself in preparing this essay include the following:

- Who is the speaker, and who is the addressee?
- How does the literary history of the sonnet as an address from a “suitor” to a “love object” connect to the message of this particular poem?
- Does the rigidity of the sonnet form express the ‘content’ of the sonnet, or do form and content seem somehow in opposition?
- Is there anything in the sonnet that may hint to you that the speaker is wrong or may be lying? (You don’t have to believe everything you read, you know.)

**TIPS**

Be sure that you are aware of as many definitions and connotations as possible for all the words in your sonnet. I would also recommend looking up the etymologies of the words (that is, where the words come from, their histories). Sometimes looking words up in the dictionary can help you recognize possible puns or alternative interpretations of individual words and lines.

Try to notice shifts in rhythm as they relate to the sonnet’s message. Perhaps your poem is extremely regular in rhythm: what does this say about content as it relates to form?

Certainly, take note of literary devices and how they create meaning in the text. You are no doubt familiar with some of the basic ones (simile, metaphor, personification, zeugma): identify them and elucidate them as they relate to your argument.

Your thesis statement (in which you reveal what your argument is) should not be the following: “I will now analyze [the sonnet].” You should have developed in your analysis a particular way of looking at the poem: try to find a succinct way of presenting this in your introduction.

Always ask yourself ‘how’ and ‘why.’ Do not tell me what happens.

Your paper should be two to three pages long, and is due on Thursday, Jan. 18 (Part I, the translation), and Thursday, Jan. 25 (Part II, the rest)