Spring 1-15-2006

ENG 3802-3892-001-099: Shakespeare

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ENGLISH 3802 / 3892 – “SHAKESPEARE”

Spring 2006 / Section
MW 3-4:15
Coleman Hall 3691
Email: cfcmw@eiu.edu

Dr. Chris Wixson
Coleman Hall 3871
Office Hours: 1:30-3 MW
(Or by appointment)

“Every age creates its own Shakespeare.”
-Marjorie Garber, Shakespeare After All

“What we learn from Shakespeare is how rich life can be if you have access to the language.”
-William Hutt, Actor

Required Textbooks: The Complete Works of Shakespeare, ed. Bevington
The Bedford Companion to Shakespeare, 2nd Edition Russ McDonald

Required Supplies: A notebook and a folder for notes, handouts, and in-class work

Although portrayed as a besotted impotent writer in the film Shakespeare in Love, William Shakespeare has nonetheless been credited recently by literary critic Harold Bloom with the “Invention of the Human.” The ongoing interest in and success of Shakespeare-based films testify to the Bard’s endurance as a source of comedy, drama, and insight. This course will read nine of Shakespeare’s plays, centering our inquiry around relationships of desire and power and the role of theater in constructing and mediating these dynamics. We will consider these issues as they affect and are affected by factors of gender, race, class, genre, and politics. We will be approaching these plays as both literary *and* theatrical texts, discussing not only their political, historical, and modern implications but also their potential for acting, directorial, and technical choices.

The complexity of Shakespeare’s plays in terms of language and thematics makes this course both reading and thinking intensive. It has a demanding reading and assignment schedule that necessitates time and planning, and all assignments must be completed in order to pass this course. Since English 3802 involves a fair amount of writing, we will spend time in class talking about the organization and construction of strong interpretive arguments. The format of each class will be relatively fluid, changing with regard to the material, my ideas, and your interests. There will be some discussion as well as the occasional informal lecture. However, this course should focus primarily on you, your questions, and opinions. Remember this is not MY class but ours.

The learning outcomes for the course are as follows:

1. To provide strategies for reading and appreciating the works of William Shakespeare for the insight they provide about Early Modern England and our own time.

2. To allow each member of the class to engage the significant issues and questions raised by the plays through writing, performance, and class discussion.

3. To assist in the development of skills of critical thinking and argumentative writing.
Assignments:

* Short pieces of writing (2-3 pages)
* Two longer, more formal essays (5-7 pages) Writing guidelines will be handed out in advance. (Those taking this class for 3892 credit will have a longer second essay.)
* A Comprehensive Final Exam
* A “Performance Requirement”
* Active Participation in Discussion (Defined as Talking.)
* The Sonnet Project

** You must complete all written assignments and exams to complete the course. Failure to complete any one of the components represents incomplete work for the semester and anyone with incomplete work will not receive a passing grade for the course.

Attendance

I expect you to be in class awake and prepared every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. In other words, arrive on time with your reading/writing assignment completed, prepared to participate in discussion. Because so much in this course relies upon in-class work, frequent absences and habitual lateness will adversely affect your course performance. Thus, your regular attendance is expected; be advised that exams and paper topics will draw heavily from material discussed in class. Attendance will be taken at each class meeting. **More than three unexcused absences will result in your participation grade being lowered by a third for each session missed beyond three.** Please notify me by email if there is unexpected illness or an emergency that causes you to miss class. Do not get in touch asking “for the assignment” or a “rundown of what you missed.” My responsibilities as an instructor lie with the students who do come to class.

** If you have a documented disability and wish to receive academic accommodations, please contact the Office of Disability Services (581-6583) as soon as possible.

Late Papers: These are no fun for me to keep track of and only put you further behind. For each day beyond the scheduled due date, late papers will be penalized a third of a letter grade. **After a week, I will no longer accept the paper, and it becomes a “0.”** Again, if you become ill or the victim of emergency circumstances, please email me as soon as possible and stay in touch.

Email

You should get into the habit of checking your email daily. There will be a class list on which I will post changes in assignments (if they arise), course-related announcements, and ideas which expand upon what happens in class. This list is also a great way for all of us to interact outside of class; that is to say, if you have a question or query (Shakespearean in nature), the miracle of technology offers us a way to discuss and address it.

Plagiarism

Any paper with your name on it signifies that you are the author—that the wording and major ideas are yours, with exceptions indicated by either quotation marks and/or citations. Plagiarism is the unacknowledged use (appropriation and/or imitation) of others' materials
(words and ideas). We will discuss how to avoid it. Evidence of plagiarism will result in one or more of the following: a failing grade for the assignment, an F in the course, and a report filed with the Judicial Affairs Office.

Class Participation
You should come to class prepared to talk about the reading for that day. Each class session will be a mixture of informal lecture and discussion; thus, your own questions and comments about the plays are essential to the success of the course. You will also need to have completed the assigned reading and (when noted) your typed “seed paper” and sonnet project. Reading quizzes may happen relatively frequently to ensure the quality of our discussions. Your class participation grade includes attendance, active contributions in class and in small group work. Class participation means that you work actively to stretch yourself intellectually, emotionally, and spiritually AND that you work actively to contribute to the class's overall movement. (This might mean, for example, moving from merely your position during class discussion to striving to promote dialogue between yourself and other students). I TAKE THIS GRADE VERY SERIOUSLY.

Conferences
I am regularly available to meet with you during my scheduled office hours or by appointment. To make an appointment, speak to me after class or contact me via email.

Grading

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Papers</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seed Papers</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Performance Component</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participation (class/sonnet)</td>
<td>20%</td>
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</tbody>
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Shorter Written Assignments

*Short pieces of writing (2-3 pages) called “seed papers” in which you pose a productive question which relates to the inquiry issues of the course about the text and then attempt to answer it. You will be asked to present and conduct class discussion with your question once during the semester. However, you will be required to write two total, that deal specifically with the language of part of the reading due for that day.

*The Sonnet Project will help us get to know one another and help us get accustomed to Shakespeare’s language. For the day you are scheduled, choose any one of Shakespeare’s sonnets (but NOT #s 18 or 130 OR one chosen before by someone else) and write a 2-3 page explication of its main ideas and why you picked it. Be prepared in class to not only give a solid reading of the poem but a brief overview of your analysis in 3-4 minutes.

*The “Performance Requirement” can be fulfilled in one of two ways:

In early February (sometime between the 9th-11th or 16th-19th), any of you who wish to join me will head to the Krannert Center at the University of Illinois for the theater department’s production of As You Like It. Afterwards, you will each write a “review” of the production. Details to follow. In lieu of the trip, you may choose to “review”, in consultation with me, one of the numerous cinematic versions of our plays found in Booth Library.
**Extra Credit:** Shakespeare began his dramatic career writing, among other things, comedies based upon a classical model, mainly those of the Roman playwright Plautus in about 200 B.C. This semester in March, the EIU theater department is doing a production of one of his plays, *The Menaechmi*, which Shakespeare later adapted into *The Comedy of Errors*. Attend this production and carefully compare what you see and hear with our course's sense of Shakespearean comedy.

**Reading Schedule**

**Because this schedule can and probably will change, it is imperative that you bring it to each class meeting so as to make the appropriate revisions.**

January  
9  Course Introduction and In-Class Writing / What is “Shakespeare”?  
11  **Read first act of Dream** / Be prepared to discuss what clues are in the language as to character, relationship, and the play’s thematic concerns. ***Bedford: pp. 109-14; 123-7; 134-7; 221-4.

16  NO CLASS --- MLK’S BIRTHDAY
18  A Midsummer Night’s Dream I – III / Bedford 81-5 / Sonnet #1

**Unit 1: Sex, Gender, and Power: Who Scores?**

23  A Midsummer Night’s Dream IV-V / Sonnet #2  
25  A Midsummer Night’s Dream V (video) / Sonnet #3

30  Taming of the Shrew Inductions-III **Seed Paper due (A-F)**  
     Bedford: pp. 253-63; 265-8 (Marriage, Gender, and Economics)

February  
1  Taming of the Shrew (IV-V) **Seed Paper due (G-K)**  

6  As You Like It / Sonnet #4
8  As You Like It / Sonnet #5

**Krannert’s As You Like It** begins and runs through the 19th.

13  As You Like It / Sonnet #6

**Unit 2: Social and Economic Status: Who Counts?**

15  All’s Well That Ends Well / Performance Paper Due

20  All’s Well That Ends Well / Seed Paper due (L-Q)
22  All’s Well That Ends Well

27  Henry V Bedford 90-4 (History Plays) / Seed Paper due (R-Z)

March  
1  Henry V

**EIU’s The Menaechmi** runs March 2nd-7th.
HAPPY SPRING BREAK!!

20 Titus Andronicus Bedford 85-90
22 Titus Seed Paper due (A-K)

27 Titus Andronicus Seed Paper due (L-Z)
29 Antony and Cleopatra

April
3 Antony
5 Antony

10 Hamlet
12 PAPER #2 Due

17 Hamlet
19 Hamlet

24 Hamlet
26 Conclusion / Evaluation / Exam Review

FINAL EXAM: Monday, May 1st 2:45-4:45