

Eng 207, Early Shakespeare  
CRN: 26063, Winter 2015  
McKenzie Hall 121  
T/R 4:00-5:20 p.m.

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Office Hours: R:6:30-7:30pm; W 3-5pm, and by appointment

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## COURSE OVERVIEW

In our readings of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Titus Andronicus*, *The Merchant of Venice*, and *Hamlet*, we will cover a range of Shakespeare's most beloved and most problematic plays. This course encourages you to use reading, thinking, conversation and writing to explore characters, themes, and contexts you may not have prior ideas about, in order to learn how to construct an informed, rigorous, and creative position about them. This course will also help you to continue the process of learning to develop, complicate and focus your ideas into written texts that will be read by real people who want to know what you think. Our primary focus throughout the term will be on close reading and analysis of the plays, paying careful attention to the details of language and textual evidence to support various interpretations.

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## REQUIRED TEXTS

- Greenblatt, Stephen et. al, eds. *The Norton Shakespeare, Volume I: Early Plays and Poems*. 2nd edition. New York: Norton, 2008.
- *Hamlet* (The Pelican paperback edition is available at the UO Duckstore and is required for this course)
- Please bring a notebook and pen to each class for handwritten notes, in-class activities, and responses.

## COURSEWORK AND GRADING

Close Reading	250 pts. (25%)
Responses	150 pts. (15%)
Project	200 pts. (20%)
Formal Essay	350 (35%)
Participation	50 (5%)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1000 pts. (100%)</b>

### Close Reading:

Using the OED, you will compose a brief, 3 page essay on a passage from *A Midsummer Night's Dream* or *Titus Andronicus*. I will provide a selection of passages and guidelines will be posted on BB.

### Responses:

In order to fully appreciate, enjoy, and understand Shakespeare, you must read slowly, attentively, and more than once. To encourage this practice of close and careful reading, there will be one or more in-class quiz or brief response paper—announced or unannounced—per play. These may ask you to summarize actions, explain characters, remember textual details, and/or analyze meanings. Responses may also include information or ideas brought up in lectures, discussions, or introductory readings in the text. You may also be asked to compose collaborative responses. **Note: Missed responses cannot be made up.**

### Project:

The Creative Project is a more flexible assignment in which you will have several choices. Your objective is to design an independent or group "Creative Project." Creative Projects will be accompanied by a 3-page Justification Essay, which will rely on textual evidence from the play to justify and to explain the meaning and significance of your project. Creative Projects may include scene performances, memorization and recitation of lines, sketches of costume designs or staging, a script rewriting a key scene from a play, or any other format that you think would lead to a deeper understanding of some aspect of one of our plays. Additional suggestions, guidelines and grading criteria will be posted on BB.

### Formal Essay:

You may compose this 5-7 page paper on any of the first three plays. I will post suggested topics on BB, though you may create your own *in consultation with me*.

### Participation and Readings:

Your **active participation** is crucial to the success of this course. Discussion of the assigned readings is a primary mode of intellectual discovery. An "A" student in this course will be in class every day with the appropriate text in hand, ready to contribute. It is essential that you maintain a verbal presence during every class discussion. You will be evaluated on the consistency and thoughtfulness of your engagement with class concepts and on your alert and respectful attention to fellow class members. In short, the participation portion of your grade reflects your perceptible contributions to daily discussion. You must come to class having read all the material assigned for that day and be ready to discuss that material. If you feel that participation is a problem for you, please arrange to speak to me immediately.

Approach class discussion as an opportunity to clarify your understanding of the readings, to test your own interpretations and theories, and to gather ideas for expanding and challenging your interpretations and assumptions. Do not be afraid to ask questions—if you are unsure about something, chances are that a significant portion of your classmates is unsure as well. Remember that class discussion is a conversation and a place for experimentation. Participation in discussion, like critical reading and writing, is a skill you must practice and develop.

## **CLASSROOM POLICIES**

### **Electronic Devices:**

All electronic devices should be turned off during the class session. If you are using an electronic device, I will ask you to leave class and will count you absent for the day.

### **Attendance and Punctuality:**

Attendance is required. You may miss the equivalent of one week of class meetings (two class sessions) without penalty. After that, I will subtract 2% from your overall course grade for each additional absence. If you are absent, you still need to get assignments to me by beginning of class; otherwise they are late (see policy on emailing papers for details about how to turn in your work if you are absent). I do not distinguish between excused and unexcused absences.

Punctuality is also mandatory. Class begins promptly at 4:00. If you are late for more than three class sessions, the fourth late arrival will be considered an absence, and every late arrival after that will be considered an absence. **I will not inform/remind you about absences;** you are responsible for keeping track of them.

### **Late Work:**

Work is due at the beginning of class on the date indicated by me in class, on Blackboard, or on the attached schedule. If you need extra time on an assignment, you should arrange that with me in advance. If you have an arranged extension, you will not lose points, although I am unlikely to offer extensions on multiple assignments. Otherwise, any work that is not turned in by the time I ask for it in class is late, even if you are absent. I will reduce your score by one full letter grade (10%) per day it is late.

If for any reason you cannot turn a hard copy of your work in when it is due at the beginning of class (due to printer problems or unexpected absence, for instance), you can only get full credit by emailing me your work before class so that I can verify that you have done it on time (assignments emailed during class time will also lose 10%—please don't skip class to finish assignments). If you have to email work to me, paste the assignment into the body of the email, and bring the assignment to me as a hard copy at the next class meeting. I will not print your work or remind you to bring the hard copy—that is your responsibility. If you fail to paste the assignment into the email and I cannot open the attachment, or if you do not bring the hard copy to the following class session, your assignment will receive a late penalty. Work that is not submitted as a hard copy at the time it is due will be graded and returned to you at my discretion.

### **Format & Documentation:**

Your essays must be stapled, typed, double-spaced, in Times New Roman 12pt. font, with 1" margins on all sides. Include a heading that consists of your name, assignment, instructor name, and the assignment due date in the top left corner, single-spaced. Your essay must also have an original title that appears centered two spaces below the heading, also in 12 pt. font. Use MLA format for quoting and citing sources. The use of outside sources is not required or encouraged, but any outside/additional sources (including the Norton introductions, articles, or online summaries you may have read—even if you don't quote them) must be documented in a Works Consulted list at the end of your assignment. Failure to format and cite sources correctly may significantly lower the assignment or essay grade.

### **Contacting me**

If you have extensive questions about an assignment or about the material, or if you miss a class and want to find out what you missed, please attend office hours or schedule an appointment with me; I love to meet with students in person, and it is a great way for

me to get to know you better. I also extend the courtesy of responding to your emails, even when I'm not in my office or at work! As in all your classes, you should put time into making sure that emails to me are clear, concise, and professional. Even if you are emailing from your phone, remember to proofread your email in order to be sure that I will be able to understand your question. On weekdays, I will try to respond to your clear and professional emails within a day. I do not guarantee email responses over weekends. If more than a full business day has passed and I have not responded to a question you had, you are welcome to send me a polite reminder email. Please note that I do not send confirmation emails to everything students send me to let them know I received their notes about absences, emailed assignments, etc.

#### **A note on the Gradebook:**

Blackboard is a great tool for keeping students and teachers connected and up to date; I will use it to post course readings, PowerPoints, handouts, and assignments. If you have trouble finding any of these things on our site, please feel free to let me know. However, updating the Gradebook on Blackboard is not a primary teaching priority for me; I may update online grades throughout the term, but I will always lesson plan, grade work, and meet with students before doing so. I strongly encourage you to keep track of the grades you receive on your work so that you can tally up your total any time you are curious.

### **UNIVERSITY AND ENGLISH DEPARTMENT POLICIES**

#### **Incompletes:**

Approval for incompletes will be granted only in cases when students through unforeseen circumstances beyond their control cannot complete some minor but essential aspect of the course.

#### **Academic Honesty:**

All work submitted in this course must be your own and be written exclusively for this course, which means you may not submit papers or portions of papers you have written for any other course. The use of sources (ideas, quotations, paraphrases) must be properly documented. Please refer to the *Student Conduct Code* on the Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards website. Violations will be taken seriously and are noted on student disciplinary records; in cases where academic misconduct has been clearly established, the award of an F for the final course grade is the standard practice of the English Department. Please see me if you have any questions about your use of sources. Please use MLA citation practices when citing work for this course.

#### **A note on using online summaries, paraphrases, and other sources:**

A lot has been written on Shakespeare in the past 400 years. It is easy to pull up hundreds of analyses of Shakespeare with the click of a button, and, unfortunately, once we read what someone else has said about a play, it becomes very difficult to have our own interpretations. What I hope to see in your writing for this course is your own individual struggle with understanding and finding meaning in Shakespeare, even if you feel your take may not be correct (usually there is no single "correct" interpretation). Online summaries are interpretations; the choices other people make about what to include and what to emphasize are themselves arguments, and paraphrases of Shakespeare erase some possible meanings while solidifying others. You may choose to look at summaries to supplement your ability to understand what is happening in a play, and that is fine. But remember that online summaries are generally not written for college-level courses, and they are only a good supplement if you are struggling; the only way you will become more fluent in reading Shakespeare is by practicing. If you do look at any online source as you work on any paper, even if you do not quote from it, you should include that source in a "Works Consulted" list at the end of your paper. Failure to cite any source that may have influenced your reading of the play (including, but not limited to, summaries, paraphrases, and articles) may be treated as Academic Dishonesty and penalized accordingly. If you want to read good interpretations of the plays to help you with your own work, please rely on the introductions to the plays in the Norton book, and feel free to quote and cite them in your essays; these introductions are written by prominent Shakespeare scholars and may help you generate strong ideas.

#### **Student with Extracurricular Commitments:**

The attendance policy applies to all students, so student-athletes, student-musicians, etc., often need to take extra care to reserve absences for other commitments. I am not able to develop alternative assignments even for arranged absences; if you must be absent during a quiz and would like to make it up, you will need to give me the contact information for an official proctor who can administer the quiz while you are away. Speak to me early in the term if you have questions or concerns.

#### **Access for students with disabilities:**

The University of Oregon is working to create inclusive learning environments. Please notify me in week one if there are aspects of the instruction or design of this course that result in disability-related barriers to your participation. You may also wish to contact the Accessible Education Center in 164 Oregon Hall at 541-346-1155 or [uoacc@uoregon.edu](mailto:uoacc@uoregon.edu).

### **SCHEDULE**

*(Please note that this schedule subject to change, in which case I will notify you)*

\*All reading and assignments must be completed for discussion and/or submission on the day that they are listed.

**Week 1**

T 1/6

Introduction to Class, Syllabus

TH 1/8

*Midsummer Night's Dream*: Introduction (839-846), Act I (849-856)

**Week 2**

T 1/13

*Midsummer Night's Dream*: Act II (856-866), Act III (866-880) and

TH 1/15

*Midsummer Night's Dream*: Act IV (880-886), Act V (886-895)

Creative Projects

**Week 3**

T 1/20

*Titus Andronicus*: Intro (399-407); Act I (408-419)

TH 1/22

*Titus Andronicus*: Act II (419-431)

Creative Projects

**Week 4**

T 1/27

*Titus Andronicus*: Act III (431-439), Act IV (439-451)

TH 1/29

*Titus Andronicus*: Act V (451-463)

**Week 5**

T 2/3

**Close Reading Assignment Due**

Continuing Discussion

TH 2/5

Creative Projects

**Week 6**

T 2/10

*Merchant of Venice*: Introduction (1111-1120), Act I (1121-1131)

TH 2/12

*Merchant of Venice*: Act II (1131-1145), Act III (1146-1159)

Creative Projects

**Week 7**

T 2/17

*Merchant of Venice*: Act IV (1159-1169), Act V (1169-1175)

TH 2/19

*Hamlet*: Introduction: (xxix – xlvi) & (xlvi – l) Act I (1-37)

Creative Projects

**Week 8**

T 2/24

*Hamlet*: Act II (37-62)

TH 2/26

*Hamlet*: Act III (62-96)

Creative Projects

**Week 9**

T 3/3

*Hamlet*: Act IV (96-122)

Th 3/5

*Hamlet*: Act V (122-148)

Creative Projects

**Week 10**

T 3/10

Creative Projects

Th 3/12

Wrap up/final instructions

Creative Projects

**Finals Week**

M 3/16

**Formal Essay Due by 5pm (PLC 105)**

**Always bring your texts to class:**

You will be required to support your opinions and theories by referring to the assigned reading/readings and we will continually revisit readings in order to establish connections and expand ideas. Please remember to take notes during our discussions; these notes will help stimulate your thinking. Once a great idea is gone, it is very hard to get it back!

