Syllabus

Be not afeared: the isle is full of noises,  
Sounds and sweet airs that give delight and hurt not.  
Caliban – The Tempest

Course Description: This introductory course will cover four of Shakespeare’s earlier plays – three tragedies and a comedy. After orienting ourselves to Shakespeare’s language and culture, our primary focus will be on close reading and analysis of the plays, paying careful attention to the details of language and textual evidence to support our various interpretations. We will also consider the work of performance in embodying meaning.

Texts: Please purchase the inexpensive Folger paperback editions, which are required for this class and available in the UO bookstore.

Titus Andronicus  
Julius Caesar  
Much Ado About Nothing (film)  
Hamlet

Grading and Requirements:
APP 20%  
Quizzes 20%  
Midterm 20%  
MAAN Essay 20%  
Group Performance & Essay 20%

Policies and Procedures:

Meetings: I am happy to meet with you during the term to discuss your ideas, writing, concerns, questions, progress, or grades. Please come to my office hours or make an appointment if you can’t make the office hours. Brief answers to simple questions can be given just before or after class, but meaningful discussions on the fly are not possible, so please come see me.

Plagiarism: Plagiarism is taking someone else’s ideas or writings and presenting them as your own without attributing the idea to its source. All work you do in this class must be your own work, based on your own original thinking, and done exclusively for this class. Essays must be written and sources cited according to MLA format and methodology. Plagiarism or academic dishonesty of any kind will result in your failing the class and a report being sent to the Office of Student Conduct. See me if you do not understand what
plagiarism means and please read the provisions in the code of student conduct regarding this: <http://darkwing.uoregon.edu/~conduct/code.htm>

**Special Needs:** Please see me during the first week of the term if you have a documented disability, are involved in a school activity, or are in a situation that requires special accommodations, so we can discuss your needs.

**AP&P (attendance, preparation, and participation):** This significant portion of your grade assumes your rigorous intellectual engagement. It includes your presence at each class and on-time arrival, your possession of the Folger paperback edition of the play at each class and in use during discussion, your preparation for each class by having read the assigned work, your willingness to share your ideas during discussion, and your respectful responses to the ideas of others. **This grade also includes single-minded focus on the work of the class, which requires you to turn off and put away all electronics – music devices, earphones, computers, cell phones, etc. – before class begins and refrain from texting or checking for messages or leaving the room while class is in session to do so.** Please take notes by hand and enter them into your computer later. (This method will actually help reinforce your memory of the material in preparation for quizzes and the midterm.) If you have a documented disability that requires use of electronic devices, please see me during my office hours to discuss.

**Quizzes:** You have to read Shakespeare slowly and attentively more than once for understanding. To encourage you in this practice of close and careful reading, there will be one or more quiz or response paper – announced or unannounced – per play. These may ask you to summarize actions, explain characters, remember textual details, and/or analyze meanings. Quizzes may also include information I bring up in lectures or discussions.

**Midterm:** The Midterm Exam will cover the two plays read up to that point as well as any lecture material presented in class. It may include both objective questions and analysis.

**Essay:** The ability to think critically and express your critical thinking in compelling written form is an essential component of this class. The final draft of the essay, which you will turn in for evaluation and a grade, should be a revision of one or more earlier drafts, all of which I would like attached at the back of your final revision. Drafting is necessary to develop your ideas and perfect your line of reasoning. Specific guidelines for the essay will be presented during the term.

**Writing Associate:** We are fortunate to have a WA attached to our class – Rebekah Barnes. Rebekah is an accomplished senior English major and a trained writing tutor. Her function is to work with you one-on-one in all stages of the writing process, from developing ideas to forming clear and well reasoned paragraphs to providing incisive textual evidence to using MLA format to untangling knotty sentence structures and deconstructing other common writing problems. She will come into class to introduce herself, and you will be asked to make appointments to meet with her – see email at top of page. Remember to do so in a timely fashion because she won’t be able to meet with all of you at the last minute.

**Group Performance and Evaluation:** This assignment requires you to work in a group to understand, interpret, and rewrite a scene from *Hamlet* into contemporary language,
situation; setting, with appropriate contemporary costumes and props, and then perform it for the class during week ten. Groups will be set up and guidelines will be discussed after the midterm. The evaluation of your performance is the final essay you will write for the class and will be due on Monday of finals week by noon in my office – 265 PLC. In this essay I want you to explain your groups’ interpretation of the scene and intention for your performance – What were you trying to do? Did you succeed in doing it? Examine your group process and reflect on challenges and accomplishments of the group and yourself.

**Tentative Schedule:**

1a* Shakespeare’s English
1b History, Culture, Context
1c History, Culture, Context
2a Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday – No Class Session
2b *Titus Andronicus*, Act 1 quiz
2c TA, Act 2
3a TA, Act 3
3b TA, Act 4
3c TA, Act 5; Scholar’s Commentary
4a *Julius Caesar*, Act 1; quiz
4b JC, Act 2
4c JC, Act 3
5a JC, Act 4
5b JC, Act 5
5c JC, Scholar’s Commentary
6a **Midterm Exam**
6b Theories of Comedy
6c *Much Ado About Nothing* – Film and Discussion
7a MAAN – Film and Discussion
7b MAAN – Film and Discussion
7c MAAN – Film and Discussion
8a *Hamlet*, Act 1; quiz; MAAN Essay due with rough draft(s) attached
8b *Hamlet*, Act 2
8c *Hamlet*, Act 3
9a *Hamlet*, Act 4
9b *Hamlet*, Act 5; Scholar’s Commentary
9c Group Performances – Groups 1 and 2
10a Group Performances – Groups 3 and 4
10b Group Performances – Groups 5 and 6
10c Group Performances – Groups 7 and 8

**Performance Evaluation Essay due** on Monday of Finals week by noon in my office – 265 PLC. You may put it under my office door anytime before that, but please make sure it is the right office door – 265 PLC. This essay is the final assignment for the class; there will be no final exam.

*(1 = Week One, 2 = Week Two, etc.; a = Monday, b = Wednesday, c = Friday; The work listed for each day is what you will have read and be prepared to discuss on that day.)*