

ENG 436/536
Course Time: T/Th 12:00-1:20
Course Location: 111 Lillis Hall

Professor Brent Dawson
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Office Location: PLC 473
Office Hours: F. 12-3 or by appt.
O. H. Signup: <https://tinyurl.com/yatwtx8f>

Shakespeare and Political Theory

Description

This course asks what Shakespeare has to offer theories of politics, especially politics in a state of emergency. It looks at Shakespeare's second set of history plays, the so-called Henriad, which examines a crucial moment of English history and asks questions about what makes rulers legitimate and what makes people obey them. At the same time, the course examines a series of twentieth-century thinkers who look backward, whether to Shakespeare or his era more broadly, to understand the political crises of their own moment, particularly the rise of European fascism.

Required Texts

Richard II. Oxford World's Classics. ISBN: 9780199602285
Henry IV, Part One. Oxford World's Classics. ISBN: 9780199536139
Henry IV, Part Two. Oxford World's Classics. ISBN: 9780199537136
Henry V. Oxford World's Classics. ISBN: 9780199536511

Editions of Shakespeare vary widely. You are required to buy the correct print editions of the texts listed above. Versions of the play that are online, for an e-reader, or published by a different company are not acceptable.

The total cost of the above editions on Amazon is currently \$39.87, cheaper if you buy used. If you are looking for ways to lower the costs of these editions, I encourage you to contact me and we can go over options together.

Calendar

Week 1: Introduction

1/8: Shakespeare in Contemporary Politics

1/10: Politics in the Time of Shakespeare: Excerpts from Tillyard, *Shakespeare's History Plays*; Hazlitt, *Characters of Shakespeare's Plays*; Paul Cantor, "Shakespeare's *Henry V*"

Week 2: Sovereignty

1/15: *Richard II* Act 1; Carl Schmitt, "The Definition of Sovereignty" 5-16

1/17: *R2* Act 2

Week 3:

1/22: *R2* Acts 3-4; Ernst Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies* 24-41

1/24: *R2* Act 5

Week 4: Republicanism

1/29: *Henry IV, Part One* Act 1; Andrew Moore, *Shakespeare between Machiavelli and Hobbes* 1-32.

Journal and Paper 1 due.

1/31: *IH4* Act 2

Week 5:

2/5: *IH4* Acts 3-4; Julia Reinhard Lupton, *Citizen-Saints* 1-48

2/7: *IH4* Act 5

Week 6: Life

2/12: *Henry IV, Part 2* Act 1; Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 1-49

2/14: *2H4*, Act 2

Week 7:

2/19: *2H4*, Acts 3-4; Michel Foucault, "Right of Death and Power over Life" **Journal and Paper 2 due.**

2/21: *2H4*, Act 5

Week 8: Art

2/26: *Henry V*, Act 1; Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* 1-48

2/28: *H5*, Act 2

Week 9:

3/5: *H5*, Acts 3-4; Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction"

3/7: *H5*, Act 5.

Week 10: Afterimages

3/12: Bertolt Brecht, *Messingkauf* 43-62; Orson Welles, *Chimes at Midnight*. **Journal and Paper 3 due.**

3/14: Gus van Sant, *My Own Private Idaho*.

3/21: **Reflection due.**

Assignments

Attendance: Coming to class with the day's reading is mandatory. Missing more than three classes will result in your final grade being lowered by 2.5 points for each additional absence. More than seven absences will cause you to fail the course.

Discussion Questions: Once a week, you will submit a question about the day's reading for discussion with the class. Along with the question, include 2-3 sentences explaining why this question interested you and/or how it relates to previous class conversations. Each submission must include at least one citation from the reading. At the beginning of the term, half the class will be assigned to Tuesdays, half to Thursdays. Submissions are due via Canvas by class time—late will not be accepted. You are allowed to miss three submissions without penalty. (10%)

Commonplace Journal: Throughout the term, you will create a commonplace journal, a text file where you keep and collect quotations from the reading. Each week, you will add at least three entries. Entries should be organized alphabetically by topic, and you can make as many topics as you want at any point in the term. For each entry, include a sentence or two about how it fits the topic. You are also welcome to keep thoughts, notes to yourself, or research here. Journals will be collected three times throughout the term. (15%)

3 Short, Connected Papers (20% each): Early in the term, each student will choose a topic of study to sustain throughout their papers. I will distribute a sign-up sheet, but students can, with my approval, create their own topic or overlap a classmate's. They will write 3 short papers of 3-4 pages on the topic, generally focusing on a couple textual moments from that section of the course. If a student ever arrives at a place where their topic no longer feels workable or productive for them, they can contact me and make arrangements to change.

1 Reflection (15%): At the end of the term, students will write 2-3 pages reflecting on their topic. The reflection should address some of the following questions: How do your papers speak to one another? How have your ideas changed over the course of the term? What questions remain for you? How might you revise one of your papers in light of what you've learned over the term?

Policies

Accessibility: Please let me know if there are aspects of the instruction or design of this course that result in disability-related barriers to your participation. You are also encouraged to contact the Accessible Education Center (formerly Disability Services) in 164 Oregon Hall at 541-346-1155 or uoaec@uoregon.edu.

Advisory: Be aware that the material we read for this course can be disturbing in its treatment of sexuality and violence, and our discussions will cover these topics. If you feel you can't participate in discussion around a particular issue or text, let me know and I will try to design alternative work.

English Language Learners: Anyone can succeed in this class whether or not English is their primary language. You will likely have some additional challenges: readings and papers will take longer to complete, participating in class discussion may be more intimidating. If you're having trouble with participation, you can earn points by sharing your ideas in email or office hours. If you're struggling with readings or papers, come to office hours and we can discuss. You should know that grammar, syntax, and spelling are a relatively minor part of paper grades. As with all students, I expect you to show care with your language, but your argument is what is most important.

Formatting Papers: Your assignments must be in twelve-point font, double-spaced, and have one-inch margins. Submitting assignments electronically is acceptable, but you need to use .doc(x) or .pdf format (not .pages or .odt). You can follow either MLA or Chicago guidelines for citations, but be consistent. Great guides to either format can be found at Purdue's OWL website (<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/>). You are expected to proofread your work; too many errors will result in a small penalty to your grade.

Late Assignments: I give out extensions readily, but you need to ask in advance. Exceptions may be given for emergencies and other drastic situations. Late assignments are graded down half a letter grade per day late. Assignments are due at the beginning of class unless stated otherwise; assignments turned in after that will be considered a day late. Papers will be accepted in print, by email, or by Canvas.

Plagiarism: All work must be your own and written solely for this class. Plagiarism can be unintentional, so be careful and make sure you understand the rules. If you're not certain, ask me. If you quote, paraphrase, or borrow ideas from an article, website, editor's note, friend, or any other outside source, you need to provide documentation. I encourage you to look at the library's guides for citing sources and avoiding plagiarism (<https://library.uoregon.edu/citing>). The same link will also allow you to access the university's official policy toward academic misconduct; you should read over the policy if you're unclear on what counts as cheating or plagiarism.

If you're struggling with a paper, I encourage you to contact me. It's better to submit a paper late, unfinished, or in poor quality than risk the penalties for plagiarizing.