ENG 208: Shakespeare's Extremities [Remote]

**Description** This course, which focuses on four of the later plays of Shakespeare’s career, is designed as an introduction to the language, themes, contexts, and implications of his most mature work. Though our close reading of these plays will lead us to consider any number of the many topics which are developed throughout Shakespeare’s work, I have chosen these four plays with special attention to their depictions and “stagings” of psychic, cultural, linguistic, and social extremities. You need not have taken ENG 207 to appreciate this course: no prior familiarity with Shakespeare or Renaissance literature is required or expected.

**Texts** I have ordered paperback editions of each of the plays and they are in stock at the Duckstore. But given the circumstance of the term, any edition of the plays should work. The plays are *Othello, King Lear, The Winter’s Tale,* and *The Tempest.*

**Policies** Live attendance is highly encouraged for lectures and discussion sections; but I understand that for some students this simply may not be possible. Therefore, I will record and post all lectures. Either way, you should carefully complete the assigned reading before class; and you should pay close attention to the lecture with your copy of the assigned text in order for you to make notes. When reading Shakespeare, it’s always important to have some form of a hard copy of the scheduled reading and make notes on that copy. If you are reading the plays on electronic versions, print them so that you will have access to the readings during the lectures.

**Class Formats**

**Lecture** After many years of “in-person” teaching, this will be my first foray in “remote” but synchronous instruction. Most of our lecture sessions will take place live on Zoom, though I may pre-record some of the lectures. I will also record and post brief “audiofiles” which focus on particularly important passages or scenes. While I won’t be using PowerPoint, I will typically go to “screen share” during class sessions to help us focus on important passages and issues in the assigned texts. I will begin each session with an introduction to the principal issues we’ll be exploring that day; and then we’ll focus on relevant aspects of the assigned reading by identifying the language and the actions presented in particular scenes. I’ll pause regularly to take questions, often from the chat box, but also in live audio responses.

**Discussion** Alexandra Garner is the GE who will be leading both discussion sections and will be primarily responsible for the grading (in close consultation with me). The discussion sections offer students the opportunity to explore the readings in
more detail, ask more questions about the lecture, discuss more thoroughly the broader set of issues raised by these plays, and take occasional quizzes.

**Grading** 2 exams, 30% each/ 3 writing assignments, 10% each/ unannounced discussion section quizzes and course participation, 10%. Exams will be administered in class as noted on the syllabus. There is no comprehensive final.

**Academic Dishonesty** To use anyone else’s actual or paraphrased words without appropriate citation is to commit plagiarism. **If we discover that you have committed an act of plagiarism, we will follow to the letter the protocol stipulated by the Student Conduct Code.** In certain cases, academic dishonesty may also result in suspension or dismissal from the university. If you are ever uncertain about what constitutes academic dishonesty, consult the Student Conduct Code reprinted in the Schedule of Classes or consult us.

**Advisory** You should be aware that in focusing on the topic of “Shakespeare’s Extremities,” this course addresses some provocative issues in these powerful dramas. Shakespeare’s work can be violent and sexual, sometimes simultaneously.

**Office Hours** My office hours will be conducted via Canvas chat. Students can “drop in” to ask questions or discuss the readings or the assignments. If you have a question or concern that you don’t want to share publicly, we can arrange a private Zoom conversation.

**Remote Learning** Student success in remote learning environments shares much in common with successful learning strategies used in regular classrooms. Actively engage the course by completing the assigned readings and by focusing on all your assignments. Be sure to check Canvas and your UOregen email often for announcements with updates concerning the course; and be sure to keep track of assignments and the course schedule. The Announcements function on Canvas will be my primary mode of contact. If you have questions, please don’t hesitate to ask me or your GE.

There are significant differences with remote learning that you should think about in order to be as successful as possible. You need to be more independent in your learning. Students who learn best from going to class may be challenged by remote learning, so it’s important to stay present in the course and with the reading by reviewing course material. Take notes on video lectures, audiofiles, and readings.

While it may take me some time to figure out how best to learn Zoom and to present the course material, I will do my best to ensure that it is made available to you in a timely manner. Be aware that there might be some technical contingencies which could prevent live Zoom sessions from taking place: wifi, failures, online glitching, user error on my part, etc. When this happens, please don’t panic: I will post an announcement as soon as possible with instructions for getting access to a recorded version of the session.
ENG 208: Shakespeare's Extremities
Syllabus, Fall 2020

29 Sept: Course Introduction and Othello, Act 1
1 Oct: Othello, Acts 2 & 3

6 Oct: Othello, Act 4
8 Oct: Othello, Act 5

13 Oct: King Lear, Act 1
15 Oct: King Lear, Acts 2 & 3

first assignment due

20 Oct: King Lear, Act 4
22 Oct: King Lear, Act 5

13 Oct: Othello and King Lear review
29 Oct: Exam: Othello and King Lear

second assignment due

27 Oct: Othello and King Lear review
29 Oct: Exam: Othello and King Lear

3 Nov: The Winter's Tale, Acts 1 & 2
5 Nov: The Winter's Tale, Act 3

10 Nov: The Winter's Tale, Act 4
12 Nov: The Winter's Tale, Act 5

third assignment due

17 Nov: The Tempest, Act 1
19 Nov: The Tempest, Acts 2 & 3

24 Nov: The Tempest, Act 4
26 Nov: Thanksgiving Holiday

1 Dec: The Tempest, Act 5 and review
3 Dec: Exam: The Winter's Tale and The Tempest