

English 436/536
Course Time: MW 2:00–3:20
Course Location: 117 FEN

Prof. Brent Dawson
Email: bdawson@uoregon.edu
Office Location: PLC 465
Office Hours: W 9–12 or by appt.

Advanced Shakespeare

Description

Students in this course will closely read Shakespeare's plays and poems, attending to their rich language, nuanced characters, and persistent fascination toward topics of the self, desire, imagination, and group identity. In the first half of the course, students will look at examples from several recent critical approaches to Shakespeare, including animal studies, post-colonial studies, sense studies, and queer theory. In the second half, students will learn about how Shakespeare became "Shakespeare," the iconic figure of popular and high culture, examining how different cultures and eras have re-interpreted his plays and biography. We will examine some contemporary films, short stories, and graphic novels that continue this process of re-interpretation.

Required Texts

The Norton Shakespeare. 3rd Edition. All other texts will be distributed electronically or in class.

*Additional readings must be brought to class in print or on a laptop. (No phones.)

Calendar

Week 1: 4/3

James Shapiro, from *Contested Will*

Stephen Greenblatt, "General Introduction" in *The Norton Shakespeare* 44-60 (Make-up assignment for Wednesday's class)

Wednesday, 9/5: Class Cancelled

Week 2: 4/10-12

A Midsummer Night's Dream

Laurie Shannon, *The Accommodated Animal* 1-17

Week 3: 4/17-19

12th Night

Valerie Traub, "Performing Lesbian History," 55-74

Week 4: 4/24-26

Sonnets 1-5, 8, 15-21, 23, 25, 29, 30, 35, 40-42, 57-60, 71, 73, 76, 81, 94, 113, 116, 123, 126, 127, 129-132, 134-136, 138, 152

Bruce Smith, *Phenomenal Shakespeare*, 38-68

Week 5: 5/1-5/3

Merchant of Venice

Midterm 5/3

Week 6: 5/8-5/10

Othello

Ayanna Thompson's *Passing Strange* 97-118

Week 7: 5/15-5/17

Time's Pencil Digital Exhibition

Week 8: 5/22-5/24

King Lear

5/24: Meet in Library Special Collections

Week 9: 5/31

King Lear

5/29: Memorial Day

Week 10: 6/5-6/7

The Tempest

Final Date and Time: _____

Essay due 6/16 5 pm

Assignments

Participation (10%): Discussion will be an important component of class. If a student is shy or has other difficulties with speaking in class, I'm happy to hear their thoughts in office hours or by email.

Weekly Writing (10% blog entry, 5% responses): Each week, five students will post a blog entry to our course website by 8 pm Monday (750 words). All other students will write a response to one of the blog entries by 8 pm Tuesday (300 words). Blog entries and responses must include at least one quotation from the week's reading different from other entries and responses. Students must complete five responses over the course of the term.

In-class Presentation (20%): Students can present on either a word, allusion, or historical context in the reading for the week. Further details will be explained in a handout. Whichever option you choose, you should email me by Wednesday evening letting me know which word or allusion you'd like to discuss. Presentations will be 5-7 minutes in Friday's class, and must include a script and a handout or slideshow. Students will submit on the day of their presentation an electronic or printed copy of the script and the handout or slideshow.

Essay (25%): 5-7 pages. Students will have two options for their essay:

1) Take one of the theoretical approaches we've studied to engage a different play than what it was paired with during the term. Essays should ask how the theory changes how the play is understood, as well as what questions or resistances the play poses to the critical approach.

2) Analyze two or three adaptations or rewritings of a Shakespearean play alongside the source material. Essays should treat the later versions as interpretations of the original, comparing how each treats a particular topic.

Midterm and Final Exams (15% each): Exams will ask students to identify and analyze important passages from course readings taken from the first or second half of the term. There may also be multiple choice and essay questions.

Policies

Accessibility: Please let me know me 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.

Formatting Papers: Your written assignments must be in twelve-point font, double-spaced, and have one-inch margins. Submitting assignments electronically is completely acceptable, but you need to use .pdf format (not .doc, .docx, .pages, or .odt). If you're not sure how to do that, ask me in advance. You can follow 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. The farther in advance you ask, the more likely I am to grant the extension. If you don't complete an assignment on time and you don't ask for an extension, I still encourage you to let me know your circumstances. Exceptions may be given for emergencies and other extraordinary circumstances. Late assignments are generally graded down one 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.

Attendance: Coming to class with the day's reading printed is mandatory. If you have a job, a sport, or anything else in your life preventing you from coming to class, you need to let me know as soon as possible. Missing more than three classes unexcused will result in your final grade being lowered by 2.5 points for each additional absence. More than seven unexcused absences will cause you to fail the course.

Plagiarism and Cheating: All work must be your own and be 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. When 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 about 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 to risk getting caught plagiarizing.