Early Shakespeare

Description

Although we remember Shakespeare as a playwright, in his own lifetime his first and most popular published work was a poem, *Venus and Adonis*. This piece in many ways runs contrary to how Shakespeare is thought about today: concerned less with marriage than sex, as much with gods and animals as humans, and less with story or character than the intoxicating power of language. This course asks how we might read Shakespeare differently if we thought about him as a poet, placing *Venus and Adonis* at the starting point of his career. We’ll read this impressive early work, and then follow it with three plays, each in different genres, that echo its style and concerns.

Course Texts and Costs

Editions of Shakespeare vary widely, from the quality of their notes to assigning speeches to different characters. Students must purchase the specific editions listed below.

At the time of writing, the total cost of course texts on Amazon is $33.42, which also qualifies an order for free shipping.

Calendar

Week 1: *Venus and Adonis*
9/26: Introduction
9/28: l. 1-450
9/29: Discussion

Week 2: *Venus and Adonis*
10/3: l. 451-852
10/5: l. 853-1194
10/6: Discussion

Week 3: *Midsummer*
10/10: Act 1 Paper 1 due
10/12: Act 2
10/13: Discussion

Week 4: *Midsummer*
10/17: Acts 3-4
10/19: Act 5 Test 1
10/20: Discussion

Week 5: *Richard II*
10/24: Act 1
10/26: Act 2
10/27: Discussion

Week 6: *Richard II*
10/31: Acts 3-4 Paper 2 due
11/2: Act 5
11/3: Discussion

Week 7: *Sonnets*
11/7: tbd
11/9: tbd Test 2
11/10: Discussion

Week 8: *Romeo and Juliet*
11/14: Act 1
11/16: Act 2
11/17: Discussion

Week 9 (Thanksgiving)
11/21: Scenes from *Porky’s 2/Romeo+Juliet* (in-class screening and discussion)

Week 10: *Romeo and Juliet*
11/28: Act 3-4
11/30: Act 5 Paper 3 due 12/1: Discussion

Assignments

Reading and Class Preparation: Reading an act of Shakespeare for this class should take you at least an hour, more likely two. Read carefully, and give yourself time for note-taking, studying the editor’s comments, and looking up unfamiliar words and references.

Attendance: Coming to class with the day’s reading is mandatory. Missing more than three classes
(lectures or discussion) 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.

2 Tests, 15% each: Each test will cover a few of the works we are reading to make sure you are keeping up with the readings, lectures, and discussions. Tests will be given at the start of class and last 30 minutes. Test may consist of multiple choice questions, passage identification, or a short essay. Missed tests cannot normally be made up, but if there are exceptional circumstances, contact me. I recommend 2-3 hours of going over notes and readings to prepare.

3 Papers, 10% each: Each short paper is designed to help you practice a particular skill important to analyzing Shakespeare. The prompt for each paper will be given out one week in advance, and the assignment will be due at the beginning of class. Each paper will be 3 pages of written work and should take about 5 hours to complete.

Final Exam, 30%: The exam will consist of multiple choice questions, passage identifications, and a short essay question. It will cover all texts for the course as well as information from class lectures. The exam will take place during finals week. Preparation time will vary, but I recommend at least 6 hours of study spread over a few days.

Discussion Section Participation, 10%: Participation is an important component of the discussion section. 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.

Workload

According to the UO Student Engagement Advisory, a 4 credit course should involve no more than 120 hours of work, in class and out, over the course of the term.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Work</th>
<th>Number of Hours/Week</th>
<th>Total Hours for the Term</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>37.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading and Class Prep</td>
<td>6 (2 hours for each act)</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exams</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Papers</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total:</td>
<td>10-15 hours/week</td>
<td>102.5 hours/term</td>
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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 assignments must be in twelve-point font, double-spaced, and have one-inch margins. Submitting assignments electronically is acceptable, but you need to use .pdf format (not .doc, .docx, .pages, or .odt). If you're not sure how to do that, ask 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 penalty to your grade.

Late Assignments: I give out extensions readily, but you need to ask in advance. The farther in advance, the more likely I am to grant the extension. Late assignments are generally graded down one letter grade per day late. Exceptions may be given for emergencies and other exceptional situations. Assignments are due at the beginning of class unless stated otherwise; assignments turned in after that will be considered a day late.

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 to risk the penalties for plagiarizing.

English Language Learners: You can succeed in this class whether or not English is your primary language. Working in another language trains you to read in the slower, more analytic fashion that literature courses reward. 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 difficulty with participation, you can earn your 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 go over strategies to improve. 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 use of language, but your ideas and argument are most important.

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, let me know and we may be able to design alternative work.