

Fall, 2020

Department of English

English 3305A

Shakespeare from Text to Stage

(Orig. Time and Place: Tues.-Thurs. 1:00-2:30)

**Asynchronous: Lectures Pre-recorded and Posted Weekly
on the course site in culearn**

Precludes additional credit for ENGL 3304 (no longer offered).
Prerequisite(s): third-year standing or permission of the department.

Instructor: D.A. Beecher

Send all Questions, Comments, and Assignment Enquiries by

E-mail to: donald.beecher@carleton.ca

Office hours: 8:30-4:30 by e-mail

NB The following is a document vital to success in the course. This syllabus attempts to cover all the administrative aspects: the intellectual goals of the course, the delivery methods, the course requirements, the reading list and schedule of lectures, the texts and which editions to use, how to communicate with the professor—in short all the rules and regulations governing the entire enterprise. I may have missed critical points and would be happy for you to call them to my attention to rectify; please don't hesitate. But on the whole, I'm hoping to have anticipated all your questions by establishing a clear expression of expectations that will set you all on the path to success in the course, as well as to new insights into Shakespeare and a greater appreciation for the world of the Renaissance and its presiding passions. Please read it carefully.

COURSE OBJECTIVES This Course deals with six of Shakespeare's best-known plays, chosen not only for their challenges as texts, but for the challenges they pose to directors and actors when actualizing these texts on the stage. In a sense, no Shakespeare play is complete until it has been translated into an enacted form of story-telling in which the characters are represented in a visual space by trained persons lending their bodies, voices, expressions, emotions, and lived understanding. There is no narrator telling the story and interpreting it for us; there are only the characters speaking for themselves, and by that means alone giving readers or viewers the hints they need to understand places, feelings, motivations, deceptions, and processes of thought. Something of that nature must also take place on the stage of the reader's mind, because we cannot conceive of the actions of characters without organizing them in the spaces and temporal sequences of our thoughts. But often that process fails to take note of the effects necessitated by presentations on physical stages. This is the challenge of reading with the eye of the director, assessing just how characters might dispose themselves, imagining the many ways in which they might pronounce their words or react to the words of others; these things often make all the difference to the ways in which the story is experienced.

Reading Shakespeare begins with the expectation of pleasure, for he was a consummate story-teller and a close reader of human nature, inspiring him, in a workaday manner as a theatrical "maker," to invest his language with play, ambiguity, paradoxes, irony, and a range of cultural reference that keeps readers alert to every word. The characters, moreover, are in some form of conflict with each other and they are seeking their respective ends on grids of desire that we often see in binary moral terms. Reading such matters closely is the beginning of interpretation and understanding, and, arguably, an extension of our pleasure, at the same time, by engaging us intensely in their aspirations, conflicts, and expectations in ways that play upon our own emotions.

These and many related issues will be at the centre of the course presentations—no longer lectures, hopefully, but explorations, perspectives, and sample readings which will enable you to draw more inciteful conclusions on your own. They are intended to help you see the problems and paradoxes Shakespeare raises, and to appreciate more thoroughly his modes of creation, the nature of the theatre, the ways in which we view others both real and imaginary, the world of the passions, the archetypes of human motivation, the ambiguities of language, and the received ideas which operated in the minds of our early seventeenth-century ancestors (in comparison or contrast to our own). We need to reflect not only on our own values, but upon how they thought about such ideas as chastity, honour, virtue, honesty, youth and old age, community, class, being and non-being, justice, and so many others which Shakespeare raises topically in the plays. Most of all, I want to challenge you all to go back to the plays themselves, investigate touchstone passages, and work out your own solutions to meanings, styles, and theatrical potential.

This is a lecture course in format, but one in which I hope to create a virtual sense of community in the few ways possible through on-line teaching. Your questions and comments are important and I will be responding to them directly through e-mail. Moreover, questions of relevance to the entire class I will also respond to through a supplemental recorded segment

which you can all access on culearn. In that way, at least, I hope to include many of you into the proceedings of the course.

How the course will work you can see by glancing at the reading schedule. We will be reading six plays over twelve weeks, so I will be uploading several short presentations equivalent to four class-length lectures on each play to the course page on culearn as the term progresses where you can access them at times most convenient to you. In short, the course is “asynchronous” in format. In an ideal world, however, I would urge you to read each of the plays at the times they would normally have been taught in class, and to view the lectures at those same times, thus spreading your work out evenly over the entire term. Of course, I can urge all I may, but in this, you are the masters of your time and your educational experience.

TEXTS FOR THE COURSE: The plays are *Twelfth Night*, *All's Well that Ends Well*, *Measure for Measure*, *Hamlet*, *Othello*, and *King Lear*. I will order a few copies for the Bookstore which they can relay to you. But these plays are also widely available in a host of single text and anthologized formats, by sundry publishers and in very inexpensive formats, as well as on line, such as the Folger editions which can easily be downloaded free. Just the play texts will do, although editions with glosses and basic reading notes could offer significant advantages. I will be rereading them in heavily annotated editions wherein the experts going back to the 18th century have tackled the most intricate knots of his language. You need not be that thorough! In short, any sound edition will serve our purposes. Whatever your choice, be sure to keep a copy beside you during the audition of the lectures for regular consultation.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS: I am keeping the course requirements intentionally simple. We will be too many for me to manage multiple exercises and quizzes. Instead, a term paper and a final exam will constitute all the instruments of evaluation in the course. But that does not prevent you from thinking ahead to these two objectives, thinking about a topic appealing to you to work on, and laying plans, even taking notes and making drafts weeks in advance of the due date, which is Dec. 11. Regarding the term paper, I am available to you by e-mail for discussing topics, strategizing approaches, and avoiding pitfalls. I will speak in a later section about the goals of scholarly writing. So, you can begin early in the course to build the perspectives you will need to perform your way brilliantly through both of these formats. They are pretty standard, after all, and will differ little from those you've encountered in other courses. All that is ever required is sound reading, informed understanding, a problem-oriented approach, evidential thinking, and clear and forceful writing toward a cogent and balanced conclusion (in either format, paper or exam. See, nothing to it!) And all of these things, in the proper light, can also be sources of pleasure—for who does not find great satisfaction in mastering an effective rhetorical and critical statement about issues pertaining to the complexity of human experience as it is represented in the greatest works of art. Writing informed arguments about literature can be one of the best highs in the educational firmament. I have been thriving on my own efforts to construct them over many years. And this can hold true even for exams through which pouring out your prepared insights under a bit of tension can be a rewardingly cathartic exercise in self-

discovery. I hope you can embrace these two requirements in these terms, turning them from obligations to opportunities, and from anxiety to self-expression.

Now to the most important details: term papers should average ten pages, but can be eight to twelve according to the needs of your argument. You can use any style sheet of your choice, but you should remain consistent in your use of it. I am more interested in your analytical ideas than in the little mishaps of style, but by third year you should all be writing fairly error-free English which is coherent and logically arranged in progressive arguments on a clearly defined topic. I prefer research papers simply by way of bringing you into dialogue with other writers in order to sharpen your thoughts and broaden your critical perspectives, but in this age of restricted resources, such as libraries (!), and the inequality of resources on line (do beware because many readers have been misled by unvetted articles) I will also accept essays based strictly on your own considered encounter with the text. But you will still need to wrestle with and reason over significant and engaging issues in cogent and persuasive ways.

Equally important, the final exam will have six questions (one on each play); you will answer five in essay form. They will be questions on major issues discussed in the lectures. I think there are means for administering three-hour exams on line with a proctoring factor built in, but the process is technical and exacting. I prefer to send out the questions to each of you by e-mail very close to the end of the normal exam period on Dec. 21, at 4:00 p.m., and have you return the answers to me by e-mail attachment on Dec. 22, at 10:00 p.m. I did this last term and it worked like a charm. This gives you a window of 30 hours during which you can find the time to write the exam. Obviously, you can use notes, consult google, reread your margins, ask your mom, because there is no way of preventing you from doing so. But in fact, the results will still follow conventional predictions. You will all use your advantages as best you can and set the new bar for everyone.

Then there is the matter of early evaluation (feed-back). This pertains largely to first- and second-year courses, but not exclusively. So if you are experiencing anxiety concerning your prospective performance in this course, I invite you to send me a one or two-page essay on any Shakespeare related topic of a kind you might choose for your term paper. (I once found myself in a fourth-year class the entire grade for which was based on five one-page papers. It was the most demanding and instructive class of my career.) These can be submitted at any time before the 26th of October, the grades for which will be assigned but not recorded, in order to give you a sense of how well you can do.

To repeat: the final grade will be determined by the term paper and the exam, each one of which will count for 50%. The ultimate and final due date for all course work (i.e. the term paper) according to the university guidelines is December 11, after which I am not allowed to accept term work. I could set an earlier date, and then negotiate late submissions up to that final date if that makes any sense to you! Express your wishes and I can set the date earlier on an individual basis! But more logically, please plan far in advance for the final due date (Dec. 11), get started early, and build in allowances for sickness, accidents, angry pets, computer failures, anxiety, family feuds, prodigality, writer's block, power outage, amnesia, lightning strikes, and insomnia. (Life will be full of deadlines, later, many of which will be very fixed and very real.)

Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor subject to the approval of the Faculty Dean. This means that grades submitted by the instructor may be subject to revision. No grades are final until they have been approved by the Dean.

COURSE SCHEDULE (Lectures will be posted according to the original course scheduling.)

Sept. 10 Introduction

Sept. 15 *Twelfth Night*, Lecture 1

Sept. 17 *Twelfth Night*, Lecture 2

Sept. 22 *Twelfth Night*, Lecture 3

Sept. 24 *Twelfth Night*, Lecture 4

Sept. 29 *All's Well that Ends Well* 1

Oct. 1 *All's Well that Ends Well* 2

Oct. 6 *All's Well that Ends Well* 3

Oct. 8 *All's Well that Ends Well* 4

Oct. 13 *Measure for Measure* 1

Oct. 15 *Measure for Measure* 2

Oct. 20 *Measure for Measure* 3

Oct. 22 *Measure for Measure* 4

Study Week

Nov. 3 *Hamlet* 1

Nov. 5 *Hamlet* 2

Nov. 10 *Hamlet* 3

Nov. 12 *Hamlet* 4

Nov. 17 *Othello* 1

Nov. 19 *Othello* 2

Nov. 24 *Othello* 3

Nov. 26 *Othello* 4

Dec. 1 *King Lear* 1

Dec. 3 *King Lear* 2

Dec. 8 *King Lear* 3

PLAGIARISM (The official university policy)

The University Senate defines plagiarism as “presenting, whether intentionally or not, the ideas, expression of ideas or work of others as one’s own.” This can include:

- reproducing or paraphrasing portions of someone else’s published or unpublished material, regardless of the source, and presenting these as one’s own without proper citation or reference to the original source;
- submitting a take-home examination, essay, laboratory report or other assignment written, in whole or in part, by someone else;
- using ideas or direct, verbatim quotations, or paraphrased material, concepts or ideas without appropriate acknowledgment in any academic assignment;
- using another’s data or research findings;
- failing to acknowledge sources through the use of proper citations when using another’s works and/or failing to use quotation marks;
- handing in substantially the same piece of work for academic credit more than once without prior written permission of the course instructor in which the submission occurs.

Plagiarism is a form of intellectual theft. It is a serious offence that cannot be resolved directly with the course’s instructor. The Associate Deans of the Faculty conduct a rigorous investigation, including an interview with the student, when an instructor suspects a piece of work has been plagiarized. Penalties are not trivial. They can include failure of the assignment, failure of the entire course, or suspension from a program. For more information please go to: <https://carleton.ca/registrar/academic-integrity/>

I would add to this, that borrowing work to boost grades is also self-defeating because it deprives the fraudulent practitioner of precious opportunities to develop his or her own writing skills in anticipation of seeking employment where those deficiencies will have real and costly consequences. It is one of the most central and vital of learning outcomes in humanities-oriented programs where acute literacy and honed communication skills are among the leading goals. If learning about literature is the immediate goal, effective writing and analytical thinking based on textual analysis,

methodological approaches, and research skills are the generic and long-term goals. These are the transferrable skills that will ultimately matter the most in the world at large.

REQUESTS FOR ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. For an accommodation request, the processes are as follows:

Pregnancy obligation: write to me with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details click [here](#).

Religious obligation: write to me with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details click [here](#).

Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: The Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) provides services to students with Learning Disabilities (LD), psychiatric/mental health disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), chronic medical conditions, and impairments in mobility, hearing, and vision. If you have a disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact PMC at 613-520- 6608 or pmc@carleton.ca for a formal evaluation. If you are already registered with the PMC, contact your PMC coordinator to send me your Letter of Accommodation at the beginning of the term, and no later than two weeks before the first in-class scheduled test or exam requiring accommodation (if applicable). After requesting accommodation from PMC, meet with me to ensure accommodation arrangements are made. Please consult the PMC website for the deadline to request accommodations for the formally-scheduled exam (if applicable).

Survivors of Sexual Violence

As a community, Carleton University is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working and living environment where sexual violence will not be tolerated, and where survivors are supported through academic accommodations as per Carleton's Sexual Violence Policy. For more information about the services available at the university and to obtain information about sexual violence and/or support, visit: <https://carleton.ca/equity/sexual-assault-support-services>

Accommodation for Student Activities

Carleton University recognizes the substantial benefits, both to the individual student and for the university, that result from a student participating in activities beyond the classroom experience. Reasonable accommodation must be provided to students who compete or perform at the national or international level. Write to me with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist.

<https://carleton.ca/senate/wp-content/uploads/Accommodation-for-Student-Activities-1.pdf>