Welcome to the plays of Shakespeare.

First we shall have to try to think out what it is that a play is. The least efficient way but the best for stimulating thought is a discussion involving students, though this will be difficult because of the large number of students. Hence, it will be necessary to provide some lectures in order to 'cover' the mammoth amount of mere information that has to be touched on. A third device for encouraging each person to articulate reactions to plays will be the student's reading aloud in class lines from the plays in as expressive a way as an amateur can; the student may be asked to explain the interpretation given to the lines. Further, the students will be asked to state his or her knowledge and understanding of the plays; this will be in the usual ways of papers (tests, examinations) written in class as well as a less time-pressed paper outside of class. Thus, the approach to the plays hopefully will be facilitated by a philosophical-critical discussion underpinned by specific reference to the plays before us, by attempts at delivery and explications of actual pieces of the plays, by more considered writings about them. As my own contribution to the course, I shall attempt to re-create(?) the actual conditions of performances on Shakespeare's stage as nearly as our historical researches permit us to do.

The course this time will feature Shakespeare's romantic comedies and romances. The plays and the due dates are

- *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* (2GV) - 22 Sept.
- *Love's Labor's Lost* (LLL) - 29 Sept.
- *As You Like It* (AYLI) - 13 Oct.
- *Measure for Measure* (MM) - 3 Nov.
- *Pericles* (Per) - 17 Nov.
- *The Winter's Tale* (WT) - 24 Nov.
- *The Tempest* (Temp) - 1 Dec.

There will be a midterm examination on 20 October. There will be a final examination on a date and at a place assigned by the Registrar.

The out-of-class paper, due on 10 November, will be a library research paper with full documentation (including foot or end notes and a bibliography of works cited or consulted). A list of topics will be available. Any deviations from or modifications of the topics on the list must be approved by me by 6 October. If a student wishes to substitute some equivalent project for this paper, any suggestions would be welcome. Some students have done musical or dramatic performances, translations, designs, mini-textual studies, critical essays, theatrical devices for presenting Shakespeare today, drawings or modelling of Shakespearean stages, etc.
Then there is the painful business of assigning marks. It may help to have some schema of what each part of a student's performance might be worth in this evaluation. Here is a probable chart:

- Discussions and readings in class: 25%
- Midterm examination: 15%
- Final examination: 25%
- Research paper (or project): 35%

I say 'probable' because in individual cases this may be altered either by request of an individual who has special aims or by me in final assessment; in the latter case, such adjustments would always be in the direction of raising the mark. The two examinations will include requests for answers that simply assure that the reading has been done as well as questions that require interpretation of the plays. In the past, course marks have had a median mark of 'C', that is, half the marks have been above and half below this middle mark.

As special aids to the course, scaled models of some of the theatres of Shakespeare's day by former students will be exhibited, a few medieval plays and perhaps a medieval Japanese Noh play will be read, a few clips of films or videotapes of Shakespearean performances will be screened, an audiotape of old Shakespearean actors reading lines will be played (displaying acting traditions back about a century), and a taped oral examination by a former blind student will be played. There will be handouts on textual, theatrical and literary subjects.

One final note of great importance: The course is set up with the expectation that a student will always attend class meetings. The course is made up in a large part by what we do in class. If a student is absent when called on to speak or to read, his or her performance will be recorded as an 'F-', unless a doctor's note on the absence is provided, or some other equivalent excuse. If the student does not intend to be absolutely regular in attendance, he or she should not take this course.

I am available to see students by appointment only; I have work to do that should not be casually interrupted. Students are welcome to see me by prior arrangement at a mutually suitable time. My study is in PAS 1279. My phone number is (519) 885-1211, extension 2115. Private appointments can be arranged at class meetings or by phone. Almost always I am available after class if my help is needed.

I look forward to our meetings as an opportunity for expansion and growing strength for student and for teacher.

L.A. Cummings