ENGLISH 190: SHAKESPEARE
Professor Kathy Acheson
HH 225
Office hours: Monday and Wednesday, 1:00-2:15, and by appointment
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DRAFT SYLLABUS

Welcome to English 190, Shakespeare. This course introduces the academic study of the works of William Shakespeare. It is designed for students in all disciplines but, like all English courses, emphasizes development of close reading, critical thinking, and clear, honest writing. We will study plays from each of Shakespeare’s major genres: comedy, tragedy, and history. I hope you’ll join me in learning more about the much beloved playwright and his works, and in developing the key skills of English studies.

The objectives of this course are for students to be better able to
- read and understand Shakespeare’s works in the language in which they are written;
- offer accounts of major themes and concerns of the works we study;
- frame interpretations of key topics in those works, using evidence from the plays to support arguments about the topics;
- read and make use of critical essays about the plays we study, and
- write about their responses to, and understanding of, works of literature.

I expect you all to have done the assigned reading before you come to class, and to be prepared to discuss the reading.

I have set up an ACE site for this course, and you should check it out. Both the thesis statement and the essay itself are to be submitted electronically through ACE.

Text books

I have ordered four plays in to the Bookstore. They are all published by Thomson and are in a series called “The Arden Shakespeare.” You will need to have this version, or have access to one, for Antony and Cleopatra, but for the other plays you may use any scholarly edition of the plays we are studying. The edition must have line numbers, notes, and introductions to the plays. Please consult me if you are unsure about the quality of an edition.

The plays we are studying, in the order we are studying them, are:

1. Much Ado About Nothing
2. Antony and Cleopatra
3. Othello
4. Romeo and Juliet
Additional Reading

For each play we will read something scholarly. The readings are as follows:


Schedule

September 14: Introduction. Visit by Jan Willwerth about UW-ACE.
September 16: Essay Writing I: collecting evidence from the text
September 21: _Much Ado About Nothing_, Act I.
September 23: **Discussion #1 post due.** _Much Ado About Nothing_, Acts II and III.
September 28: _Much Ado About Nothing_, Acts IV and V.
September 30: **Discussion #2 post due.** MAAN, critical reading (Howard).
October 5: _Othello_, Act I.
October 7: **Discussion #3 post due.** _Othello_, Acts II and III.
October 12: Thanksgiving Holiday – give thanks!
October 14: **Discussion #4 post due.** _Othello_, Acts IV and V.
October 19: **Discussion #5 post due.** _Othello_, critical reading (Smith).
October 21: **Mid-Term**
October 26: _Antony and Cleopatra_, Act I.
October 28: **Discussion #6 post due.** _Antony and Cleopatra_, Acts II and III.
November 2: _Antony and Cleopatra_, Acts IV and V.
November 4: **Discussion #7 post due.** _Antony and Cleopatra_, critical reading (Textbook, pp. 5-12, 56-69)
November 9: Essay Writing II: constructing your argument; using secondary sources
November 11: **Discussion #8 post due.** Essay writing III: documentation, presentation, writing, and grammar.
November 16: _Romeo and Juliet_, Act I.
November 18: **Discussion #9 post due.** _Romeo and Juliet_, Acts II and III.
November 23: **Thesis statement due.** _Romeo and Juliet_, Acts IV and V.
November 25: **Discussion #10 post due.** _Romeo and Juliet_, critical reading (Lehmann)
November 30: Exam information.
December 2: **Essay due.** Make-up class if necessary (i.e., if I have to cancel a class for some reason, we will use this day to replace it). The essay will be delivered electronically through ACE.

**Assignments**

**Weekly Postings (10%):** Each week I will release a question in the “Announcements” section of the ACE homepage for this course. The question is scheduled to be released on Sunday morning, and your posting is due by 9:00 a.m. on Wednesday (except on October the 19th, when the question will be posted on Friday, October 15, and your responses on October 19th). Your post will be 50-100 words (or so); your response should reflect the question and your reading, it should be written in clear language, and it should be civil. It must not repeat what another group member has already posted. If these conditions are met, you will get 1 mark for each posting.

You will post your response in the discussion forum designated for your group in the course’s site in UW-ACE. You should be able to see which group you belong to when you log on to the course.

**Mid-term (25%):** This will be a take-home exam. It will be on *Much Ado About Nothing* and *Othello*. I will give you a selection of passages from the plays, and I would like you to choose one for each play. I will give you the speaker and the place in the play the passages occur. For each of the answers you will try to comment on the choice of language and imagery and how it contributes to the development of themes, of the character who speaks it, and to the emotional impact of the play.

**Essay (25%):** You may write your essay on *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Othello*, or *Antony and Cleopatra*. You may select the topic yourself, or you can talk to me about your interests and we can develop one together. (Please come in office hours or make an appointment, unless we have time in class).

The essay will be six to eight pages long (1500-2000 words) and will present an argument supported by evidence. It will have a thesis paragraph that outlines the argument, five or six paragraphs describing the main points of the argument, well-supported by evidence and clearly linked to the overall argument, and a conclusion. For the essay you may use reference works, such as the *Oxford English Dictionary* or encyclopedias, and you may also draw on the scholarly articles we have read, or others that you read on your own. You may also look at film treatments, productions, or photographs from productions, if you would like to address a question that involves any of those things.

The essay will be graded as follows:

Quality of argument: 20%
*An excellent argument is persuasive, well-supported with evidence, well-organized in a logical sequence of points, and offers an interpretation that is convincing but at*
the same time not self-evident to the reader. Although your reader is me, you should imagine that your model reader is yourself, or a classmate of above-average perception, thoughtfulness, and diligence.

Structure of argument: 20%  
An excellently structured argument is organized so that the argument unfolds logically. Each paragraph has a beginning, middle, and end, and a clear purpose. The paragraph that follows is clearly linked logically to the previous one, but deals with a different aspect of the argument.

Use of evidence from the play, and from other sources: 40%  
This is really the most important category, as shown by the weighting it is given. As I will tell you (more than you want to hear, I'm sure), literary criticism is evidence-driven, like detective work. Your evidence must support the interpretations you give it; it must be the best support available in your source for that interpretation; it must be accurately understood. It must be integrated with your sentences, and evenly distributed throughout the essay.

Paragraph and sentence structure: 10%

Grammar, spelling, punctuation: 10% (minus one for each error up to 10).

**Thesis statement (10%)**: Your thesis statement is due on Nov. 23, and will be returned to you on Nov. 26 (Friday) by email. It is your first paragraph of your essay. It starts with a statement of your topic. It continues with a step-by-step summary of the argument you will give your reader. It concludes by saying why or how this argument is important to our understanding of the meaning of the play, its power or affect, or how it is made.

**Final Exam (40%)**: There will be three questions on the exam, which must be answered in essay-style (an argument, paragraphs, good grammar, etc.). For each question you will have choice. The first question will ask you to write a short personal essay (for instance, it might be “How is history important to the study of Shakespeare?” or “What was your favourite play that we studied and why?” There will be one question on *Antony and Cleopatra* and one on *Romeo and Juliet*. The first question is worth 20% of the final grade, and the other two are worth 40% each.

**Rules**

**Late and illness policy**: I will only accept late assignments if you bring me a doctor’s note saying that you were unable to submit the assignment on the due date. Assignments are due at the beginning of the class on the day on which they are due.

In addition, the Faculty of Arts at the University of Waterloo requires that I include the following information on the course outline:
Academic Integrity: in order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo community are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility.

Grievance: A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of his/her university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Read Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances, Section 4, [http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy70.htm](http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy70.htm)

Discipline: A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing academic offenses, and to take responsibility for his/her actions. A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offense, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offenses (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about “rules” for group work/collaboration should seek guidance from the course professor, academic advisor, or the Undergraduate Associate Dean. When misconduct has been found to have occurred, disciplinary penalties will be imposed under Policy 71 – Student Discipline. For information on categories of offenses and types of penalties, students should refer to Policy 71 - Student Discipline, [http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy71.htm](http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy71.htm)

Appeals: A student may appeal the finding and/or penalty in a decision made under Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances (other than regarding a petition) or Policy 71 - Student Discipline if a ground for an appeal can be established. Read Policy 72 - Student Appeals, [http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy72.htm](http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy72.htm)