ENGLISH 362    Shakespeare 1
Section 01, 10:00-11:30 TR, AL 206

Professor Lynne Magnusson, HH 264, phone ext. 2759, e-mail lmagnuss@watarts
Office hours: M 3:00-4:00, T 11:30-12:30 (ENGL 362 priority), T 1:30-3:00, Th 2:00-4:00
(call ext. 2759 or 3358 for appointment)

A.    COURSE DESCRIPTION

English 362 focuses on the plays Shakespeare wrote before 1600, providing intensive
coverage of seven plays. Close study of the plays is encouraged, with attention given to
Shakespeare’s techniques of plot construction, to his accomplishment in language, and to
elements of his stage craft. The lectures also reflect on social and political themes, and they
assess the intellectual contribution of Shakespeare’s writings. They discuss the sixteenth-
century cultural and theatrical contexts from which the plays arise, but they also reflect on the
uses to which Shakespeare’s works are put in the present day. The course introduces students
to the current developments in Shakespeare studies.

B.    OBJECTIVES

English 362 has four key objectives.

1. It aims to make you fully conversant with seven Shakespeare plays.
2. It aims to give you a vocabulary and skills for the close reading and analysis of
   Shakespeare’s plays, skills which you can transfer to other plays and texts.
3. It aims to encourage interrogative thinking about the plays.
4. It aims to help you improve your writing ability.

C.    TEXT


D.    ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Note: A series of small assignments based on group work and seminars is designed to help
prepare you for the major essay assignment of the course—a scene analysis. You are strongly
couraged to participate fully in these discussions to help create a lively intellectual
exchange in the classes.

1.    Progressive course essay

   Instead of writing two or three essays, you will be asked to submit an essay proposal, a
   first version of your essay, and a more fully developed second version of your essay. This
   plan acccents writing as a learning process, and it emphasizes how revising and revisioning
   based both on feedback from others and one’s own rethinking are integral to the writing
   process.

   The course essay—on a topic to be approved by the instructor—should treat specific
   interpretive and/or analytic issues in one or two plays with a specific focus on one scene or
on a few scenes or episodes. The essay must in some way incorporate the three following elements: a) close analysis of particular episodes or passages, emphasizing any or all of the following: language use, rhetorical strategies, structural features, theatrical cues and potential; b) intellectual engagement with two relevant and recent critical articles, including annotated bibliography entries and discussion within the essay; c) some element of historical research, drawing either on the account of a historian or a primary source.

The proposal: 1-2 typed page maximum (250-500 words)—the proposal should identify play[s] and episode[s], the topic of the essay, and some key ideas that might be developed; it should mention how close analysis, critical articles, and historical research will be incorporated. Due date 2 November. Grade value 0%. Instructor’s approval required.

The essay, first version: 6-7 double-spaced typed pages (1500-1750 words)—the best essay you can write on the proposed topic. Due date 16 November. Grade value 15%.

The essay, second version: 7-8 double-spaced typed pages (1750-2000 words)—a revision of the paper, involving an effort to develop and strengthen the first version and to be responsive to feedback received. Where relevant, work to improve writing, organization, clarity of presentation, and development of thought. Enclose first essay and summary of changes. Due date 5 December. Grade value 30%.

2. Mid-term test
   In-class test covers first three plays. May include identification and discussion of passages, short essays, pre-arranged research. Date of test 19 October. Grade value 20%.

3. Final examination—two hours scheduled in examination period. Covers remaining plays and sonnets. May include identification and discussion of passages, essay questions, pre-arranged research. Grade value 25%.

4. Class activity—presence and participation in class, including submission of two "class discussion sheets." Grade value 10%.

E. CLASS SCHEDULE

12 Sept.        Course organization. Introduction.


19, 22, 26 Sept. The Taming of the Shrew

28 Sept.        Much Ado About Nothing

3, 5 Oct.       Opening scene as microcosm. Patterns shared with Taming. Absent
mothers. Language and politeness as themes. Repetition, prosaic creativity, and social reproduction. Social class.

10, 13, 17 Oct.  
*Love's Labour's Lost*  
Beginning and ending. Rhetorical tradition.

19 Oct.  
Mid-term test

24, 26, 31 Oct.  
*The Merchant of Venice*  
Aristocrats and merchants: two separate worlds. Historical materials: usury, the rising merchant class. Cross-dressing. The controversy of the play.

2, 7, 9 Nov.  
*King Richard II*  
Giving structure to history. Elements of tragedy. Indirection. The theatre of power; the power for the theatre. Kingship. 
Reminder: Essay proposals due 2 November.

14, 16, 21 Nov.  
1 *Henry IV*  
Representing history. Comic elements of structure. The double plot. The rebel prince. Education for kingship.  
Reminder: Essay, first version, due 16 November.

23, 28, 30 Nov.  
2 *Henry IV* and *Sonnets*  
Sequel, time theme, disillusion, diminishment. Time and the sonnets.

5 Dec.  
Catch-up day  
Reminder: Essay, second version, due 5 December.

**Plays:**
The instructor may choose to substitute another play for one of those listed above, but notice will be given well in advance.

**Late assignment policy:**
Only serious illness or crises of comparable seriousness for which you can provide written documentation will justify missing tests. Inform the instructor by voice mail (at 885-1211 or 888-4567, ext. 2759) as soon as you know of a problem of such serious proportions. Where necessary, for sufficient cause, negotiate essay extensions in writing with the instructor in advance of deadlines to avoid late penalties of 2% per day.

**Plagiarism warning:**
The Faculty of Arts requires instructors to remind students that plagiarism—the use of another’s words or ideas as one’s own—is a serious academic offence, and it will be treated as such in this course. For further information, see the undergraduate calendar.