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

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Office hours: 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 six plays and some sonnets. 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. We shall try to see one of the plays in performance at the Stratford Festival.

B. OBJECTIVES

English 362 has four key objectives.

1. It aims to make you fully conversant with six Shakespeare plays and some sonnets.
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

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. You may choose to limit your analysis to one scene or to 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 Bedford Companion is a good starting place).

The proposal: 1-2 typed page maximum (250-500 words)--the proposal should identify play[s] and episode[s], the topic of the essay, a possible thesis statement or some key ideas that might be developed; it should mention how close analysis, critical articles, and historical research will be incorporated. Due date 24 October. 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 7 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 28 November. Grade value 30%.

2. Final examination. Covers plays and sonnets. May include identification and discussion of passages, essay questions, pre-arranged research. Grade value 30%.

3. "Issue" sheets--aimed at stimulating active learning and lively class discussion. Students submit six issue sheets. Issue sheets should be a paragraph to a page, typed if possible, in which you articulate and develop an "issue" relating to your reading of a play or "Bedford Companion" context: make use of the critical reading and thinking tools you develop in this and other courses. Issue sheets must relate to the current reading assignment. Submission dates are bolded in the course schedule below: the first day we plan to treat a new play or (for Bedford readings only) the final day on a play. Issue cards on Bedford readings should connect up with the Shakespeare plays we are treating. (Due dates: 6 of Sept. 19, 26, Oct. 1, 8, 10, 17, 22, 29, Nov. 5, 12, 14, 26.) Grade value 30%.

E. CLASS SCHEDULE

10 Sept. Course organization. Introduction.


17, 19, 24, 26 Sept. The Taming of the Shrew; Bedford ch. 8 (251-96) on family
1, 3, 8 Oct.  
*Much Ado About Nothing; Bedford* ch. 1 (11-39) on life
Opening scene as microcosm. Patterns shared with *Taming*. Absent
mothers. Language and politeness as themes. Repetition, prosaic
creativity, and social reproduction. Social class.

10, 15, 17 Oct.  
*Love’s Labour’s Lost; Bedford* ch. 6 (180-220) on language
Beginning and ending. Rhetorical tradition. Social class.

22, 24, 29 Oct.  
*The Merchant of Venice; Bedford* ch. 2 (40-73) on theatre
Aristocrats and merchants: two separate worlds. Historical materials:
usury, the rising merchant class. Cross-dressing. The controversy of the
play. The play in performance.
Reminder: Essay proposals due 24 October.

31 Oct.  
Catch-up or move-ahead day

5, 7, 12 Nov.  
*King Richard II; Bedford* ch. 9 (297-341) on politics
Giving structure to history. Elements of tragedy. Indirection. The theatre
of power; the power for the theatre. Kingship.
Reminder: Essay, first version, due 7 November.

14, 19, 21 Nov.  
*Titus Andronicus*
Efforts in tragedy. Sensationalism and violence on stage. Silence and

26, 28 Nov.  
Selected *Sonnets*
Reminder: Essay, second version, due 28 November.

3 Dec.  
Catch-up day

*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.