

WESTERN UNIVERSITY
 Department of English
<http://www.uwo.ca/english>

ENGLISH 3227E/002: SHAKESPEARE
 Tuesdays 11:30-1:30, and Thursdays 12:30-1:30 in UC289

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TEXTBOOKS: Single-volume OUP editions of the plays are available at the bookstore, and packaged together at a discounted price.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- Engage creatively with the drama as texts for performance, showing a basic familiarity with the constraints and opportunities provided by specific performance spaces (past and present) in which the plays are, or have been, performed;
- Demonstrate an introductory knowledge of historical circumstances shaping the drama written for the professional stage in early modern England;
- Formulate interpretive arguments that incorporate close readings of the plays;
- Locate and build into your own argument well-chosen secondary criticism;
- Communicate your ideas effectively in both oral and written forms.

TEACHING/LEARNING PROGRAMME

This course is organized as a series of lectures that incorporate a substantial amount of classroom participation on the part of students. I will regularly introduce an idea or topic and then ask students to share their views on how it might be applied to the play, scene, or moment under discussion.

In addition, some classroom time for nearly every play we study together will be turned over to “performance choices and interpretation” (PCI). During this windows, we will closely examine a particular passage or exchange in order to consider how its interpretive significance might be affected by performance. We will ask if there are certain choices (gestures, props, styles of delivery, etc) that are required by the text and must be obeyed in performance; we will also explore in what ways the text remains “open” to actorly interpretation. I will use theatre history documents, film clips, and in-class stagings during this hour to illustrate key points and to stimulate discussion.

In our first class, I will send around a sheet asking if you would be willing to contribute to an in-class staging – *there is no advance preparation required on your part for these stagings and the stagings are not part of your assessment.* Those students who are selected to participate in an in-class staging will be told in advance that I’ll call on them, and I’ll also try to give them a heads-up about the sorts of questions we’ll be exploring as a class. But everyone should reread the selected passage carefully before arriving on the day, the interpretive work will be done by the class as a whole, and I expect everyone to contribute to the discussion.

TEACHING PROGRAMME

SEPTEMBER

4 Welcome and Introduction

9 *Comedy of Errors*11 *Comedy of Errors*16 *Comedy of Errors*18 *Midsummer Night's Dream*23 *Midsummer Night's Dream*25 *Midsummer Night's Dream*30 *Richard III*

OCTOBER

2 *Richard III*

7 Stratford Trip (matinée) – no class

9 *Midsummer Night's Dream*14 *Richard III*16 *Richard III*21 *Much Ado about Nothing*23 *Much Ado about Nothing*28 *Much Ado about Nothing*

30 HALF-TERM BREAK

NOVEMBER

4 *Winter's Tale*6 *Winter's Tale*11 Screening *Shakespeare in Love*13 *Shakespeare in Love* (cont.)18 *Winter's Tale*20 *Winter's Tale*25 *Pericles*27 *Pericles*

DECEMBER

2 *Pericles*

JANUARY

6 *Twelfth Night*8 *Twelfth Night*13 *Twelfth Night*15 *Twelfth Night*20 *Othello*22 *Othello*27 *Othello*29 *Othello*

FEBRUARY

3 *Romeo and Juliet*5 *Romeo and Juliet*10 *Romeo and Juliet*12 *Romeo and Juliet*

16-20 Reading week

24 *Troilus and Cressida*26 *Troilus and Cressida*

MARCH

3 *Troilus and Cressida*5 *Troilus and Cressida*10 *Henry V*12 *Henry V*17 *Henry V*19 *Henry V*24 *Titus Andronicus*26 *Titus Andronicus*31 *Titus Andronicus*

APRIL

2 Review of First Term

7 Review of Second Term

ASSIGNMENTS

Performance Analysis	(10%)	Due 14 October
First Essay, 2000 words	(15%)	Due 2 December; research essay, questions to follow
Director's Notebook	(15%)	Due 3 March
Commonplace Book	(10%)	Due 7 April (it will be returned to you at the final exam, and you may consult it during the exam). <i>You will submit this project as a work in progress on 2 December.</i> On 7 April you submit the entire project for final grading (first and second term commonplaces included).
Second Essay, 2000 words	(15%)	Due 7 April; research essay, questions to follow
3 Hour Exam	(35%)	Includes both first and second term work.

STUDENTS MUST PASS BOTH TERM WORK AND THE FINAL EXAMINATION (IN COURSES WITH FINAL EXAMINATIONS) IN ORDER TO PASS THE COURSE. STUDENTS WHO FAIL THE FINAL EXAMINATION (REGARDLESS OF THEIR TERM MARK) AUTOMATICALLY FAIL THE COURSE.

Students seeking academic accommodation on medical grounds for any missed tests, exams, participation components and/or assignments worth (either alone or in combination) 10% or more of their final grade must apply to the Academic Counselling office of their home Faculty and provide documentation. Academic accommodation cannot be granted by the instructor or department.

Documentation shall be submitted, as soon as possible, to the Office of the Dean of the student's Faculty of registration, together with a request for relief specifying the nature of the accommodation being requested. The Student Medical Certificate (SMC) can be found at:

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf.

The full policy is set out here:

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to MentalHealth@Western:

<http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS

[Live performance is] an event for that moment in time, for that [audience] in that place – and it's gone. Gone without a trace. There was no journalist; there was no photographer; the only witnesses were the people present; the only record is what they retained.

—Peter Brook

We will be seeing *Midsummer Night's Dream* at Stratford this season. The purpose of this assignment is to strengthen your critical analysis of Shakespeare in performance. Write an essay of 1,000 words that analyzes the Stratford production. If you're unable to attend the *Dream* trip, please contact the instructor to discuss an alternative performance-oriented assignment.

I'm not especially interested to know whether or not you liked the production. This sort of evaluative judgement will probably emerge over the course of your essay, but the primary emphasis must be on *analysis*. In particular, focus on one or two production choices that you consider especially important in terms of how the Stratford company interpreted the play. You might be struck by costuming decisions, lighting and sound effects, striking gestures or unexpected emphases introduced by actors that introduced a reading of the play that hadn't occurred to you – the list of production choices to which you might attend is endless. In your essay, describe the production choice(s) concisely, and then analyse how it or they shaped a certain interpretation of the action, either in terms of the overall action, or in that particular scene. You

might analyze the choices in terms of the tone of the production (happy, melancholy), power dynamics between characters on stage, individual characterisations, homoerotic tensions, the treatment of revenge – again, the potential interpretive significances are endless.

Your essay will be graded according to the following criteria:

- An ability to notice and build into your analysis significant production details;
- An ability to construct an argument that analyses how these staging choices shaped a particular interpretation of the play;
- An ability to communicate your insights effectively: I will be looking for grammatically correct sentences, coherent essay structure, and careful presentation (no typos, titles italicized, pages numbered, essay titled, footnotes and bibliography presented according to MLA guidelines, etc).

I would recommend taking a notepad and pen into the theatre with you, so you can jot down striking details as they occur: you might otherwise have trouble remembering how exactly a scene or moment was played. You should also keep the theatre programme that you'll be given when you enter, as it will tell you who played which parts, who directed the show and wrote the music for it, and perhaps also provide some insight into what the company was trying to achieve. We'll discuss the production in class on Thursday, and your essays are due in class on the Tuesday.

DIRECTOR'S NOTEBOOK

I think theater ought to be theatrical ... you know, shuffling the pack in different ways so that it's -- there's always some kind of ambush involved in the experience. You're being ambushed by an unexpected word, or by an elephant falling out of the cupboard, whatever it is.

—Tom Stoppard

This assessment pushes further your ability to imagine and analyse these plays as texts for performance. It builds on the performance analysis you'll submit in October and tests the critical skills you'll develop during the "performance choices and interpretation" sessions. From any of the plays on the syllabus, choose a scene of about 125 lines (you may take more, but 200 lines is the upper limit) on which to base your Director's Notebook. Think about how you would stage this scene if you were directing it. Start this project as soon as possible and update your ideas as you go along with notes from class, reflections on current affairs or modern political debates that resonate with the scene you've chosen, comments about past productions (not necessarily Shakespearean stagings) that incorporate similar moments, ideas that arise in the performance choices sessions that you could adapt for your own purposes, etc.

Your project will be in three parts, with an optional fourth part:

Photocopy or scan the section of text you're presenting, and then prepare a set of marginal directorial annotations for it, keyed to the text by numbers. Think about such features as lighting, set changes, music cues, props, movement by actors across or around the stage, significant (not incidental) gestures. You should feel free to cut or rearrange the text, even add lines to it: the *final* number of "spoken" lines should not exceed 200.

Supplement this promptbook with a diagram of the stage on which you imagine your production being performed (you can photocopy a plan of an existing stage, or

design your own). Your staging must not ignore, and ideally should make creative use of, the constraints and opportunities imposed by the space.

Write a 1,000 word essay that briefly describes and then analyses your production choices. Begin by situating your staging of this scene in terms of the scene's relation to the rest of the production. What is your directorial "take" on the play? What are the central themes, images, and/or concepts that this staging is designed to explore? Then describe the particular staging choices you're introducing to this passage, and analyse how they contribute to the overall production goals. Where you make use of secondary sources, document your research thoroughly.

OPTIONAL: Feel free to add other materials such as photographs, illustrations of props, an illustration of the set (if there is one), costume sketches and swatches of material, music suggestions, dance choreography, a diary of ideas tracking your work in progress, and/or anything else that seems relevant to the impact of your staging in performance.

Your Director's Notebook is worth 10% of the final grade, and will be assessed according to the following criteria:

- The extent to which your production choices are appropriate to and make use of the specific theatrical space in which you propose to stage the imagined production;
- The extent to which your production choices offer an insightful interpretive reading of the passage, especially in relation to the rest of the play;
- The extent to which your thinking about the staging you devise is in dialogue with past productions and/or with scholarly examinations of the play;
- The creativity of your production choices;
- An ability to articulate effectively the interpretive significances of the choices you make, to document your secondary reading in a scholarly manner, and to present your argument without errors of presentation.

COMMONPLACE BOOK

[T]here scarcely can be a thing more useful, even to ancient, and popular sciences, than a solid and good aid to memory; that is a substantial and learned digest of common places...because it is a counterfeit thing in knowledge, to be forward and pregnant, unless you be withal deep and full; I hold that the diligence and pains in collecting common-places, is of great use and certainty in studying; as that which subministers copy to invention; and contracts the sight of judgement to a strength.

—Francis Bacon, *The Advancement of Learning*

The Commonplace book was a central Renaissance method of gathering and organizing material from reading for use in composition at a later date. While there were many variations in methods of commonplacing, they all involved the consistent practice of collecting excerpts while reading—either by marking the margins of text for later copying or by copying as one read. These quotations were then transferred to a commonplace book in which they were organized by topic. Indeed, the English word “topic” derives from the Greek term for place, *topos*.

The use of commonplaces, or in Latin, *loci communes*, is derived from the rhetorical practice of invention: the process of finding arguments to support your case in a formal speech. This method became generalized to include the collection of quotations, or *sententiae*, drawn from important authors which might be used for illustration or ornament. There are two important metaphors used to describe the process: bees gathering nectar from flowers and transforming it into honey; and the process of consuming and digesting books (thus *Reader's Digest*). As this tradition evolved during the Renaissance, the aim was to produce a style of writing marked by *copia*—a varied style, with frequent and subtle allusion to classical and scriptural authority, displaying the writer's familiarity with and command of learned and literary culture.

THE COMMONPLACE BOOK ASSIGNMENT

Use of the commonplace book is intended to be a central part of the course, and of each student's reading. During the course you should compile a collection of quotations from the

plays read which you find interesting or pleasing. You should aim to gather ten quotations from each play, for a total of 120 for the whole year. Each quotation should be assigned to an appropriate topical heading.

The practice of assigning quotations to different headings is an important part of the exercise, because it accustoms you to think in terms of the categories which organized knowledge in the Early Modern period, and, in doing so, guides your reading in the future. You should make your collection either in an exercise book, with separate pages assigned to each topic, or electronically, with a printout handed in on the due dates. In either case, you should cite for each commonplace the play from which it comes with relevant act, scene, line numbers. No individual commonplace should be longer than four lines.

COMMONPLACE TOPICS

Here are a series of basic topics for your commonplace book. Feel free to add to or change the list that you use in order to reflect your own interests.

Faith; Kingship; Virtue; Vice; Love; Nature; Science; Time, Conscience; Reading and Writing; Marriage; Beauty; Fortune; Costume/Disguise; Reason; Truth; Travel; Liberty; Nobility; Family; Marriage & Single Life; Education; Discipline; Desire; the Body; Doubt; Justice; Empire; Colonialism.

It is appropriate to list the same quotation under different topical headings if it is relevant to more than one, but that quotation does not count twice towards the total number of quotations you are expected to gather.

EVALUATION

The commonplace exercise is worth 10% of your final grade. You will be assessed based upon the number and variety of your quotations and their appropriateness to their assigned topic. I will return your commonplace book at the final exam, where it may be used as a memory aid, quotation reference, etc. Please remember: no individual commonplace should be longer than four lines.

Submission of assignments:

- These may be handed in at class, given to me in person, sent to me (at the Department) by post or courier, or may be submitted to the essay box outside the Department of English office, where they will be date/time-stamped.
- Do *not* put assignments under my office door
- Essays submitted before 8:30 a.m. in the essay box are stamped with the previous day's date, and I accept those datings. (This means you can get a Friday date, up to 8:30 a.m. Monday.)
- Assignments posted to me will be counted as submitted on the postmark date; so, obtain and carefully keep proof of posting (ie., priority post receipt, recorded delivery receipt, etc).
- The Department will not accept assignments by fax or e-mail.
- Because of the prevalence of viruses, etc., on the internet, I will not open attachments to e-mails whose authenticity has not been independently verified.
- ***Be sure to keep a copy of all assignments submitted.***

Plagiarism (Senate statement): “Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea, or a passage of text from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offense (see Scholastic Offense Policy in the Western Academic Calendar). Plagiarism checking: The University of Western Ontario uses software for plagiarism checking. Students may be required to submit their work in electronic form for plagiarism checking.”

Please also consult the statement on plagiarism on the **INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS** sheet located on the English Department home page.

Grace days.

- You are each given six “grace days” in a full-year course which you can use all at once, or allocate them between your various term assignments (first essay, second essay, or whatever).
- These “grace days” are intended to accommodate the accidents that commonly happen (got writer’s block, had computer problems [especially viruses!], printer or typewriter ribbon/cartridge wore out, couldn’t get books, ran out of toner, dog ate notes, kid sister drew all over essay, cat threw up on notes, overslept, etc. etc.).
- Grace days are not transferable, nor do they have any value if unused.
- Grace days include only “academic days” – that means that Saturdays and Sundays are free. A wise course is to save your grace days until you really need them, particularly in second term when you will probably be under a lot more pressure than in first term.
- When your Grace Days are gone, they’re gone, and you’re faced with a late assignment (see next section).
- Students requiring further extensions based on medical or compassionate grounds must apply to the Academic Counselling office of their home Faculty. Please see page 5 for academic accommodation details.

Late assignments. If you submit a paper after the due date (plus whatever grace days you have remaining) but within two weeks of it, the paper will be counted as late and the following procedures will apply:

- The paper will not be read until all the assignments handed in on time have been read and returned (all papers are read in order of receipt).
- The paper will be read and a grade given, but NO COMMENTS OR CORRECTIONS will be made on it.
- The grade will be reduced by a penalty of two marks (2%) for each calendar day that it is late. Note that when a paper is late, every day counts (including weekends); however the arrangements for date-stamping essays in the Department of English essay box are accepted for late essays.

PAPERS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED IF SUBMITTED MORE THAN TWO WEEKS AFTER THE DUE DATE UNLESS PRIOR ARRANGEMENTS HAVE BEEN MADE.

Laptops

I do not permit the use of laptops in the classrooms (lecture and tutorial). Students may tape-record lectures if they have difficulty taking notes by hand. (Phone use in class is also prohibited. Please turn off your phones before class begins.)

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to MentalHealth@Western: <http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.