

## Department of English &amp; Writing Studies

English 3227E (002) – Shakespeare  
Fall/Winter 2015-16

**Professor:** Dr. Jo Devereux [jdevereu@uwo.ca](mailto:jdevereu@uwo.ca)  
**Office:** AHB 2G28J  
**Office Hours:** Tues. 1:30-2:30; Thurs 1:30-3:30

**TA:**  
**Office:**  
**Office Hours:**

Required Texts:Shakespeare, William. *As You Like It*.\_\_\_\_\_. *Hamlet*.\_\_\_\_\_. *King Lear*.\_\_\_\_\_. *Macbeth*.\_\_\_\_\_. *The Merchant of Venice*.\_\_\_\_\_. *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.\_\_\_\_\_. *Much Ado About Nothing*.\_\_\_\_\_. *Pericles*.\_\_\_\_\_. *Richard III*.\_\_\_\_\_. *The Taming of the Shrew*.\_\_\_\_\_. *Twelfth Night*.\_\_\_\_\_. *The Winter's Tale*.

Preferred Edition: New Folger, edited by Barbara A. Mowat and Paul Werstine and ordered into UWO Bookstore for this section of the course.

Assignments and Exams:

Two essays, one in each term	15% and 30% see below for details
Performance and Participation	20% see below for details
Final Exam April 2016	35%

**NOTE:** In accordance with Department of English standards, students must pass BOTH the term work and the final examination in order to pass the course.

Essay Policy:

You should hand in your essays in class or place them in the English Department Essay Drop Box in the hallway of AHB, near the main English Department Office located in room 2G02. ALWAYS KEEP A COPY OF YOUR ESSAY.

**Late essays** will be penalized 2% per day.

**Plagiarism:** See the English Department's statement on plagiarism:  
<http://uwo.ca/english/undergraduate/Student%20Information.html>

Academic Accommodation:

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

**Participation/Performance Work (20%)**

In the first hour of each Tuesday's class, beginning in our third full week together, we will forgo the formalities of a traditional university lecture and get down to the business of performance. I will be dividing the class into four groups, and each week you, the students, will run our final hour.

Our performance hour will begin with a scene study presentation by the group designated, for that week, as THE COMPANY.

- It will be the Company's job to stage a scene from that week's play, and to take up roles such as actors, director, dramaturge, and designers. The scenes you perform will be "poor" theatre in the best sense of the word: not a formal, heavily rehearsed performance, although you are free to bring props and costumes as you choose. Your primary task will be to work together to select a specific approach to the scene, and then be prepared to defend and explore your choices in class. This "thought work" is *the most important* component of your presentation!
- Those who aren't acting or directing in any given week must contribute behind the scenes, by helping to imagine potential visions for the scene, by imagining a design (be prepared to explain and discuss it!), or by applying dramaturgical (that is, critical, close-reading) skills to the text and then offering options to the actors and/or director.
- I would like each of you to try different roles over the course of the term: if you are shy, challenge yourself to try acting once; if you're a raging extrovert, challenge yourself to pull back a bit and let the quieter members of your group shine.
- The Company will need to read ahead, and agree on a scene (or scenes) to perform in advance of their scheduled Tuesdays. You need not clear your scene selection with me in advance, but please choose something that will take approximately 10 minutes to perform.
- Be prepared to meet outside of class for an hour or two, at least a couple of times, before each performance, and establish an informal email discussion list among yourselves in order to hammer out your basic choices and ensure everyone knows their jobs.
- Coordinating your schedules will not be easy. In fact, it's part of the challenge. But your groups are large because performance cannot happen with just a couple of people: theatre is made in the messy coordination between different personalities with different schedules and different needs. Do your best to accommodate everyone, to get to know one another, and to support one another; by the end of the term, you'll be glad these people are your colleagues; they may even be your friends!

- After each performance, and a short break, the Company will be asked to get back on stage and participate in a question-and-answer period. Each member of the Company should try to contribute something during the Q&A, especially those whose work has been primarily behind the scenes. This is the time for you to explore in depth, with your colleagues, the terrific thought work that has gone into your presentation!
- The final part of the class will involve a post-performance “talk-back” or discussion.
- When the week’s performance is over, the Company will take their break while the rest of us get into our designated groups. You will be given 10-15 minutes in your group to discuss the performance you’ve just seen, and to prepare two or three good challenging questions about the Company’s performance choices.
- In order to ensure that your group’s discussion runs smoothly, each of you will need to take some notes during the Company’s performance, bring those notes with you to your group’s “huddle,” and be prepared to talk about them.
- NOTE that the questions you develop must delve below the surface of what the Company is doing. Colleague-critics are reviewers with a difference: your task is to explore what worked and what didn’t, to probe the critical effects of the Company’s choices, to offer alternative readings, and to examine how others in the class received the performance (it’s a good idea to address some questions to your fellow audience members as well!). One important proviso: colleague criticism is designed to be helpful and respectful, not hurtful and derogatory.
- We hope to get a lively discussion going, and will bounce from group to group until either our time or your notes are exhausted. Support a strong, engaged class discussion!

Assessment:

- Your group work is the core component of your participation grade; you will be judged on the amount of effort you put into the work—NOT on your acting skills—and on your willingness to push yourself in new directions, beyond your comfort zone. Note that you need not play a major role in each presentation: balance your commitments to the group work as needed, but ensure that you are contributing helpfully in some way each time your group is The Company, and that you challenge yourself to contribute during your group’s discussions.
- **Attendance.** One of the keys to doing well at this assignment is attending regularly; the other key is being engaged when you attend. Each time you miss a performance during which your group is The Company without prior leave you will lose 5/20 marks. Attendance will be taken. Even if your group is not performing, your attendance is still required and appreciated. Each time you miss an “ordinary” Tuesday without prior leave, you will lose 1/20 marks.

Schedule:*Fall Term*

Sept. 10	Introductions, General Business
Sept. 15-17	Shakespeare's Theatre, Criticism, Bibliography
Sept. 22-24	<i>Taming of the Shrew</i>
Sept. 29-Oct. 1	<i>Taming of the Shrew</i> <b>Group 1 = The Company</b>
<b>NB: Field trip to Stratford on Saturday October 3<sup>rd</sup> to see <i>Taming of the Shrew</i>!</b>	
Oct. 6-8	<i>Richard III</i> <b>Group 2 = The Company</b>
Oct. 13-15	<i>Richard III</i> <b>Group 3 = The Company</b>
Oct. 20-22	<i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i> <b>Group 4 = The Company</b>
Oct. 27-29	<i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i>
Nov. 3-5	<i>The Merchant of Venice</i> <b>Group 1 = The Company</b>
Nov. 10-12	<i>The Merchant of Venice</i> <b>Group 2 = The Company</b>
Nov. 17-19	<i>Much Ado About Nothing</i> <b>Group 3 = The Company</b>
Nov. 24-26	<i>Much Ado About Nothing</i> <b>Group 4 = The Company</b>
Nov. 29-Dec. 1	<i>Hamlet</i>
Dec. 1-3	<i>Hamlet</i> ; <b>Essay 1 due on Dec. 3</b>
Dec. 8	TBA

*Winter Term*

Jan. 5-7	<i>Twelfth Night</i>
Jan. 12-14	<i>Twelfth Night</i> <b>Group 1 = The Company</b>
Jan. 19-21	<i>As You Like It</i> <b>Group 2 = The Company</b>
Jan. 26-28	<i>As You Like It</i>
Feb. 2-4	<i>Macbeth</i> <b>Group 3 = The Company</b>
Feb. 9-11	<i>Macbeth</i> <b>Group 4 = The Company</b>
Feb. 16-18	READING WEEK
Feb. 23-25	<i>King Lear</i>
Mar. 1-3	<i>King Lear</i> <b>Group 1 = The Company</b>
Mar. 8-10	<i>Pericles</i> <b>Group 2 = The Company</b>
Mar. 15-17	<i>Pericles</i> <b>Group 3 = The Company</b>
Mar. 22-24	<i>The Winter's Tale</i> <b>Group 4 = The Company</b>
Mar. 29-31	<i>The Winter's Tale</i>
Apr. 5	Review; <b>Essay 2 due</b>

Group/Play Breakdown:

Group 1: *Taming of the Shrew*, *Merchant of Venice*, *Twelfth Night*, *King Lear*

Group 2: *Richard III*, *Merchant of Venice*, *As You Like It*, *Pericles*

Group 3: *Richard III*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Macbeth*, *Pericles*

Group 4: *Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Macbeth*, *Winter's Tale*

Essay Assignments and Topics:

Essay 1: Due Dec. 3, 2015

Length: 1500 words

Worth: 15%

Choose ONE of the topics from the list of 10 below, and develop a clear and focused argument based on specific questions that you come up with on that topic. Remember: you need to ask some searching questions about the play, and then offer some thoughtful answers based on your reading of the play itself and of some (at least TWO) secondary sources on that play. Be sure to talk to the prof and TA well ahead of the due date about your ideas and proposed argument, and ask for help with research.

Essay 2: Due Apr. 5, 2016

Length: 2500 words

Worth: 30%

Choose *another* ONE of the topics from the list of 10 below, and develop a clear and focused argument on that topic looking at TWO plays on the course (NB: NOT the one you did for Essay 1). As with Essay 1, again you need to ask some searching questions about the plays and then offer some thoughtful answers based on your reading of the plays and some (at least FOUR) secondary sources. Be sure to talk to the prof and TA well ahead of the due date about your ideas and proposed argument, and ask for help with research.

**Essay Topics:**

1. plays within plays or metatheatrical elements
2. sexual politics or gender troubles
3. supernatural characters or effects
4. animal imagery
5. cross-dressing and/or disguise
6. the exile or outsider figure
7. images of food or drink or consumption
8. bodily or somatic imagery (e.g. blood, water, tears, body parts, synecdoche of those)
9. fathers and/or mothers
10. sibling rivalry, fratricide, primogeniture