

Department of English & Writing Studies

English 3331G (001)
Adapting Shakespeare
Winter 2026

Instructor: Dr. James Purkis
UC4412

jpurkis@uwo.ca

Office Hours will be posted on OWL

Prerequisites: At least 60% in 1.0 of English 1020-1999, or 1.0 of Film 1000-1999 plus [English 2112F/G](#), Film 2212F/G, or [Theatre Studies 2212F/G](#), or permission of the department.

Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

Instructor Information

Please drop into my office during office hours or send queries through email. I will normally reply to emails within 24 hrs. Monday to Friday. I am unlikely to reply to emails over the weekend. If you do not use your uwo email account, your message may not reach me or get opened. Complex questions are nearly always best discussed in person or, failing that, over Zoom.

Course Description

Shakespeare invented few of the plots of his plays; instead he used others' writings as models. Later artists (including stage and film directors, playwrights, and novelists) have likewise drawn on Shakespeare's plays as inspiration. This half-course explores this range of "Shakespearean adaptation" through close study of two major plays, *The Taming of the Shrew* and *Othello*, and some of the adaptations and artistic creations that they have inspired.

Course Objectives

By the end of the course, successful students will have attained:

- an increasingly advanced understanding of Shakespeare's drama and how it was created and first performed
- an understanding of the culture of early-modern England, particularly as it pertains to modern constructions of gender, sexuality, race, and class
- an advanced understanding of concepts and theories related to dramatic adaptation
- a developing facility with a variety of approaches, theories, and techniques that can be applied to the study of dramatic literature, including a critical awareness of knowledge systems that shape our analysis of the text.
- an ability to reflect on their own varied and intersecting positionalities and/or to think critically about ways in which the reception of Shakespeare, including adaptations of his work, reproduces or contests existing power structures
- proficiency with essential tools of literary scholarship, including library catalogues and content databases
- an introduction to specialized research tools and their uses
- an advanced ability to analyze a piece of literature within its specific cultural context

- an advanced ability to apply a variety of scholarly or theoretical approaches to the analysis of texts
- the opportunity to develop the capacity to engage in class discussions and respond meaningfully to lecture material and peer discussion while using textual evidence as support

Course Materials

Shakespeare Texts:

Modern editions of Shakespeare's plays differ. When one of Shakespeare's plays exists in divergent early versions, modern edited playtexts may be very different. It is therefore essential to attend to the text that you use. Classes will give references to, and use the texts of, the editions of *Othello* and *Shrew* provided by the FOLGER SHAKESPEARE LIBRARY. These are available free online at <https://www.folger.edu/explore/shakespeares-works/download/>

These online texts **do not** have commentaries or glosses. Commentaries and glosses are just-about essential for studying the play. You can buy physical copies of the Folger Shakespeare texts, which come with the explanatory notes not available in electronic form. These are inexpensive and reliable texts edited by Barbara Mowat and Paul Werstine. I strongly recommend that you get – and use (i.e. read and annotate) – these physical copies. They cost \$12.99 each and are in stock at the university Bookstore.

You may use other editions of Shakespeare's plays that provide explanatory notes and have useful introductions. These are plentiful and can often be picked up second hand. I recommend that you use texts from one of these series: Arden (Third Series), New Cambridge Shakespeare, or The Oxford Shakespeare. Older and less scholarly editions will not be as useful and may even be misleading. If you use any of these as your main texts, you will find that the lines and even scenes that are cited in class may not match your edition.

Other books:

- Keith Hamilton Cobb, *American Moor* (Paperback \$21.15; eBook \$16.92 - <https://www.bloomsbury.com/ca/american-moor-9781350165304/>)
- Djanet Sears, *Harlem Duet* (Paperback \$15.95 - <https://www.canadianplayoutlet.com/products/harlem-duet>)
- Anne Tyler, *Vinegar Girl* (Paperback \$22.00 - <https://www.penguinrandomhouse.ca/books/239448/vinegar-girl-by-anne-tyler/9780345809155>)

These are available at the Dellelce Family Bookstore on campus. You do not need to purchase these particular editions either new or second-hand, but I strongly recommend that you do so if possible.

Material posted on OWL Brightspace:

Charles Marowitz, *The Shrew*

Material available in Digital Facsimile (available through Library Services database):
David Garrick, *Catherine and Petruchio* (Edinburgh, 1756) Available through *Eighteenth Century Collections Online*. Make sure that you use this particular edition.

URL: https://go-gale-com.proxy1.lib.uwo.ca/ps/retrieve.do?tabID=Monographs&resultListType=RESULT_LIST&searchResultsType=SingleTab&retrievalId=6a19ce30-bf6a-498d-8a2e-5026fd8cf151&hitCount=4&searchType=AdvancedSearchForm¤tPosition=2&docId=GALE%7CCW0112425140&docType=Monograph&sort=Pub+Date+Forward+Chron&contentSegment=ZCEX&prodId=ECCO&pageNum=1&contentSet=GALE%7CCW0112425140&searchId=R2&userGroupName=lond95336&inPS=true

Film and Live Recording (available through Library Services databases):
Othello (2013, dir. Nicholas Hytner, National Theatre) available through Drama Online
10 Things I Hate About You (1999, dir. Gil Junger) available through Audio-Cine

Digital Edited Text (available through Library Services database):
John Fletcher, *The Tamer Tamed* (ed. Lucy Munro). Available through Drama Online.

Other material:

Course assignment details and material supplementing classes will be posted to OWL:
<https://westernu.brightspace.com/>

Students are responsible for checking the course OWL site (<https://westernu.brightspace.com/>) regularly for news and updates. This is the primary method by which information will be disseminated to all students in the class.

If students need assistance with the course OWL site, they can seek support on the [OWL Brightspace Help](#) page. Alternatively, they can contact the Western Technology Services Helpdesk. They can be contacted by phone at 519-661-3800 or ext. 83800.

Technical Requirements: Students will need access to high-speed internet and a computer capable of streaming video to watch the video material; they will also need access to a computer to complete and submit assignments.

Electronic Devices: Students without specific academic accommodation will write all in-class assignments and the final exam by hand. The use of electronic devices is not permitted for these assignments.

Methods of Evaluation

The grade for the course will be arrived at as follows:

Short Paper (600-800 words) (due February 13) – 15%
2 x In-Class Writing Assignment (February 5, March 19) – 10% each
2000-word Term Paper (due April 6) – 25%
Participation – 5%
2-hour Exam (in April exam period) – 35%

Short Paper (600 words, due February 13)

Please ensure that you support your reading with analysis of the primary text. Include a Works Cited and proper and correct referencing. You may, but need not, cite appropriate criticism.

Choose a passage of around thirty to forty lines from Garrick's adaptation of *Shrew*. Discuss how the passage alters or adds to Shakespeare's original play and the interpretative consequences of this adaptation. You may wish to address one or more of the following questions: what sort of meanings are created? How is interpretation of the *Shrew* story affected by the adaptation? What is lost?

In-class Writing Assignments (February 5, March 19)

45 minutes. Hand-written and with no reference to notes, texts, or electronic devices allowed. Students will be given either a passage analysis or a discussion question that calls for engagement with course material. I shall talk about the format and what will make for a strong response in class before the assignment.

Please note that the first in-class writing assignment is central to the learning objectives for this course. Accordingly, students seeking academic consideration for this assessment will be required to provide formal supporting documentation. Students who are granted academic consideration for this assessment will be provided with an opportunity to make up this work.

Term Paper (2000 words, due April 6)

Your essay should be presented in accordance with MLA Guidelines and must include TWO pieces of peer-reviewed secondary reading and a Works Cited list. Your essay will be graded on presentation, articulacy of expression, quality of interpretive analysis, relevance of your choice of secondary reading, and your ability to build that criticism into your own argument. Questions will be posted on OWL four weeks before the essay is due.

Participation

The grade will be founded on regular and punctual class attendance; demonstration of completion of assigned reading; meaningful and regular contributions to class discussion. Please note that interactions with the professor outside of class time will not count towards the participation grade.

Exam

A two-hour in-person exam. The format of the exam will be explained in class and a description of the format and the exam's rubrics will be posted to OWL in advance of the examination. Note that supporting documentation is **always** required for academic consideration requests for examinations scheduled by the office of the registrar

Additional Information

Please submit electronic copies (in MS Word and NOT pdf) of all out-of-class writing assignments through the course's OWL Brightspace site.

Statements of Academic Policies etc.

General information about missed coursework

Students must familiarize themselves with the *University Policy on Academic Consideration – Undergraduate Students in First Entry Programs* posted on the Academic Calendar:
<https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academicpolicies/appeals/academicconsiderationSep24.pdf>

This policy does not apply to requests for academic consideration submitted for **attempted or completed work**, whether online or in person. The policy also does not apply to students experiencing longer-term impacts on their academic responsibilities. These students should consult: Accessible Education.

For procedures on how to submit Academic Consideration requests, please see the information posted on the Office of the Registrar's webpage:

<https://registrar.uwo.ca/academics/academicconsiderations/>

All requests for Academic Consideration must be made within 48 hours after the assessment date or submission deadline.

All academic consideration requests must include supporting documentation; however, recognizing that formal documentation may not be available in some extenuating circumstances, the policy allows students to make one Academic Consideration request **without supporting documentation** in this course. However, the following assessments are excluded from this, and therefore always require formal supporting documentation:

- First in-class writing assignment
- Examination scheduled during official examination period.

Assignments with flexible deadlines and any term work that does not count towards the course grade are **not** eligible for additional consideration.

In response to this policy, and to make things easier for all of us, I am using a system of grace days, which – in effect – brings a flexible deadline to all assignments with the exception of the final exam and the in-class writing assignments. This is how the grace-days system works:

You are each given FIVE grace days, which you can use at once, or share between your assignments. You will not be penalized for a late submission as long as you can cover the delay through using your grace days. When your grace days are gone, they are gone, and you are faced with a late assignment. If you submit an assignment after the due date and the expiration of your grace days, the grade will be reduced by a penalty of 2% for each calendar day that it is late. Note that Senate regulations stipulate that **all assignments must be completed by the last day of classes**.

In the case of prolonged extenuating circumstances that exceed the five grace days, a request for academic consideration must be made to the Academic Advising office of the student's Faculty of Registration.

Documentation for medical illness, when required, includes the completion of a [Western Student Medical Certificate \(SMC\)](#) or, where that is not possible, equivalent documentation, by a health care practitioner.

Requests linked to examinations scheduled by the Office of the Registrar during official examination periods as well as practice laboratory and performance tests typically scheduled in the last week of term **always** require formal supporting documentation.

Attendance

Attendance is mandatory in all classes and tutorials. In cases of excessive absenteeism (e.g. more than 9 unexcused hours for a half course, 18 for a full course), which are not accounted for by either academic consideration or accommodation, students may be debarred from taking the final examination, and will receive an official warning to this effect by or before the course drop date (see Senate policy).

Gender-Based and Sexual Violence

Western is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence (GBSV) and providing compassionate support to anyone who is going through or has gone through these traumatic events. If you are experiencing or have experienced GBSV (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts at the following website: https://www.uwo.ca/health/student_support/survivor_support/get-help.html. To connect with a case manager or set up an appointment, please contact support@uwo.ca.

Intellectual Property/Copyright

All instructor-written materials (e.g. PowerPoints, lecture notes, oral lectures) for this course are created solely for students' personal use within the course, and remain the instructor's intellectual property. Further reproduction, fixation, distribution, transmission, dissemination, communication, or any other uses, without securing the consent of the copyright owner (the course instructor) may be an infringement of copyright. You may not distribute, email, or otherwise communicate these materials to any other person. These limitations extend to recording, photographing, or sharing lectures (online or in-person) and lecture material without permission. Posting the instructor's content from this course to online course sharing sites like OneClass or Course Hero without permission is both an infringement of intellectual property law and a violation of academic integrity guidelines. The instructor will pass these cases on to the Western University Ombudsperson or their Department Chair as appropriate. You may not record the classes unless you have permission, which will only be granted in accordance with an accommodation request from Accessible Education.

Religious Accommodation

Students should consult the University's list of recognized religious holidays, and should give reasonable notice in writing, prior to the holiday, to the Instructor and an Academic Counsellor if their course requirements will be affected by a religious observance. Additional information is given in the Western Multicultural Calendar.

Support Services

Registrarial Services <http://www.registrar.uwo.ca>

Student Support Services <https://student.uwo.ca/psp/heprdweb/?cmd=login>

Services provided by the USC <http://westernusc.ca/services/>

Academic Support & Engagement <http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/>

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.

Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence

The use of generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools/software/apps is not allowed on the course. The course is intended help students develop writing, critical-thinking, and research skills, and this development may be hampered by use of such tools. Sanctions for the use of AI in writing submitted work will match those for plagiarism. Should AI use be suspected, the instructor may ask the student for research notes, rough drafts, essay outlines, and other materials used in preparing the assignment. The students should therefore keep copies of all such material, and failure to produce material may weigh heavily against the student. The instructor may also ask the student to explain the genesis of the paper and ask questions that demonstrate the student's familiarity with the material and concepts addressed in the paper.

Academic Offences

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

Plagiarism

Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea or passage 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 offence.

Plagiarism Checking

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com <http://www.turnitin.com>.

All instances of plagiarism will be reported to the Chair of Undergraduate Studies. Proven cases of plagiarism will result in a grade of zero for the assignment. Subsequent offences will result in failure for the course.

Schedule of Classes and Assignments

CLASS SCHEDULE

THIS SCHEDULE IS OPEN TO MINOR REVISION. WE WILL ALMOST CERTAINLY STUDY THESE WORKS IN THIS ORDER, BUT THE TIMING MAY VARY.

JANUARY

Tu 6	Intro and hellos
Th 8	William Shakespeare, <i>The Taming of the Shrew</i>
Tu 13	William Shakespeare, <i>The Taming of the Shrew</i>
Th 15	William Shakespeare, <i>The Taming of the Shrew</i>
Tu 20	William Shakespeare, <i>The Taming of the Shrew</i>
Th 22	John Fletcher, <i>The Woman's Prize, or, The Tamer Tamed</i>
Tu 27	John Fletcher, <i>The Woman's Prize, or, The Tamer Tamed</i>
Th 29	David Garrick, <i>Catharine and Petruchio</i>

FEBRUARY

Tu 3	David Garrick, <i>Catharine and Petruchio</i>
Th 5	First In-Class Writing Assignment*
Tu 10	Charles Marowitz, <i>The Shrew</i>
Th 12	Charles Marowitz, <i>The Shrew</i>

14-22 SPRING READING WEEK | NO CLASSES

Tu 24	<i>10 Things I Hate About You</i>
Th 26	<i>10 Things I Hate About You</i> ; Anne Tyler, <i>Vinegar Girl</i>

MARCH

Tu 3	Anne Tyler, <i>Vinegar Girl</i> / <i>Shrew</i> conclusions
Th 5	William Shakespeare, <i>Othello</i>
Tu 10	William Shakespeare, <i>Othello</i>
Th 12	William Shakespeare, <i>Othello</i>
Tu 17	William Shakespeare, <i>Othello</i>
Th 19	Second In-Class Writing Assignment William Shakespeare, <i>Othello</i>
Tu 24	<i>Othello</i> , National Theatre Live performance.
Th 26	Djanet Sears, <i>Harlem Duet</i>
Tu 31	Djanet Sears, <i>Harlem Duet</i>

APRIL

Th 2	Keith Hamilton Cobb, <i>American Moor</i>
Tu 7	Keith Hamilton Cobb, <i>American Moor</i>
Th 9	Review / Reminders / Remainders

*** students seeking academic consideration for this assessment will be required to provide formal supporting documentation.**