

Department of English & Writing Studies

English 2191F (001)
Shakespeare in the Age of Me Too and Taylor Swift
DRAFT SYLLABUS
Fall 2026

Instructor: Dr M. J. Kidnie
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Office hours: Wednesdays 2:30-3:30, and
by appointment (Zoom) mjkidnie@uwo.ca

Prerequisites: At least 60% in any 1000-level or above “E” or combination of two 1000-level or above “F/G” courses from any department in the faculties of Arts and Humanities, Information and Media Studies (FIMS), or Music, or from the Department of Anthropology, the Department of History, the Department of Political Science, 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.

Land Acknowledgement:

Western University is situated on the traditional territories of the Anishinaabeg, Haudenosaunee, Lunaapeewak and Attawandaron peoples, who have longstanding relationships to the land and region of southwestern Ontario and the City of London. The local First Nation communities of this area include Chippewas of the Thames First Nation, Oneida Nation of the Thames, and Munsee Delaware Nation. In the region, there are eleven First Nation communities and a growing Indigenous urban population. Western values the significant historical and contemporary contributions of local and regional First Nations and all of the Original peoples of Turtle Island (North America).

Course Description

This course studies issues of intersectional identity, consent, and privilege in five plays by Shakespeare, with particular attention to the plays in production. Two of the texts will be in repertory at Stratford (*A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Othello*) and we will see *Dream* in live performance.

Objectives:

By the end of the course, successful students will be able to:

- analyze relations of power and choice as they play out in Shakespeare's drama in relation to race, gender, social rank, sexuality, and religion;
- analyze how genre shapes perceptions of individual and collective boundaries;
- describe a variety of performance choices and explain how they shape interpretation of character, theme, and/or situation;
- frame and develop evidence-based arguments, both orally and in written form.

Course Materials. All texts are required and are available at Bookstore. Feel free to use other editions and/or second-hand copies and/or a complete works, but you must bring physical copies of these texts to class that you can underline, circle, highlight, asterisk, add comments to in the margins and between the lines, and otherwise deface (or to put that differently, make entirely your own).

Shakespeare, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, ed. Barbara Mowat and Paul Werstine (\$12.99)

Shakespeare, *Measure for Measure*, ed. Barbara Mowat and Paul Werstine (\$12.99)

Shakespeare, *Troilus and Cressida*, ed. Barbara Mowat and Paul Werstine (\$12.99)

Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, ed. Barbara Mowat and Paul Werstine (\$12.99)

Shakespeare, *Othello*, ed. Barbara Mowat and Paul Werstine (\$12.99)

Plays We Will Study (all of these are required reading):

Shakespeare, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

Shakespeare, *Measure for Measure*

Shakespeare, *Troilus and Cressida*

Shakespeare, *Hamlet*

Shakespeare, *Othello*

Methods of Evaluation

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

1200-word performance analysis (15%)

Commonplace book (15%)

1500-word essay (15%)

5 x in-class quizzes (10%). Four quiz grades out of ten will be counted towards the course grade. *Not eligible for additional academic consideration.

Final exam (35%)

Participation (10%)

Students are fully responsible for looking at and being familiar with the information posted on the department website.

Additional Information

Late Paper Policy

If you submit a paper after the due date, the paper will be counted as late. The grade will be reduced by a penalty of two marks (2%) for each calendar day that it is late.

Extensions will only be considered if supported by a request for accommodation sent by students' Academic Counsellors in their home faculty (see below, "Academic Consideration").

Statements

Academic Consideration

Students may request academic consideration in cases of extenuating circumstances – that is, personal circumstances beyond the student's control that have a **substantial but temporary** impact on the student's ability to meet essential academic requirements.

1. Requests for academic consideration are made to the Academic Advising office of the student's Faculty of Registration.
2. Requests for academic consideration include the following components:
 - a. Self-attestation signed by the student;
 - b. Indication of the course(s) and assessment(s) relevant to the request;
 - c. Supporting documentation as relevant.

Requests without supporting documentation are **limited to one per term per course**.

Instructors may designate one assignment or assessment as exempt from this allowance. In this course, requests for academic consideration can be used for any assignment.

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

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). In classes with or without final exams, students who do not attend class will receive 0% for course participation grades. Unless other policies dictate a different set of penalties in specific English and Writing Studies programs, this will apply to all department programs.

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.

Accommodation Policies

Students with disabilities work with Accessible Education (formerly SSD) which provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive testing. The accommodation policy can be found here: [Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities](#).

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](#).

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 includes, but is not limited to, the unauthorized use of AI tools such as ChatGPT to create content that is submitted as one's own. In this course, students are permitted to use AI tools exclusively for information gathering and preliminary research purposes. Students must however critically evaluate the obtained information, exercise independent thinking, and engage in original research to synthesize and develop their own ideas, arguments, and perspectives. The use of AI tools can serve as a starting point for exploration, however students are expected to uphold academic integrity by appropriately attributing all sources and avoiding plagiarism. Assignments should reflect the student's own thoughts and independent written work.

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.

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.

Schedule of Classes and Assignments

1200-word performance analysis (15%)

Commonplace book (15%)

1500-word essay (15%)

5 x in-class quizzes (10%). Four quiz grades out of ten will be counted towards the course grade. *Not eligible for additional academic consideration.

Final exam (35%)

Participation (10%)

Timetable

SEPTEMBER

9 Introduction

14 *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

16 *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

21 *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

23 *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. First in-class quiz.

September 26, 8pm – *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at the Stratford Festival

28 Post-performance discussion

30 No class – National Day for Truth and Reconciliation

OCTOBER

5 *Measure for Measure*

7 *Measure for Measure*. Second in-class quiz.

October 10-18 – THANKSGIVING AND READING WEEK

19 *Measure for Measure*

21 *Measure for Measure*. Discussion of Gregory Doran, dir., RSC staging (2019). View it on Digital Theatre Plus (available through Weldon databases – this is a proprietorial site and not available by means of a Google search).

October 23 – Performance analysis due

26 *Troilus and Cressida*

28 *Troilus and Cressida*. Third in-class quiz.

NOVEMBER

2 *Troilus and Cressida*

4 *Troilus and Cressida*. Discussion of Gregory Doran, dir., RSC staging (2018). View it on Digital Theatre Plus (available through Weldon databases – this is a proprietorial site and not available by means of a Google search).

9 *Troilus and Cressida*

11 *Hamlet*

16 *Hamlet*

18 *Hamlet*. Fourth in-class quiz.

23 *Hamlet*. Discussion of Peter Pasyk, dir., Stratford Festival staging (2022). View it on Digital Theatre Plus (available through Weldon databases – this is a proprietary site and not available by means of a Google search).

25 *Othello*

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER

30 *Othello*

2 *Othello*. Fifth in-class quiz.

7 *Othello*. Discussion of Richard Twyman, dir., English Touring Theatre (2018). View it on Digital Theatre Plus (available through Weldon databases – this is a proprietary site and not available by means of a Google search).

9 Review.

December 9 – Commonplace book and final essay due