

Shakespeare in Performance (Summer 2025)

Instructor	Dr. M.J. Kidnie (she/her), University of Western Ontario mjkidnie@uwo.ca
Location	University of Waterloo, Stratford School of Interaction Design (room SSID 1004), 125 Patrick Street, Stratford
Dates and Time	Monday June 2 – Saturday June 14 (excluding Sundays and play performance days), 1:00-3:50pm

Course Description:

A historical, theoretical, and critical introduction to Shakespeare's plays in performance, this course focuses on specific concerns and various viewpoints in relation to productions in the current Stratford Festival season. As part of the course, students are required to attend *As You Like It*, *Macbeth*, and *The Winter's Tale*. Note that tickets to *Macbeth* are selling fast – you were contacted by email and instructed to book your tickets by May 15. If you haven't done that yet, move quickly!

Please use the promo code 117055 for discounted tickets to the following performances:*

As You Like It – Wednesday, June 4, 2pm

Macbeth – Saturday, June 7, 2pm

The Winter's Tale – Tuesday, June 10, 2pm

Other performances the discount promo code applies to (in case for some reason you have a conflict with our scheduled dates):

- *Macbeth* – June 5 @ 8pm
- *The Winter's Tale* – June 6 @ 8pm
- *The Winter's Tale* – June 8 @ 2pm
- *Macbeth* – June 10 @ 8pm
- *The Winter's Tale* – June 12 @ 8pm
- *Macbeth* – June 13 @ 8pm
- *Macbeth* – June 14 @ 8pm

* Please do not share this code, as it is meant exclusively for students enrolled in Shakespeare and Performance and Voice and Text.

Learning Outcomes:

- To foster a critical appreciation of selected plays by a foundational English writer and to provide some specific vocabulary and tools for close analysis of these texts and performances;
- To develop practices which situate Shakespeare's plays and their reception within various social, political, and cultural contexts in which they were produced and in which they are performed and read;
- To consider and discuss the relationship between text and performance.

Required Texts: Any good edition of the plays listed above (i.e. with a comprehensive introduction and footnotes) is acceptable. The Stratford Festival Bookstore will stock copies of the plays, if you need to purchase them. While you may find good editions of Shakespeare's works online, in class I would like you to have a physical copy.

Attendance Note: Because this is an intensive course, it is vital that you attend every session of the course in addition to the performances. In a compressed experience such as this, each absence is equivalent to missing a week or more of a regular course. If you are sick or unable to attend, please get in touch with me directly at mjkidnie@uwo.ca.

Territorial Acknowledgement: The University of Waterloo Stratford Campus is situated on the traditional territory of the Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee, and Ojibway/Chippewa peoples. This territory is covered by the Upper Canada Treaties.

Course Schedule (subject to minor changes):

Monday, June 2

Introduction to the course and to each other

As You Like It

Tuesday, June 3

1-1:50pm: Q&A with Christine Schindler, Archivist

2pm: *As You Like It*

Wednesday, June 4

Attend performance of *AYLI* at 2pm

5:15pm post-show chat with Christopher Allen (Orlando) and Aaron Krohn (Jacques). We'll meet Heather at steps of the Normal School after the performance.

Thursday, June 5

1-1:30: In-class chat with Ari Weinberg, Casting Director

Post-performance discussion of *AYLI*

In-class writing exercise

Friday, June 6

Macbeth

Saturday, June 7

Attend performance of *Macbeth* at 2pm

5:15pm post-show chat with Tom McCamus (Macbeth) and Lucy Peacock (Lady Macbeth).

We'll meet Sydney Fuhrman at the entrance of the Studio Theatre – located at the back of the Avon Theatre – after the performance.

SUNDAY – NO CLASS

Monday, June 9

Post-performance discussion of *Macbeth*

In-class writing exercise

The Winter's Tale: history and contexts

Tuesday, June 10

Attend performance of *The Winter's Tale* at 2pm

5:15pm post-show chat with *The Winter's Tale* cast (meet Heather by the large red bar in the lobby of the TPT after the performance)

Wednesday, June 11

1-2:10pm: Post-performance discussion of *The Winter's Tale*

2:20-2:50pm: In-class writing exercise

3-3:30pm: Q&A with Antoni Cimolino

Thursday, June 12

1:00-1:30: Q&A with Melissa Rood, Assistant Stage Manager, *Macbeth*

Friday, June 13

Wrap-up and review: Shakespeare in Performance

Saturday, June 14

In-class test (2 hours)

Class dismissed at 3pm after test

Date	Activities	Homework and Assignments
Mon, June 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introduction to the course and to each other• Shakespeare in Performance: contexts	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Think of questions for <i>Twelfth Night</i> cast members for after tomorrow's show• Think of questions for Costume Director Michell Barnier
Tues, June 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•	
Wed June 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Attend performance of <i>AYLI</i> at 2pm• 5:15pm post-show chat with <i>AYLI</i> cast (with?)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Submit writing exercise in class• Think of questions for <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> cast members for after tomorrow's show
Thurs June 13	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 5:15pm Post-Show Chat with <i>R & J</i> Cast (Curnock Hall)	

Fri June 14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Romeo and Juliet</i>: history and contexts • In-class writing exercise • 2:30pm Q & A with Marie Fewer-Muncic Stage Director R & J 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit writing exercise in class
Sat June 15		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Think of questions for Casting Director
Mon June 17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2:30pm Q & A with Ari Weinberg, Casting Director • In-class writing exercise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit writing exercise in class • Think of questions for <i>Cymbeline</i> cast members for after tomorrow's show
Tues June 18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend performance of <i>Cymbeline</i> at 2pm • 5:15pm Post-Show Chat with <i>Cymbeline</i> Cast (Dinner Rooney) 	
Wed June 19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2:30pm Q & A with Esther Jung, Director Of <i>Cymbeline</i> • In-class writing exercise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit writing exercise in class • Think of questions for Archivist Christine Schindler
Thus June 20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2:30pm Archives Presentation with Christine Schindler 	
Fri June 21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-class test from 1:00-3:00 • Class dismissed at 3 after test is complete 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write test in class
Sat June 22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summarizing Shax in Performance • Post class social hang 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit Performance Review by June 24th (see below)

Grade Breakdown:

Assignments and Activities	Weight
In-class presentation or initial writing assignment or participation [tbd]	20%
In-class writing exercises (4 x 10%)	40%

In-class test (Fri June 21)	20%
Performance Review (due June 24)	20%

Performance Review

Critically review a performance of *Twelfth Night*, *Romeo and Juliet*, or *Cymbeline*, commenting on overall production. Identify and comment on moments where in your opinion the performance altered/adapted/interpreted the text.

A “critical review” doesn’t describe the performance (also it is not necessarily negative – “critical” here means **that you are reflecting on the performance through a**). Instead, develop an argument around the choices and interpretations made in the performance. The best assignments will highlight interesting performance choices (especially ones that add to the performance history of Shakespeare), analyze why they are significant, and explain how they contribute to the tone or theme of the performance.

Length guideline: 750 words

How this assignment will be graded:

- **Identification of and insight into** the performance choices made by the director and actor(s). Build an argument based on specific elements of the performance.
- **Analysis** of the ways these choices relate to the text. Show your reader how the performance choices affect meaning, effect on the audience, etc.
- **Clear** and effective writing. Be sure to proofread and eliminate errors in style and grammar that can hinder the clarity of your writing.

This assignment should be submitted directly to my email address at okane@brocku.ca by **7:00pm on June 24th** (subject line: Performance Review). Late assignments cannot be accepted.

In-class writing exercises (4 x 10%)

Responses to a prompt given by the instructor related to the plays/performances/themes we’ve been discussing in class. You will have 30 minutes to complete each response. Further details will be provided in class.

How this assignment will be graded:

- **Ideas:** I’m looking for thoughtful, creative, insightful engagement with the topic at hand. There is no length requirement, but the response should contain the of detail of detail possible given 30 minutes of writing time.
- **Clear** and effective writing (but grammar and style are less important than they would be in a more polished piece of writing; it’s understood that this is a one-draft, time-limited exercise).

In-class test (Friday June 21)

This will be an essay-style response to a question based on the themes and details, as well as the features of the performances, of the plays that we've been considering. You'll be given two questions; and you'll be required to choose one to respond to. You'll be able to consult your hard copies of the play texts as part of the test. No other notes will be permitted. Further details will be made available in class.

How this assignment will be graded:

- **Insightful engagement** with the question; **breadth** (discussion of a range of plays/performances/ideas).
- **Clear** and effective writing (but grammar and style are less important than they would be in a more polished piece of writing; it's understood that this is a one-draft, time-limited exercise).

In-class presentation or initial writing assignment or participation [tbd]

University Policies:

Please note: Shakespeare in Performance is governed by a Memorandum of Understanding among five institutions: Brock, Guelph, Western, Windsor, and UW/St. Jerome's. The policies below are specific to students enrolled at Brock University. Students enrolled in one of the other four institutions are to follow the corresponding policies of their own university.

Academic integrity: Academic misconduct is a serious offence. The principle of academic integrity, particularly of doing one's own work, documenting properly (including use of quotation marks, appropriate paraphrasing and referencing/citation), collaborating appropriately, and avoiding misrepresentation, is a core principle in university study. Students should consult Section VII, "Academic Misconduct", in the "Academic Regulations and University Policies" entry in the Undergraduate Calendar, available at <http://brocku.ca/webcal> to view a fuller description of prohibited actions, and the procedures and penalties. Information on what constitutes academic integrity is available at <https://brocku.ca/academic-integrity/>

Accessibility: Student Accessibility Services collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. If you require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability on taking part fully in the course, please register with Student Accessibility Services for this course.