

# Shakespeare

ENG 311

Dr. Staffel

A survey of the plays of Shakespeare, including three comedies, three tragedies, one problem comedy, one romance, and one additional Shakespeare play that is being performed at the Globe or in Stratford during the course or a Renaissance play being performed in London or Stratford during the course.

## ***Main objectives & goals:***

At the conclusion of the course, students should be able to discuss Shakespearean dramatic literature (distinguishing the four sub-genres) with friends and colleagues, teach it at the secondary education level, and/or begin advanced study at the graduate level. They should also be familiar with basic methods of and sources for Shakespearean research and demonstrate their competence in using them. Likewise, on their various formal written assignments, students will demonstrate their ability to analyze Shakespearean texts and compose academic essays competently.

## ***Student assessment***

Students will be assessed in four ways—1) Longish, objective reading quizzes (take-home) that students will complete prior to beginning study of a play; the primary purpose of these in-depth quizzes is to ensure the students have a good working knowledge of the plots prior to discussing ideas within the plays. [I will drop the lowest grade of the nine—everyone has a bad day.] 2) Final exam consisting of a section of identifications (passages from the plays) and a section of essays. This is a take-home exam—I will select four passages from each play from which they will choose three to identify by play, speaker[s], and significance. [They will be able to choose up to three of the “leftovers” as extra credit.] I will compose three essay topics for each of the three sections of plays, and they will select one from each section to write an essay of approximately 750 words. 3) Brief research project based upon a selection from Neil MacGregor’s *Shakespeare’s Restless World: A Portrait of an Era in Twenty Objects*. The students will write a brief research essay (1000-1500 words) and present an oral summary to the class. 4) Final class period “mystery matching” test, required but exclusively for extra credit (up to 5 points), that will have four characters from each play (45) to match with a punning or puzzling description of each character—no preparation necessary or encouraged; after all, we’ve been immersed in this stuff for a month! [I have appended one of my previous tests to this document for your perusal. Oh, and also an answer sheet, if you wanna have a go . . . ]

## ***Prerequisites & academic credit equivalencies***

Students should have passed their college writing requirements and are encouraged to have a basic survey of British Literature. The course should have a three credit hour value on a semester calendar or its quarter equivalent.

## Syllabus

### **Week #1:**

- Monday: Course introduction, background on WS and his times,  
WS's Theatre, & an introduction to Shakespearean comedy
- Tuesday: *The Comedy of Errors*
- Wednesday: *A Midsummer Night's Dream*
- Thursday: *Twelfth Night* OR *As You Like It*

### **Week #2:**

- Monday: Introduction to tragedy, Classical (Aristotle's *Poetics*) & Renaissance
- Tuesday: *Macbeth*
- Wednesday: *Julius Caesar*
- Thursday: *Othello*

### **Week #3:**

- Monday: Introduction to history plays, the Romance, & the problem comedies
- Tuesday: *Measure for Measure* OR *All's Well that Ends Well*
- Wednesday: *Henry V* OR *Richard II*
- Thursday: *The Tempest* OR *The Winter's Tale*
- [Distribute Final Exam, due Thursday (5 PM) of Week #4]

### **Week #4:**

- Monday: Presentation of research projects and submission of paper.
- Tuesday: no classes while students work on final exam
- Wednesday: no classes while students work on final exam
- Thursday: "Mysterious Matching Final Test" [required but extra credit—no studying allowed].

### **Final Exam due by 5 PM**

- Friday: End of course discussion & evaluation