

BHP 201 The Age of Shakespeare

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Course Objectives: We will study the cultural history of Elizabethan and Jacobean England and its visual and literary arts. More specifically, the course will investigate the peculiarly English synthesis of the old and new, Medieval and Renaissance, Continental and English in the arts and ideas of the Age of Shakespeare. To this end, we will read several plays and poems by Shakespeare, paying attention to his use of language and to the historical, political, religious and other cultural issues related to the plays. We will also read various historical documents and artifacts to help us discuss topics such as cultural criticism, aesthetics, canon formation and analytical models. Through a close, critical reading of the playwright's representative works and related historical documents, you will

- Understand, analyze and appreciate some of the best pieces by the bard;
- obtain comprehensive knowledge of the culture and material conditions that affected his writing;
- discuss the ways in which his writing has been interpreted and appreciated in different time periods and cultural contexts (including our own time and culture);
- acquire proficient critical reading skills that will allow you to read any piece of literature from the period with competence;
- show your ability to write well-organized, well-informed argumentative essays that demonstrate your understanding of accepted conventions of standard written English and best practices in academic writing;
- and demonstrate your ability to engage in intellectual discussion and articulate your opinions and ideas in oral and written communications.

University Learning Outcomes and Student Learning Outcomes

Written communication, Critical Thinking, Information Literacy:

Show your ability to write well-organized essays that demonstrate your understanding of accepted conventions of standard written English and best practices in academic writing.

Written communication, Oral Communication:

Demonstrate your ability to engage in intellectual discussion and articulate your opinions and ideas in oral and written communications.

Connected Learning:

Obtain comprehensive knowledge of the culture and material conditions that affected Shakespeare's writing.

Critical thinking:

Understand, analyze and appreciate some of the best pieces by Shakespeare.

Diversity: Mutual respect and a commitment to inclusiveness are crucial to a positive learning environment. In this course, we will honor the diversity of all members of the Rider community by fostering a learning environment that is respectful of other classmates based on their identities and past experiences, including race, ethnicity, national origin, gender, sexuality, age, religion, culture, veteran status, and disability. We encourage any student who has concerns about the climate of this classroom or the behavior of others in the class to discuss matters with us.

Students with Disabilities: Please talk to us about special accommodations as soon as possible.

Grading:

Mid-term Exam: 20%

Final Exam: 30%

Discussion Forums: 20%

Term Paper: 25%

Attendance and Participation: 5%

Extra credit: None

5: attends every class, shows enthusiasm, offers insightful comments frequently

4: attends almost every class, offers input sometimes

3, 2: attends regularly, but input is limited

1, 0: irregular attendance and shows little or no interest

GRADING SCALE:

| | |
|---------------|-----------|
| A (Excellent) | 94 - 100% |
| A- | 90 - 93% |
| B+ | 87 - 89% |
| B (Good) | 84 - 86% |
| B- | 80 - 83% |
| C+ | 77 - 79% |
| C (Fair) | 74 - 76% |
| C- | 70 - 73% |
| D | 60 - 69% |
| F | 0 - 59% |

Discussion Forums: At least one hour prior to each class meeting, go to Canvas discussion forum for the day. First read what other students have written about the day's assignment (unless you are the first one to start the discussion thread), respond to them, and then write your own entry of at least 100 words about your take on the assigned reading. Be sure to refer to specific lines or passages when you make a point. Feel free to raise a question, but when you do, please

propose your own tentative answer as well. Late submissions receive no credit. Your comments help us plan our lessons.

Performance/movie reviews: Review and evaluate the performance, not the original script/play. No need to summarize the plot since we all know it. Pay attention to the ways in which the play is interpreted and presented by the actors and directors. Costumes? Stage? Music? Camera work (movie)? Lighting? Casting? Acting? How does the production/movie deviate from the original play? If anything has been changed, why? If very little is changed, why? Is the performance/movie effective because of the changes? Do you agree with the director's interpretation of the play? Be sure to provide examples to support your claims. Watch the production/movie again (and again) to ensure your review is fair to the actors, directors, and staff.

Research Paper: 8-10 pages in length (approximately 2500 words). Present an argument concerning one or more of the plays on the syllabus, properly citing at least three secondary sources. You may cite as many primary sources as you need. The paper should be typed, double-spaced, with 1-inch margins, in 10-to-12- point font, without gratuitous spelling or grammatical errors, and using MLA citation format (in-text citations with a Works Cited page at the end). Submission will be online (Canvas-assignment).

Textbooks: *Elizabethan World Picture*. E. M. Tillyard.
The Taming of the Shrews (Folger Library Shakespeare)
The Merchant of Venice (Folger Library Shakespeare)
As You Like It (Folger Library Shakespeare)
Othello (Folger Library Shakespeare)
The Tempest (Folger Library Shakespeare)

- You can use other editions, but please be aware there are differences among various editions.

Reading and discussion schedule:

- 9/7: Intro to the course
- 9/12: Read *The Elizabethan World Picture* (up to Page 60, end of "The Stars and Fortune")
In-class movie "Shakespeare in Love"
- Go to Discussion Forum for Sept 10. Read what your classmates have written, respond to them (via threaded reply) and write your own response. If you happen to be the first to write, return at a later point to respond to other people's posts. Each discussion thread is meant to be a conversation among classmates.
- 9/14: Read *The Elizabethan World Picture* (up to the end)
In-class documentary "Shakespeare in Love" (bonus feature-"in the classroom")
Discussion forum
- 9/19: *The Taming of the Shrew* (Induction, Acts 1-2)
Discussion forum
- 9/21: Read *The Taming of the Shrew* (Acts 3-4)
Discussion forum
- 9/26: Read *The Taming of the Shrew* (Act 5)

- “A Homily of the State of Matrimony” (Canvas-files)
 “A Looking Glass for Married Folks” (Canvas-files)
 “The Law’s Resolutions of Women’s Rights” (Canvas-files)
 Discussion forum
- 9/28: Watch a performance of *The Taming of the Shrew*
- [Taming of the Shrew \(Stratford festival\)](#)
 - If the link above does not work, go to the Library’s website, click on the “databases” and find “Digital Theatre+.” Search for “Taming of the Shrew” and find the production by Stratford Festival (not Royal Shakespeare Company” or Broadway Digital Archive).
 - Post your review of the performance in the discussion forum
- 10/3: Read *The Merchant of Venice* (Acts 1-2)
- Discussion Forum
- 10/5: Read *The Merchant of Venice* (Act 3-4)
 Discussion Forum
- 10/10: Read *The Merchant of Venice* (Act 5)
 “The Case of Doctor Lopez” (Canvas-files)
 “Causes of the Miseries of Jews” (Canvas-files)
 “Judaizing Christians in the 1590s” (Canvas-files)
 “Parliamentary Debate on Usury, April 19, 1571” (Canvas-files)
 “An Apology for the Honorable Nation of the Jews” (Canvas-files)
 Discussion Forum
- 10/12: Watch a movie online (Canvas-Media Gallery): *The Merchant of Venice*
- Discussion Forum
- 10/17: Exam 1
- 10/19: Read *As You Like It* (Acts 1 & 2)
 Discussion Forum
- 10/24: Read *As You Like It* (Acts 3 & 4)
 Discussion Forum
- 10/26: Read *As You Like It* (Act 5)
 “The Benefit of a Liberal Education” (Canvas-files)
 “Boundaries between Animal and Human” (Canvas-files)
 “Humans versus Animals” (Canvas-files)
 “How Sheep Devour the English” (Canvas-files)
 “Enclosure, Vagrancy, and Sedition in the Tudor-Stuart Period” (Canvas-files)
 “Proto-ecological Epigrams” (Canvas-files)
 Discussion forum
- 10/31: Watch a performance of *As You Like It*
 Digital Theatre+ in the library’s database. Find “As You Like It” produced by the Royal Shakespeare Company (**Directed by** Kimberley Sykes, 2019 in Stratford-upon-Avon)
 Discussion Forum
- 11/2: Read *Othello* (Acts 1-2)
 Discussion Forum
- 11/7: Read *Othello* (Acts 3-4)
 Discussion Forum
- 11/9: Read *Othello* (Act 5)
 “Blackness and Moors” (Canvas-files)

- Discussion Forum
- 11/14: Watch *Othello*, a movie in Canvas-My Media
- Discussion Forum
- 11/16: Read *The Tempest* (Acts 1-2)
- Discussion Forum
- 11/21: Read *The Tempest* (Acts 3-4)
- Discussion Forum
- 11/23: Thanksgiving
- 11/28: The Tempest (Act 5)
- “Of the Cannibals” (Canvas-files)
 - “True Repertory of the Wrack” (Canvas-files)
 - “A Discovery of the Barmudas” (Canvas-files)
 - “Reasons for Colonization” (Canvas-files)
 - “Letter to Philip-, Great Prince of Spain” (Canvas-files)
 - “The Monster Caliban”
- 11/30: Research Papers due
- Presentations of papers
- 12/5: Watch a performance of *The Tempest* online (link below)
- [Tempest by Royal Shakespeare Company](#)
 - Or find the university library's "Databases" and then "Digital Theatre+." Once you are in Digital Theatre+, enter "*Tempest*" in the search area. Enjoy watching the Royal Shakespeare Company's "*Tempest*" directed by Gregory Doran.
 - Post your review in Discussion Forum
- 12/7: Review
- 12/15 (Thu): Final Exam, 3:30-5:30 p.m.