

Rhode Island College
English 346
Shakespeare's Tragedies

Goals

I expect that when you have read Shakespeare's works before you have read them as the works of a "great author" isolated from his cultural and historical context. This course takes a different approach, so, through doing the reading, listening to lectures, and participating in discussion you will increase your understanding of the plays in a number of ways:

§ You will read materials and hear lectures that will enable you to think about the plays within the literary, historical, social, and intellectual contexts of late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century England.

§ You will come to comprehend the language, characterization, structure, and themes of the plays at a more sophisticated level by completing various exercises that help you to refine the techniques of literary analysis that you learned in English 201

§ You will come to appreciate the plays as texts for performance by thinking about performance conditions in Shakespeare's day -- costumes, design of the stage, acting style -- and by looking at interpretations of the plays in a variety of modern media -- film, illustrated retellings, art.

§ The end result of all this effort will be, I hope, delight in the plays and confidence in your ability to understand and appreciate them and to communicate that understanding and appreciation to others.

Required Texts -- available at the Off Campus Bookstore

1. *The Norton Shakespeare: Essential Plays* ISBN-13: 978-0-393-93313-0.

If you wish to use some other edition of the plays, please check with me.

2. Machiavelli, *The Prince*, Dover Thrift 0-486-27274-5

3. Many materials that I will distribute by means I have yet to figure out. I am trying to avoid simply photocopying because the department is short of paper. On the syllabus, these reading are called "Packet." It is essential that you print out these materials. More on this later.

Other sources of information

Books on Shakespeare can be found in the library at PR2800-2999. You might find it interesting just to browse through them.

Useful reference works are:

The Harvard Concordance to Shakespeare -- RIC Reference PR2892.S6)

Who's Who in Shakespeare -- RIC Reference PR2989.Q4

Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare (many volumes) -- PR2952.B8

The *Oxford English Dictionary* online; see, "Using the *O.E.D.*" in this Handbook.

www.Folger.edu --the Folger Shakespeare Library site, especially useful for teachers, fun for all.

www.WWNorton.com/literature. If you bought a new textbook for this class or, indeed, any new textbook from Norton, you should have received an access code. If you bought a used copy of the textbook, you may purchase web access; go to the site for information.

Productions of most of the plays that we are reading are available on video/dvd and on cd/tape.

Students with disabilities

Please contact Disability Services (8061) early in the semester in order to take advantage of the many services they offer and to arrange accommodations for this course, if necessary; also, let me know.

Requirements

1. Oral presentation of a passage: Each member of the class must present a 5-7 minute oral analysis of a 15-20 line passage. The passage must be drawn from the part of the play assigned to be read on the day on which you present. On the day of the presentation, you must turn in a passage worksheet (see #3, below) on the passage about which you present. See, “How to Prepare and Present the Passage You Select” in this handbook. There will be no make-ups without prior permission to postpone. Sign-ups will be on September 7; presentations will begin on September 14. Think about which play you want to do and which date works for you. Worth a maximum of 40 points.

3. Two papers on different plays. One paper must be turned in by **October 19**.

One passage paper: Expand and develop your oral presentation into an interpretive essay on the passage or scene. “How to develop your passage presentation into a paper” in this handbook. Due one week after your oral presentation. Worth a maximum of 100 points.

One topic paper: I will hand out topics for papers for each play we read; you may not write on your oral presentation play. See the syllabus for due dates. Last due date with the possibility of revising: November 19; last possible due date with no revision possible: December 3. Worth a maximum of 100 points.

3. Passage worksheets: You must fill in two passage worksheets in addition to the one that accompanies your oral presentation (3 worksheets in total). The first one is due September 10. You may turn in the other anytime up to November 9. Worksheet 1 is worth a maximum of 30 points. Worksheet 2 is worth a maximum of 40 points.

4. Study Questions: Answers to one set of study questions. Questions will be available for most plays. Questions must be turned in on the last day the class discusses a play. See syllabus for dates. Last possible date to turn in study questions is November 23. Maximum of 40 points

5. Attendance at the Gamm production of Romeo and Juliet. You must turn in a written critique of the performance and your ticket stub within one week of seeing the play. See, “Critique Instructions” in the handbook. Worth a maximum of 40 points.

6. A midterm and a final exam. Each is worth a maximum of 100 points.

7. Class attendance and participation: Discussion is essential to the success of this class; therefore, you must come and you must talk, at least sometimes. Frequent thoughtful participation will be rewarded; more than 3 absences will lower your grade. Participation also includes any small assignments such as lists. Worth a maximum of 40 points.

8. RIC Policies

1. Please note: Any student with a documented disability is welcome to contact me as early in the semester as possible so that we may arrange reasonable accommodations. As part of this process, please be in touch with the Coordinator of Services for Students with Disabilities, Disability Related Services for Students office at Craig-Lee 127, 456-8061.
2. Pursuant to the RIBGHE Rhode Island College does not discriminate based on race, color, creed, national or ethnic origin, gender, religion, disability, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, or expression, marital/citizenship status, or status as a special disabled veteran, Vietnam veteran, or any other veteran who served active duty during war or campaign or expedition for which a campaign badge has been authorized.
3. This classroom is a safe classroom for all students. Negative discrimination toward any one, through words of actions, will not be tolerated, based on but not limited to, race, color, creed, national or ethnic origin, gender, religion, disability, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, or expression, marital/citizenship status, or status as a special disabled veteran, Vietnam veteran, or any other veteran who served active duty during war or campaign or expedition for which a campaign badge has been authorized.
4. RIC's Academic Dishonesty Policy can be found in the Rhode Island College Handbook of Policies, Practices, and Regulations (Chapter 3: *Academic policies and procedures*, pp. 32-34, section 3.9.1), and will be followed in this class.

I do not accept extra credit work.

Grading system:

There are 630 total points for the semester. The maximum of possible points for each assignment is listed above. A = 579.6 and above (92%); A- = 567-579.5 (90 - 91.9%); B+ = 554.4-566.9 (88% - 88.9%); etc.

Syllabus

The introductions to the plays in *The Norton Shakespeare* are required, but they are not listed individually on the syllabus. Please read the introduction to each play on the first day that the play is assigned. Other reading from Norton is indicated on the syllabus. N means *The Norton Shakespeare*

Please remember to do the additional reading. Do not just read the play. "Packet" refers to readings that I will distribute, leave at Reserve in the library, or post. Packet readings will be on the exam and quizzes.

Readings should be completed before the meeting for which they are assigned.

August 31	Introductory lecture: Plan of course Shakespeare's life and times How to read a play by Shakespeare Elizabethan theories of tragedy
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- September 4 Reading: *Julius Caesar*, Acts 1 and 2
 “The Shakespearian Stage” (N. 79-99)
 Thomas Platter on *Julius Caesar* (N. 1739)
 “Other Accents... Elizabethan pronunciation” (packet)
- September 10 Reading: *Julius Caesar*, Acts 3 and 4
 “Reading the Poetry of Shakespeare’s Plays”(handbook)
- September 14 Reading: *Julius Caesar*, complete
 “Using the O.E.D.” (handbook)
 Writing: Passage worksheet #1 due
- September 17 Reading: *Romeo and Juliet*, Acts 1-2
 Extract from a source of *RJ* (packet)
 Elizabethan love poetry (packet)
 Meter 1: Examples from *Romeo and Juliet* (packet)
 Writing: scan a few lines on page 2 of Meter 1
- September 21 Reading: *Romeo and Juliet*, Acts 3-4
 Saviolo His Practice (packet)
 betrothal and wedding images (packet)
- September 24 Reading: *Romeo and Juliet*, complete
 Garrick’s version (packet)
 Writing: optional study questions on *RJ* due
 Julius Caesar papers due
- September 28 Reading: *Hamlet*, Act 1
 a definition of revenge tragedy (packet)
 “Melancholy” (packet)
 “Demonology” (packet)
 “The Nature of Man” (packet)
- October 1 Reading: *Hamlet*, Acts 2 and 3
- October 5 Reading: *Hamlet*, Act 4
 Selection from *Motives of Woe* (packet)
 Writing: *Romeo and Juliet* papers due
- October 8 Reading: *Hamlet*, complete
 Writing: optional *Hamlet* study questions due
- October 12 NO CLASS Columbus Day
- October 13 SPECIAL EXTRA CLASS attendance required
 Reading: *Othello*, Acts 1-2
 images of actors dressed as Othello (packet)

- October 15 MIDTERM
- October 19 Reading: *Othello*, Act 3
Passions of the Mind (packet)
image of courtesan (packet)
- October 22 Reading: *Othello*, Act 4
Writing: *Hamlet* papers due -- **Last date for first paper**
- October 26 Reading: *Othello*, complete
the source of *Othello* (handout)
Writing: Required of everyone: list of 6 changes Shakespeare made when adapting the source
- October 29 Reading: *King Lear*, Act 1
Machiavelli, *The Prince*, chapters 1,5,6,8,9,15-26
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- November 2 Reading: *King Lear*, Acts 2 and 3
Fool handout (packet)
Writing due: Required of everyone: list of six places that you see the influence of the Prince in *King Lear* -- be precise; cite the example and state the place in Machiavelli that you see as influential.
- November 5 Class canceled
- November 9 Reading: *King Lear*, Act 4
Critical essay: Charney, "We put fresh garments on him" (packet)
Writing: *Othello* papers due
Charney worksheet (packet)
- November 12 Reading: *King Lear*, Act 5
Historical sources of *KL* (packet)
Writing: **last possible due date** for passage worksheet 2
- November 16 Reading: *Macbeth*, Acts 1-3
"Equivocation" (packet)
"Countess of Lincoln's Nursery" (packet)
- November 19 Reading: *Macbeth*, Acts 4 - 5
Simon Forman on *Macbeth* (N. 1064-6)
In class: Discuss acts 4-5
Begin watching *Throne of Blood*, a version of *Macbeth* set in Japan, directed by Kurosawa.

Writing: *King Lear* papers due
Writing: **LAST DATE** for topic papers if you want to have the
opportunity to revise

November 23 Reading: *Macbeth*, complete
In class: *Throne of Blood*

November 26 No Class -- Thanksgiving

November 30 Reading: *Macbeth*, complete
“News from Scotland” (packet)
Writing: Required of everyone: List 6 ways that *Throne of
Blood* resembles or differs from *Macbeth* and list 6
similarities and differences of the witches in *Macbeth*
from the witches (suspected witches) in *News* or of
other thoughts that the reading provoked.
Writing: *Macbeth* study questions due.
Last date to turn in study questions.

December 3 Reading: *The Winter's Tale*, Acts 1-2
Supplemental as assigned
Writing: *Macbeth* papers due.
Last possible due date for papers.
No late papers accepted.

December 7 Reading: *The Winter's Tale*, Acts 3-5
pastoral poetry (packet)

December 10 PARTY! Please bring food and drink.