

ENG296Y / Virtual Summer Abroad 2021
Topics in English Literature: Shakespeare
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Course Description

What's so great about Shakespeare? This question will be the starting point for a course in which you will have the opportunity to learn everything you ever wanted to know, and to ask every question you ever wanted to ask, about Shakespeare—as well as to learn things and ask questions that you had never thought of before. We will read four plays by Shakespeare in this course—a comedy, a history, a tragedy, and a romance—juxtaposed with two adaptations and several filmed productions of the plays. By attending to Shakespeare's plays across genres and considering how artists and theatre-makers have responded to and transformed these plays over time, we will also engage the possibilities for cultural analysis and performance that Shakespeare's plays offer for us today.

Each week of this four-week course will focus on one play. We will explore the play by reading it, viewing filmed clips (and at least one full-length filmed production), and watching or reading an adaptation—and we will think through these materials as fodder for collective and lively discussion. Each week's schedule will also include a virtual field trip in which we will, individually and collaboratively, digitally explore a site or institution that has been crucial to the production or survival of Shakespeare's plays over the past four hundred years. Finally, each week you will complete one short writing assignment—designed to allow you to hone your analytical skills and critical proficiency—focused on the play of the week, before we conclude the course with a final project of your choice.

Reading

Four plays by Shakespeare, including *Twelfth Night*, *Richard II*, *Macbeth*, and *Cymbeline*, along with Sulayman Al-Bassam's *The Speaker's Progress* and Eleanor Brown, *The Weird Sisters*. We will also view, in part and whole, a number of filmed theatrical productions.

Coursework

Two short writing exercises (20% total), two short performance responses (20% total), reading quizzes (10% total), one final project (30%), and class participation (20%).

Brief Course Outline

Week 1:

Key Text: Shakespeare, *Twelfth Night*

Production: Royal Shakespeare Company video

Adaptation: Sulayman Al-Bassam, *The Speaker's Progress*, MIT Global Shakespeares video archive

Virtual field trip: Shakespeare's Stratford and the 1623 Folio

Performance Response: analyzing adaptation

Week 2:

Key Text: Shakespeare, *Richard II*

Production: Globe Theatre/Wanamaker video

Adaptation: Public Theater radio play

Virtual field trip: Globe Theatre & digital history of the City of London

Writing Exercise: close reading response

Week 3:

Key Text: Shakespeare, *Macbeth*

Production: Tabletop Shakespeare video

Adaptation: Eleanor Brown, *The Weird Sisters*

Virtual field trip: Ashmolean museum and Bodleian Library online, Oxford

Performance Response: scene annotation

Week 4:

Key Text: Shakespeare, *Cymbeline*

Production: Royal Shakespeare Company video

Adaptation: South Sudan Theatre Company, Globe to Globe Festival video

Virtual field trip: British Library curation

Writing Exercise: soliloquy analysis