

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 several plays by Shakespeare in this course—ranging across comedy, history, tragedy, and romance—and we will watch several productions to encounter the most famous early modern playwright's work through the live medium of performance. 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 engage the possibilities for cultural analysis and performance that Shakespeare's plays offer for us today.

Required Course Texts:

Four plays by Shakespeare, including: *All's Well That Ends Well*; *Macbeth*; *Richard III*; and *The Tempest*. We will be able to watch three of these plays in performance (at the Globe Theatre and the Royal Shakespeare Company's theatre in Stratford-upon-Avon). Please purchase a scholarly edition (e.g. Cambridge, Oxford, Folger, Norton) of the play, or use an anthology such as *The Complete Pelican Shakespeare*.

Course Requirements: [percentage of final grade given in brackets]

More information will be given about each assignment as we approach the due dates. You will also find the full assignment prompts posted online on our course Quercus site.

- 1) Two short close reading exercises (2 pages each) [2 x 15%: 30% total]:
Working with the material of a single scene in one of the plays we have read, this focused writing requires you to attend to the relationship between literary form and content.
- 2) Two short performance responses (2 pages each) [2 x 15%: 30% total]:
Drawing upon evidence from productions or adaptations, this focused writing requires you to make an argument about the significance of the text in performance.
- 3) Quizzes and Class Participation [15%]:
Make the most of your experience by coming to class, on time, with the course text and an idea about the day's reading. Quizzes, which will focus on readings for the day, are unannounced and cannot be made up if missed. Class participation is about demonstrating preparation for class—which you can best achieve by reading carefully and thinking about questions prompted by the plays we read and watch.
- 4) Final Project [25%]:
For the final project, you will produce an annotation of a single scene from one of the plays we have studied. The annotation will be accompanied by a position paper (ca. 2,000 words / 7-9 pages), explaining and analyzing the choices that you made, drawing upon textual analysis from the play and performance insights from the productions we have seen.