

ENG 1300: Introduction to Shakespeare, Fall 2018
Oakland University College of Arts and Sciences
Department of English

Professor Gower-Toms
Course number 44344
Section 006, 4 credits
Tuesday, Thursday, 3:00-4:47pm
163 South Foundation Hall
Office Hours: 10:00am-noon, TR
and by appointment
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gowertoms@oakland.edu

University Course Description: A general introduction to representative dramatic works of Shakespeare. Satisfies the university general education requirement in the literature knowledge exploration area.

Prerequisites: None

General Education Learning Outcomes:

- Knowledge of literature's role in the expression of culture
- Knowledge of the Shakespearean text and literary form

Cross-Cutting Capacities: Critical thinking and cultural analysis are crucial both within and outside the classroom. Further development of critical thinking skills through detailed literary analysis allows you to apply these critical thinking skills across several disciplines.

Registrar's Important Dates: <https://www.oakland.edu/registrar/important-dates/#tab-2>

Required texts:

The Taming of the Shrew, ISBN: 9780743477574

Macbeth, ISBN: 9780743477109

The Merchant of Venice, ISBN: 9780743477567

Othello, ISBN: 9780743477550

King Lear, ISBN: 9780743484954

As You Like It, ISBN: 9780743484862

Titus Andronicus, ISBN: 9780671722920

*All poetry is posted on Moodle

Shakespeare is a contentious figure. Some of his plays seem to conform to the status quo of his time period, while others appear to radically depart from the time's conventional notions of gender, power, religion and race. Our class will examine Shakespeare's poetry and plays with an eye toward considering whether the works present a break from traditional norms or if they comply with societal expectations.

The prospect of studying Shakespeare can be daunting. The language is difficult and sometimes alien because of the historical and cultural difference between Shakespeare's time and our own. In addition, the meaning of the lines and passages seems obscured by history; his works were composed so long ago, how can a modern audience be expected to understand the references and context?

These are problems and questions faced by every Shakespearean scholar, no matter their level of expertise or experience. My goal as your instructor is to put you in the position to understand not only the language but also the relationship between Shakespeare's Britain and the concepts explored in the poems and plays. Using these skills, which we will develop throughout the semester, you will be able to approach Shakespeare's works knowledgeably and critically. In other words, rather than offering a "translation" of the text, you will be given the tools to intricately interpret the play and present a critical argument regarding the work's meaning.

Learning how to read Shakespeare critically requires work and patience. It is important to understand going into this course that you are capable of reading and analyzing the Shakespearean text, provided you dedicate yourself to your study of the works and the material presented in lecture.

Course Breakdown:

Weekly close-reading assignments: 10%

In-class assignments: 10%

Paper one: 10%

Midterm exam: 20%

Paper two: 15%

Final exam: 20%

Participation: 15%

Letter Grading System (implemented Fall 2018):

A = 4.0 C+ = 2.3 F = 0.0

A- = 3.7 C = 2.0

B+ = 3.3 C- = 1.7

B = 3.0 D+ = 1.3

B- = 2.7 D = 1.0

Course Assignments:

- Close-reading assignments: Each week, you will submit via Moodle a writing assignment about one of our weekly texts. This is called a close-reading assignment because you will be asked to carefully and minutely analyze Shakespeare's language choices and form. You will choose a portion of the assigned reading and provide a detailed analysis of at least two substantial paragraphs in length. Your close-reading assignments must be submitted by *11:55pm on Monday night*. The purpose of this assignment is to allow you to practice the most important skill necessary to succeeding in this course. It also gives you the opportunity to hone your close-reading skills before tackling major assignments, like exams and papers, which will ask you to demonstrate your ability to close-read a text. Finally, these weekly assignments will provide you with discussion material and therefore help you to earn participation points. Close-readings will not be assigned on the weeks in which papers are due or during the week of exams. Be sure to follow the due dates for close-reading assignments on Moodle.
- Papers: My paper assignments will ask you to posit and develop a specific interpretation of one of Shakespeare's works. You will gather textual evidence—quotes from the play—to support your interpretation. You'll use your close-reading skills to analyze this evidence and link it to your thesis, or interpretation, to compose a critical analysis of the play. Professional writing skills and critical analysis are required in every field. I will provide comments that will help to improve your compositional as well as analytical skills. Papers will be submitted in hard copy form at the beginning of class.
- Exams: Both your midterm and final exams will have the same make-up: definitions, passages and an essay. The definition questions will ask you to explain literary terms and important historical events, movements or phenomenon that impacted the production of a specific text. For the passages section, you will be given a series of lines that you will identify from our list of plays. You will then answer a number of prompt questions asking you to consider the passage's significance from a specific angle. Finally, the essay requires that you write a carefully-considered answer to a prompt that speaks to a text or texts' major themes and historical context discussed in lecture.
- Participation: Please note going into the semester that participation is 15% of your final grade. There are a number of ways to earn participation points. The first is to offer up observations, comments or questions during class. Meeting me during my office hours to discuss our texts, to pose questions or to help prepare for papers and exams is also a form of participation. You may also improve your participation grade by asking questions or sharing observations via email. On the other hand, you will lose participation points by using your cell phone in class or otherwise failing to adhere to the course policies detailed below. Importantly—and please make a note of this—your participation grade is affected by your number of absences over the course of the semester.

Course Policies:

- Expectations: I expect you to come to each class prepared and with questions to pose or observations to share. Literary analysis is an on-going, collaborative and active process requiring our participation, discussion and close attention to detail. In other words, I expect you to be active readers and students. I expect you to be courteous of others and myself and to adhere to the course policies explained below. Finally, I expect you to be attentive during class.
- Attendance: Attendance is mandatory. If you miss class sessions, you will miss important information and discussion. Also, we will spend a substantial portion of our class periods working on literary analysis and participating in in-class work. Your participation grade will depend upon your active involvement in these activities and your everyday engagement in class discussion. As explained above, your participation grade will suffer significantly if you accrue an excessive number of absences. If you are late to class and miss attendance, it is your responsibility to see me after class to be marked present.
- Class conduct: Please arrive to class on time and stay for the entire class period. Late arrivals and early departures interrupt class discussions and are thus inconsiderate to your classmates and to myself as your instructor. Disruptive or inconsiderate classroom behavior will not be tolerated; students behaving inappropriately will be asked to leave. If you sleep in class, you will be asked to leave and you will be marked absent for the day.
- Technology: Cell phone usage is not permitted in class; this includes text messaging. Inappropriate laptop usage will negatively affect your grade because a lack of attention to class discussion, activities and course material will result in a less than satisfactory performance in the course. Therefore, please use your laptop for note-taking and appropriate research only. Do not wear headphones during class.
- Late work: You will lose .4 points per day for late assignments. If you submit a 4.0 assignment one day late, this grade will immediately drop to a 3.6. Likewise, an assignment that would have earned a 3.6, had it been turned in on time, would drop to a 2.8 if it were two days late. Papers must be turned in at the beginning of class; you will lose points if assignments are not turned in or submitted at the appropriate time.
- Academic Misconduct / Plagiarism: According to "Student Code of Conduct", "all members of the academic community at Oakland University are expected to practice and uphold standards of academic integrity. Academic integrity means representing oneself and one's work honestly. Misrepresentation is cheating since it means the student is claiming credit for ideas or work not actually his or her own and is thereby seeking a grade that is not actually earned. All academic misconduct allegations are forwarded to the Dean of Students Office and adhere to the student judicial system". *In the event that I discover plagiarized material in your work, I must report this infraction to the Dean of Students office.* Please review the university's policies on academic dishonesty at <<https://oakland.edu/deanofstudents/policies/>> so that you are aware of the consequences of this most serious academic crime. If you have any questions regarding plagiarism, it is imperative that you come talk to me before submitting your work. Once your work has been submitted, you cannot turn in a second draft and your materials will be judged by the academic standards determined by our university.

- Email and office hours: I encourage you to visit my office if you have questions or concerns about the course. If you are unable to attend my posted office hours because of scheduling conflicts, I should be able to schedule a meeting outside my regularly scheduled times. You can also email me with specific questions and comments. Discussions about our assignments and exams are much more effective when these conversations take place during office hours. I may not be able to respond to your email the day you send it, so do not expect an immediate response. I do not check my email after 8:00pm.
- Moodle Help: Walk in appointments are available from weekdays 8:00am to 5:00pm at 430 Kresge Library. To ensure that someone will be available for help, please make an appointment by calling (248) 805-1625. To get immediate help, call (248) 805-1625 weekdays 8:00am to 8:00pm and 8:00am to 1:00pm on Saturdays. You may also contact the Moodle staff via an online form. Please see Search under the "Help" tab on the Moodle home page.
- Notice for Disabled Students: Please contact our university's Disability Support Services. DSS is located in 103A North Foundation Hall. You may reach support services at this number:
 - (248) 370-3266. Please feel free to speak with me regarding any concerns you may have.
- OU Writing Center: If you need additional instruction in composition or if you would like help composing, organizing and formatting your written work, please contact the Writing Center at their office in 212 Kresge Library. You may also contact them by phone (248) 370-3120 or email (ouwc@oakland.edu).

Reading Schedule: ENG 1300 Introduction to Shakespeare (3:00-4:47pm)

*Schedule is subject to change.

*Readings must be completed by the date listed on the reading schedule.

*Readings must be completed before class.

9/6: Introduction to course; introduction to the Shakespearean sonnet; Sonnet 29 "When in disgrace with fortune and men's eyes"; Sonnet 19 "Devouring Time, blunt thou the lion's paws"; Sonnet 55 "Not marble nor the gilded monuments" (sonnets for the first day are provided in class and posted on Moodle)

9/11: Sonnet 8 "Music to hear, why hear'st thou music sadly?"; Sonnet 12 "When I do count the clock that tells the time"; Sonnet 129 "Th' expense of spirit in a waste of shame" (posted on Moodle; please print and bring to class) (**first close-reading assignment due 9/10, please see Moodle for future assignment due dates**)

9/13: Sonnet 95 "How sweet and lovely dost thou make the shame"; Sonnet 127 "In the old age, black was not counted fair"; Sonnet 130 "My mistresses' eyes are nothing like the sun"

9/18: *King Lear*, Act One

9/20: *King Lear*, Acts Two and Three

9/25: *King Lear*, Acts Four and Five

9/27: *Macbeth*, Act One

10/2: *Macbeth*, Acts Two and Three

10/4: *Macbeth*, Acts Four and Five

10/9: *As You Like It*, Act One, **Paper One Due (no close-reading assignment this week)**

10/11: *As You Like It*, Acts Two and Three

10/16: *As You Like It*, Acts Four and Five (**No close-reading assignment this week**)

10/18: **Midterm Exam**

10/23: *Othello*, Act One

10/25: *Othello*, Acts Two and Three

10/30: *Othello*, Acts Four and Five

11/1: *The Merchant of Venice*, Act One

11/6: *The Merchant of Venice*, Acts Two and Three

11/8: *The Merchant of Venice*, Acts Four and Five

11/13: *The Taming of the Shrew*, Act One

11/15: *The Taming of the Shrew*, Acts Two and Three

11/20: *The Taming of the Shrew*, Acts Four and Five

11/22: **No class**

11/27: *Titus Andronicus*, Act One, **Paper Two Due**

11/29: *Titus Andronicus*, Acts Two and Three

12/4: *Titus Andronicus*, Acts Four and Five

12/6: **Open Day**

12/11: **Final Exam, December 11th, 12:00-3:00pm**