

**I. COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

- A. Department Information  
Division: Humanities  
Department: English  
Course ID: ENGL 077  
Course Title: Shakespeare  
Units: 3  
Lecture: 3 Hours  
Laboratory: None  
Prerequisite: ENGL 914 or eligibility for ENGL 015 as determined by SBVC assessment process.

- B. Catalog Description:  
A critical analysis of a selection of Shakespeare's plays representative of his literary development. Lectures, films, and recordings will examine life and the theater in Elizabethan England. This non-transfer course is taught simultaneously with ENGL 275, a transfer-level course. Assignments differ for the two courses although students participate in the same lectures.

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**II. NUMBER OF TIMES COURSE MAY BE TAKEN FOR CREDIT: One**

**III. EXPECTED OUTCOMES FOR STUDENTS:**

Upon successful completion of the course the student should be able to:

- A. Read, discuss, and respond to the plays and poetry assigned;
- B. Compare and contrast Shakespeare's treatment of a theme in two different types of plays;
- C. Explore the connections between Elizabethan England and the themes of Shakespeare's poetry and plays;
- D. Analyze the differences between the complete text of a play and a video counterpart;
- E. Identify major speeches by prominent characters in assigned plays and discuss the significance of those quotations.

**IV. COURSE CONTENT:**

- A. Shakespeare's World
  1. Life and Death
  2. Wealth
  3. The Status of Women
  4. Henry VIII and the English Reformation
  5. Elizabethan England
  6. The Jacobean Court
- B. The History of Theater
  1. Greek Drama
  2. Medieval Miracle, Mystery, and Morality Plays
  3. 16th, 17th Century Entertainments
  4. The Puritan View
- C. Shakespeare's Life
  1. Shakespeare's Family and Education
  2. Shakespeare in London
- D. Shakespeare's Art

1. Major Themes
2. Issues of Identity
3. The joy of language play
- E. The Variety of Interpretation
  1. Pertinent Criticism
  2. Various Possibilities of Dramatic Interpretation
- F. Selected Plays and Poems of Shakespeare
  1. At least one comedy such as "Twelfth Night," "A Midsummer's Night Dream" or "Much Ado About Nothing"
    - a) Discussion of the conventions of comedy
    - b) Discussion of themes in the comedy: Elizabethan concerns and contemporary issues
  2. At least one audio or video version of that comedy: Comparison of the play and the production viewed or heard
  3. At least one tragedy such as "Othello" or "Hamlet;" note that "Romeo and Juliet" is most commonly covered in high school
    - a) Discussion of the tragic hero
    - b) Discussion of themes in the tragedy: Elizabethan concerns and contemporary applications
  4. At least one audio or video version of that tragedy: Comparison of the play and the production viewed or heard
  5. At least one history such as "Richard III" or "Henry V"
    - a) Discussion of English history
    - b) Political forces affecting the interpretation of history
  6. At least one audio or video version of that history: Comparison of the play and the production viewed or heard
  7. A selection of sonnets
    - a) History of the form
    - b) Shakespeare's themes and language play
    - c) Recordings of the sonnets; discussion of oral interpretation

**V. METHODS OF INSTRUCTION:**

- A. Reading: Students will read a selection of complete plays and poems. Since Elizabethan English and Shakespeare's writing are very demanding, emphasis is upon covering a few plays very carefully in the course of the semester, giving the students tools to be able to approach plays independently after the semester is over. While students are assigned out of class reading, much of that assigned reading needs to be read aloud, explained, and acted out in class to appreciate Shakespeare's achievement and the implications of dramatic form.
- B. Writing: Frequent reflective writing in class after discussions or viewing productions can help students focus their responses to the works. The teacher will also assign a structured reading journal, requiring students to summarize scenes of plays to help support reading assignments. A personal copybook of favorite Shakespearian quotes is also fun and instructive.
- C. Hands on Demonstration: Shakespeare Up on Your Feet: Since the plays were written to be acted out, teachers are encouraged to keep the class as active in that same spirit as possible. Suggested source books for accomplishing this include the Shakespeare Set Free series from the Folger Shakespeare Library and Teaching Shakespeare into the Twenty-first Century from Ohio University Press.
- D. Lecture
- E. Discussion
- F. Audio-visual

**VI. TYPICAL ASSIGNMENTS:**

- A. Write journal response in which you explore one of the major characters in Twelfth Night. What are his/her major qualities? Does s/he change in the course of the play? How do those

- changes -- or lack thereof -- help emphasize a prominent theme in the play? What concerns of Shakespeare's world does that character reflect? What present-day applications can you see in the issues that character raises? Be sure to use quotations, introduced and analyzed, to support your point of view.
- B. Write a journal response in which you compare and contrast the significance of love and deceit in Twelfth Night and Othello. A way to make this seemingly overwhelming task manageable is to look for passages in each play that serve as a microcosm reflecting the larger play. In this way, students would be identifying major speeches by prominent characters and discussing the significance of those quotations. Explicate those passages by paraphrasing them line-by-line, then discussing how they reflect a major theme of the play.
  - C. Write a journal response in which you compare and contrast the presentation of Richard III's character in the play you have read with one of the following video versions: Lawrence Olivier's Richard III, Al Pacino's "Looking for Richard," Ian McKellan's Richard III.

## VII. EVALUATION(S):

- A. Methods of Evaluation
  1. Weekly Assignments: Typical weekly assignments include summarizing each scene of an assigned play in a reading journal, collecting of quotes in a personal copybook, and reflective writing on the significance of various characters in the plays.
  2. Class Participation in discussions of passages and characters to strengthen analytical skills and understanding of themes.
  3. Exams given at the end of each play: Questions would include important lines for which students are asked to identify the speaker and discuss the significance of the passage. Students would also be asked, in brief essays, to discuss how specific characters reflect major themes of the plays and how those themes reflect the concerns of Elizabethan England.
  4. Three extended journal responses: Examples of assignments may be seen may in "VI. Typical Assignments" above. Since students will also have watched video versions of the plays, a comparison/contrast response discussing the written play and the video version would be useful. The teacher may consider requiring the memorization and recitation of a sonnet in place of one of the responses, once again emphasizing the power of Shakespeare's language and performance.
  5. Final Examination: This exam includes quotations for identification and discussion from the plays studied, along with essay questions concerning connections between Shakespeare's plays and the era in which he lived. In keeping with the spirit of performance, questions are also asked concerning how certain speeches should be delivered, requiring an understanding of context and interpretation.
- B. Frequency of evaluation:
  1. Weekly assignments
  2. Three extended journal responses
  3. Exams at the end of each play
  4. One final examination

## VIII. TYPICAL TEXT(S):

An appropriate collection of Shakespeare's poetry and plays such as:  
The Norton Shakespeare. Stephen Greenblatt, Ed. New York: W. W. Norton, 1997.  
The Riverside Shakespeare, 2nd ed. Evans et al., New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1997  
Also, a work with background information such as:  
Epstein, Norrie. The Friendly Shakespeare. NY: Viking, 1995

## IX. OTHER SUPPLIES REQUIRED OF STUDENTS: None