

I. CATALOG DESCRIPTION:

- A. Department Information
Division: Humanities
Department: English
Course ID: ENGL 275
Course Title: Shakespeare
Units: 3
Lecture: 3 Hours
Laboratory: None
Prerequisite: ENGL 101

- B. Catalog and Schedule 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.

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

III. EXPECTED OUTCOMES FOR STUDENTS:

Upon 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. Write analytically about the plays and poetry read;
- E. Analyze the differences between the complete text of a play and its video counterpart;
- F. 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. Typical kinds of reading and writing assigned

1. 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.
2. Writing: Students will write essays demonstrating their ability to analyze themes in Shakespeare's plays and poetry. Frequent reflective writing in class after discussions or viewing productions can help students focus their responses to the works. The teacher might also consider assigning 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.

B. Pedagogical Techniques

1. 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.
2. Lecture (eg. the relevant historical and sociological contexts of each play assigned; the history of British drama)
3. Discussion (eg. helping students to discover themes by prominent characters in assigned plays by discussing the significance of those quotations)
4. Audio-visual (eg., after reading and discussing each play, show a video version so that students can compare and contrast their reading interpretations with dramatic interpretation; various recordings of the sonnets and other poetry, by actors, scholars such as Helen Vendler, singers such as Bryn Terfel and Thomas Hampson can also demonstrate the variety of interpretation)

VI. TYPICAL ASSIGNMENTS:

- A. Write an essay 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 an essay 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 an essay 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 out-of-class essays: 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 essay 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 papers, 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, essay 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 out-of-class essays
 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:
Ed. Stephen, The Norton Shakespeare. Greenblatt New York: W. W. Norton, 1997.
Ed. G. Blakemore, 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